QUEER KINSHIP
AND RELATIONSHIPS

CONFERENCE 2015 POLAND

Idea of the Conference

Studies of non-heterosexual kinship in modern societies are well established in the Anglophone countries, dating back to such "classical" texts as Eshter Newton's *Mother Camp* (1972) and especially Kath Weston's *Families We Choose* (1991). The once original body of work has now become "canonical" and a mandatory point of reference for subsequent researchers. Canonization, however, presents us with the obvious perils of hegemonization and domination of theories that perhaps do not necessarily fit into the diverse (i.e. non-Western) social and cultural realities. At the same time, it is hard to escape the existing theoretical vocabulary since scholars from various localities researching non-heterosexual families use them as the only pre-existing point of reference, and an inspiration for their own terminology and conceptualizations. Consequently, although studying "their own" localities, they apparently have no choice but to use "not their" language and concepts to capture developments and local narrations of queer families/kinship.

During the conference we want to concentrate on different understandings of queer kinships/relationships, and present more insights into the dynamics of non-normative kinship configurations in various geo-temporal contexts. Consequently, we seek to address such questions as the following:

1. How do non-heterosexual people define their relationships? What concepts are used to think through, understand, and describe non-normative kinship practices?
2. How are "queer families" socially framed and understood in various localities with different political significance of "traditional family"?
3. Does "queer kinship/family" have the potential to become a (new) reference point for the LGBTQ activism, in the place or in conjunction with "marriage equality" or "rights politics"?
4. How do specific local contexts influence the debates on sexual politics in diverse locations?

The idea of the conference is to meet in a relaxed and more intimate atmosphere away from the busy metropolis. This way we hope to inspire a more personal and individual exchange of opinions between participants. Therefore, we have decided to organize the conference in Masuria – the beautiful lake district of Poland. The conference will take place in Zalesie Mazury, a conference centre situated on a lake in Zalesie near Olsztyn.

Organizing Committee

The conference is organized as a part of the research project "Families of Choice in Poland" (2013-2015)[1], Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences, by the following team:

Principal Investigator of "Families of Choice in Poland" research project
Prof. Joanna Mizielińska

Conference Coordinator
Agata Stasińska (Research Officer)

Research Team Members
Aleksander Wasiak-Radoszewski (Researcher)
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Conference production

SZUSTOW.
KULTURA I KOMUNIKACJA

Day 1, June 8th

13.30-14.30	**Registration** (Meeting Place in Warsaw: Plac Defilad 1, Ul. Marszałkowska, Side of the Palace of Culture, near the Dramatyczny Theatre (more info see: 'information pack_queer kinship and relationships.pdf')
14.30-Aprox.18.00	**Trip from Warsaw to Zalesie, Masuria (Conference Venue)**
19.00-19.30	**Opening of the Conference** Room: Banquet Room
19.30	**Welcome Dinner** Room: Plenary Room

Day 2, June 9th

8.00-9.00	**Breakfast**
9.00-10.30	**Plenary Session 1:** Room: Plenary Room Chair: Joanna Mizielińska
	Judith Butler, University of California, New Kinship: Paradoxes of Legal Recognition
10.30-11.00	**Coffee Break**
11.00 -13.10	**Parallel Sessions:**

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1 Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Catherine Donovan

Jose Pichardo Galan, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Rethinking Same-Sex Sexuality and Kinship in Spain
Anna Borgos, Research Institute for Psychology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, A Precarious Status: Hungarian Co-Mothers in the System of Family and Society
Daniel Monk, Birkbeck University of London, 'Too Gay to Foster?'
Galina Yarmanova, Sociology Department, National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy & Lesia Pagulich, Independent Researcher, "We Just Want to Be Normal": 'Double Bind' of Reproductive Pressure on Lesbian Mothers in Ukraine
Simon Crouch, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne, Ruth McNair, The University of Melbourne, Heteronormative Conflict: Socially Constructing Child Health in Australian Same-Sex Parent Families

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1 Room: 1   Chair: Amy Brainer

Giulia Selmi, Centro Studi Interdisciplinari di Genere, University of Trento & Marina Franchi, Gender Institute, London School of Economics, Narratives on The Border: Negotiating Queer Kinship in Contemporary Italy
Jingshu Zhu, University of Amsterdam, 'Fake' Marriages of Chinese Queer Comrades: Negotiating Queer Kinship within Family Normativity
Michael Yarbrough, Department of Political Science, John Jay College, CUNY, By the Authority Vested: Constructing Marriage in LGBT and Indigenous South African Communities
Hwajeong Yoo, Women's Studies, The University of York, Living Cohabitation in Contemporary Korea: The Experiences of Lesbians, Gays, and Heterosexuals
Brian Horton, Anthropology, Brown University, Rethinking Visibility: Non-Disclosure as "Coming Out" for Queer Mumbai Youth

13.10-14.10	**Lunch**

| 14.10-16.10 | **Plenary Session 2:** Room: Plenary Room |
| | **Joanna Mizielińska (PI), Agata Stasińska, Aleksander Wasiak-Radoszewski, Katarzyna Dębska, Joanna Zamorska**, Institute Psychology PAN, Families of Choice in Poland (2013-2015) – Presentation of Research Findings |

| 16.10-16.30 | **Coffee Break** |

| 16.30-18.10 | **Parallel Sessions:** |

Session 3: When Something Goes Wrong... Room: Plenary Room
Chair: Ruth Preser

Luke Gahan, Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University, Separated Same-Sex Parented Families: Rethinking the Queer Family through the Experiences of Separation

Annukka Lahti, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Ambivalences and Tensions in Bisexual Women's and Their Partners' Relationship Talk

Catherine Donovan, Department of Social Science, University of Sunderland & Rebecca Barnes, Department of Criminology, University of Leicester, Making Sense of Domestic Violence and Abuse in LGBTQ Relationships

Alzbeta Mozisova, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian Relationships in the Context of Heteronormativity

Session 4: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 2 Room: I
Chair: Olga Plakhotnik

Elizabeth Smith, **Roz Ward**, La Trobe University, Transgender and Gender Diverse Kinship: The Role of Parents, Friends, and Families of Choice as Protective Factors for Gender Diverse and Transgender Young People

Jennifer McGuire, **Jory Catalpa**, Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, Negotiating Kinship Ties for Transgender Young People

Masha Neufeld, Department of Psychology, Dresden University of Technology & Katharina Wiedlack, Gender Research Office, University of Vienna, 'Children 404-We Exist!': Russia's New Queer (Activist) Communities, Belonging and Kinship

Alisa Zhabenko, Allegra Laboratory Association, Lesbian Lives in Russia under the Rapidly Changing Legal Landscape

Session 5: Queering Heteronormative Life Cycle Room: II
Chair: Tomasz Basiuk

Kathryn Almack, **Anne Patterson** & **Meiko Makita**, School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, Friends, Families and Kinship: Proximity and Intimacy in the Support Networks of LGBT Elders

Rebecca Jones, Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University, Queer Kinship in Bisexual People's Imagined and Experienced Later Life

Danielle Pearson, Social Sciences, The Open University, 'I Just Want to Get a Dog and See how that Works...' Family Planning among Young Same-Sex Couples

| 19.30 | **Dinner** |

Day 3, June 10th

Breakfast

9.00-10.30   **Plenary Session 3:** Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Agata Stasińska

Jacqui Gabb, Open University, Critical Reflections on Sexuality and Family Lives over a Generation (1990-2015)
Ruth Preser, ICI-Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry, What Therefore Discourse Has Joined Together: Kinship, Performativity and Everyday Use of Public Spaces

10.30-11.00   **Coffee Break**

11.00-13.10   **Parallel Sessions:**

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2 Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Simon Crouch

Gracia Trujillo, Sociology, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Queering the Family Institution? Bio-Social Discourses, Resistances and Chosen Families
Tania Machado, Sociology, University of Minho, "Sometimes I Feel like I'm the Father": Portuguese Lesbian Families (Re)Designing Gender Roles
Amalia Ziv, The Gender Studies Program, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Querying Lesbian Fatherhood
Oscar Laguna-Maqueda, Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales Museo UABC, Queer Families in the Making: The Case of Gay Fathers in Mexico City
Marcin Śmietana, Gender and Women's Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Gay Father Families in Spain: Inclusion Within the Nuclear Family and the Nation State

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families Room: I   Chair: Tuula Juvonen

Federica de Cordova, **Chiara Sità**, University of Verona, Susan D. Holloway & Irenka Domínguez-Pareto, University of California, Berkeley, Strategies of Disclosure in Same-Sex Parents In Italy: Between Self-Invention and Normalization
Amy Brainer, University of Michigan-Dearborn, New Identities or New Intimacies? Reframing "Coming Out" through Cross-Generational Ethnography in Taiwan
Olga Plakhotnik & **Maria Mayerchyk**, Center for Cultural-Anthropological Studies, 'From Coming Out to Queering Act': Queer Reflections on Kinship Politics
Em Temple-Malt, Sociology, University of Manchester, Displaying to Family and Friends
Michal Pitonak, Charles University, Prague, Me and My Partner, A Same-Sex Couple: Are We Family Yet?

13.10-14.10   **Lunch**

14.10-15.40   **Plenary Session 4:** Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Gracia Trujillo

Ana Cristina Santos, Centre For Social Studies, University of Coimbra, It Takes More Than Two to Tango! Relational Citizenship and the Queer Ethics of Care and Choice
Ulrika Dahl, Södertörn University, Between Monsters and Mothers: Notes on Femininity, (In)fertility and Queer Kinship in an Age of Reproduction

15.40-16.00   **Coffee Break**

16.00-17.20   **Parallel Sessions:**

Session 8: Challenging Understandings of Intimacy Room: I   Chair: Marcin Śmietana

Juan Anzola, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham, Words & Things that Matter: Exploring Intimacy within Transnational Same-Sex Coupled Relationships
Charlotta Carlstrom, Department of Social Work, Centre for Sexology and Sexuality Studies, Malmoe University, BDSM - A Way of Living
Corrie Hammers, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department, Macalester College, Queering Kinship through the Bonds of Leather

Session 9: Polyamory - Discourses and Practices Room: II   Chair: Daniel Monk

Katarzyna Grunt-Mejer, University of Zielona Góra & Weronika Chańska, Department of Philosophy and Bioethics, Jagiellonian University, Medical College, Disciplining Debauchery: Psychologization and Pathologization of Polyamory in the Experts Discourse
Shelley Park, University of Central Florida, Polyamory Is to Polygamy as Queer Is to Barbaric?
Cornelia Schadler, Department of Sociology, Ludwigs Maximilians University Munich, Polyamorous Networks and Parenting

Session 10: Practices of Trans-Parenting Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Elizabeth Smith

Sally Hines, Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, Pregnant Pauses: Trans* Blokes, Bodies and Babies
Rachel Epstein, LGBTQ Parenting Network, Sherbourne Health Centre, Space Invaders: Queer & Trans Bodies in Fertility Clinics
Yuval Topper-Erez, Hoshen - LGBT Education Center, Transgender Pregnancy and Queer Parenting from the Personal Perspective of Yuval Topper-Erez

19.00   **Dinner**

21.00   **Party**

Day 4, June 11th

8.00-9.30   **Breakfast**

9.30-11.40   **Parallel Sessions:**

Session 11: Narratives of Reproduction Room: Plenary Room   Chair: Kathryn Almack

Damien W. Riggs, Flinders University, The Differential Use of Claims to Genetic Relatedness amongst Gay Men who Enter into Transnational Surrogacy Arrangements
Aspa Chalkidou, University of Aegean, It's My Party and I'll Inseminate if I Want To: Some Thoughts on Sex, Sexuality and LGBT Parenting
Michael Nebeling Petersen, Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark, Between Precarity and Privilege. Claiming Motherhood as Gay Fathers through Transnational Surrogacy
Elizabeth Peel, Psychology, University of Worcester, Crista Craven, Anthropology, College of Wooster, Stories of Grief and Hope: Queer Experiences of Reproductive Loss

Session 12: Chosen Families and Friendships Room: I   Chair: Sally Hines

Deborah Dempsey, Swinburne University, Enduring Choices: Friendship, Blood Ties and the Persistent Appeal of the 'Homo Nuclear' Family
Tomasz Basiuk, American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, Reimagining Relationality in American Gay Men's Life Narratives
Tuula Juvonen, University of Tampere, Army Of Ex-Lovers? Lesbian Community Building in Tampere from the 1970s to the 1990s
Gibran Teixeira Braga, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Me and My Boys: Queer Kinship, Eroticism and Friendship among a Young Woman and Some Gay Guys
Marcelo Perilo & **Bruno Pucinnelli**, Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Unicamp, Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger: Transits, Visibility and Parenthood between "LGBT Families" in São Paulo (Brazil)
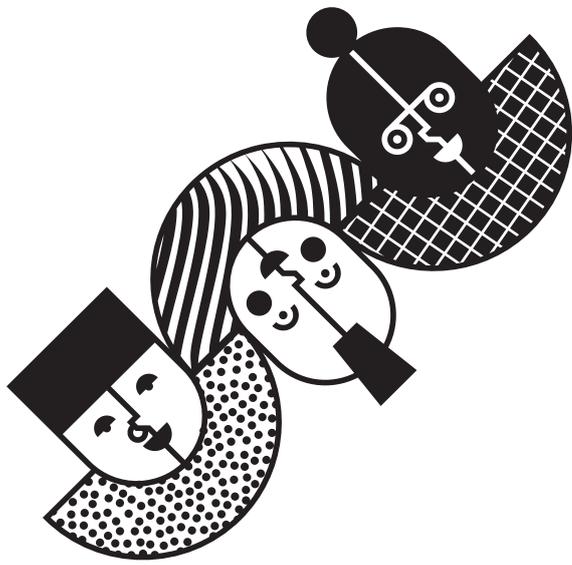
11.40-12.00   **Conference Closing** Room: Plenary Room

12.30-13.30   **Lunch**

14.00-Aprox.17.00   **Trip Back to Warsaw**

Plenary Sessions

– Abstracts in the Order of the Sessions

JUDITH BUTLER

University of California

New Kinship: Paradoxes of Legal Recognition

Plenary Session 1:

On the one hand, legal recognition of same-sex partners is important for all kinds of reasons, including immigration and parenting rights, medical benefits, and rights to execute living wills and share or inherit property. More importantly, it seems as thought legal recognition is one of the most powerful ways to combat both the pathologization and criminalization of gay and lesbian couples and their parenting practices. At the same time, legal recognition can restrict our understanding of actual sexual practices and forms of intimate kinship that fall outside the conjugal norm. This paradox has been named time and again within queer studies, though the mainstream effort to secure rights of marriage have become the focus of gay and lesbian movements, often at the expense of the parenting rights of lesbians, bisexuals, trans people, and gay men who may or may not be in a couple form. So one question is: what are the challenges for radical sexual politics during this time when legal recognition seems to have become the ultimate aim? At the same time, some of the most virulent attacks on lgbtqi people have been waged against struggles for legal enfranchisement for gay marriage, rights to parenting, decriminalization, and de-pathologization. Although it is possible to maintain a critical view of some of the mainstream legalization efforts (precisely for their normalizing effects), it remains true that they have produced the conditions for a radical critique of homophobia and transphobia that remains crucial during this time of increasing opposition to "gender ideology" and gender equality. The challenges that many of us face are (a) how to keep a radical queer movement alive that seeks to contest normalizing standards and link the struggle against homophobia to other forms of social oppression and (b) lend support to the struggle against homophobia occasioned by legal movements from which we do not necessarily wish to benefit. Finally, what pleasures and possibilities exist for radical genderqueer and sexual movements outside of legal recognition? How do we maintain those broader aspirations for radical sexual culture in the face of very difficult and consequential legal and political battles over gender, marriage, parenting, rights, criminal and psychiatric codes?

Judith Butler is Maxine Elliot Professor of Comparative Literature and Critical Theory at UC Berkeley. She is the author of several books including *Gender Trouble, Bodies that Matter, Undoing Gender,* and *Precarious Life.*

JOANNA MIZIELIŃSKA (PI),
AGATA STASIŃSKA,
ALEKSANDER WASIAK-RADOSZEWSKI,
KATARZYNA DĘBSKA,
JOANNA ZAMORSKA

Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Families of Choice in Poland (2013-2015) – Presentation of Research Findings

Plenary Session 2:

The research project *Families of choice in Poland* is conducted under the supervision of Professor Joanna Mizielińska at the Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences. The main purpose of the project is to show the variety of family and intimate arrangements of non-heterosexual persons in Poland and to understand the challenges they face in everyday life. The project consisted of several stages and techniques selected to present the various aspects of family and intimate lives of non-heterosexual persons as completely as possible. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed:

1. **Critical Discourse Analysis** concerning "families of choice": we paid special attention to the reconstruction of the voices of the most important actors who influence the shape of these discourses (state institutions, the Roman Catholic church, academia, and NGOs) as well as the applied arguments;

2. **A detailed analysis of selected case studies:** concerning crucial public debates on the situation of non-heterosexual persons in Poland, such as the debates concerning civil partnerships bills. We also analysed legal proceedings (e.g. at the European Court of Justice in Strasbourg and Polish High Court of Justice);

3. **A quantitative study:** carried out throughout Poland on 3038 people living in same-sex relationships and 2378 who were single; our aim was to ascertain the general recognition of the needs and aims of people living in 'families of choice'. The respondents could express their opinions on various aspects of their own family lives.

4. **53 individual in-depth interviews** with members of families of choice. The interviews were meant to provide detailed data concerning motives connected with the most crucial decisions made by the couple, the issues of social support, love and intimacy, strategies of coping with social invisibility, and attitudes towards basic institutional conditions;

5. **21 ethnographic studies** in which a researcher accompanied a selected family in their everyday life for 30 days. The researcher lived in their home, watched their daily practices, and talked with them about their life, problems, and joys;

6. **23 focused group interviews:** carried out in groups of 6-10 people. It allowed us to gather data concerning their opinions and positions in the situation of social contacts. They were also intended to allow us to get to know similarities and differences between the experiences and narrations of various members of families of choice, and to show an in-depth picture of their individual and common experiences.

During the plenary session the team will present some of the results of different stages of the research project.

JACQUI GABB

Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University

Critical Reflections on Sexuality and Family Lives over a Generation (1990-2015)

Plenary Session 3:

The international lesbian and gay association (http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/) has identified the UK as one of the most progressive countries for lesbian and gay rights; UK social attitudinal data indicate growing tolerance of lesbian and gay relationships. Indeed, over the past twenty-five years there have been wide-ranging social, cultural and legal changes. This paper will explore how advancements in equality rights and positive social attitudinal changes are experienced across a generation (1990-2015). Recollecting the highly influential and inspirational work of American poet, essayist and feminist Adrienne Rich, the narrative for this paper traces my personal journey into lesbian motherhood, interlaced with empirical data from three of my research projects that have examined sexuality and families. I suggest that equal rights are not automatic bedfellows with equality. What is right for some may feel wrong for others. The 'world we have won' (Weeks 2007) may not be the first prize. Equal rights have served to underpin heteronormative institutions – such as 'the family' and marriage. Queers who go against the grain are being increasingly marginalized. 'Compulsion coupledom' reigns supreme. Advances in reproductive technologies may have queered the sexual family but they simultaneously reaffirm biological narratives and traditional meanings of kin. In this paper, therefore, I focus on the sticky stuff that counts. Methodological, epistemological and theoretical imperatives are interwoven. While scholarly studies of relationships and sexuality have added significant insight into queer kinship, these typically wring out the very emotions that constitute the fabric of study. Intimacy and sexuality are sanitised and neatly packaged. I situate feelings at the analytical heart of family lives, taking everyday experience and emotions as the starting point. I reflect on moments where sexuality and relationships become meaningful. Looking back over a generation, these momentary points of departure require us to reflect upon where we are and how we got here: to think again about the 'rights, wrongs and rules' of queer kinship in the 21st century.

Jacqui Gabb is a Sociologist. She holds a PhD in Women's Studies, University of York, UK. She an Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Social Sciences, at The Open University. Interests centre on interdisciplinary psycho-social approaches for researching and theorizing intimacy, sexuality and family life, with particular emphasis on the contemporary dynamics of policy, professional practice and personal relationships.
She has completed ESRC-funded projects on lesbian parenthood, intimacy and sexuality in families, and, most recently, long-term couple relationships. In collaboration with colleagues in Australia and the US, her current research is interrogating how ideas of enduring coupledom cross different national, situational and biographical contexts. Other work is exploring how couples are supported by and shaped through cross-generational affinities. Publications include *Couple Relationships in the 21st Century* (Palgrave, 2015) and *Researching Intimacy in Families* (Palgrave, 2008).

ULRIKA DAHL

Södertörn University

Between Monsters and Mothers: Notes on Femininity, (In)fertility and Queer Kinship in an Age of Reproduction

Plenary Session 3:

What does it means for our understanding of (lesbian) *femininity* that (some) lesbians have gone from being monstrous and unmotherly to menstruating, from queer to normal, from "infertile" to fertile? Drawing on previous research and pilot interviews, and focusing on the high financial, social, and emotional costs and investments of (queer and lesbian) reproduction, this speculative paper attends to how ideas of (in)fertility and femininity are both reproduced and redefined. Extending an interest less in defending the radical possibilities and the promise of happiness presumably lodged within legal, cultural, and medical recognition of queer reproduction, and more in what failures might teach us and attempting a queer femme-inist reading of the complex relationship between femininity and (in)fertility it asks: Of what use is an (in)fertile body to her (queer) family and nation?

In heteropatriarchy, both the idea of femininity without motherhood and motherhood without pregnancy are condemned (Ryan 2013) and feminist concerns with fertility/femininity have largely centred on either affirming motherhood/femininity or on women's rights and stratified abilities to regulate reproduction and thus on dislodging both womanhood and femininity from the "biological" dimensions of fertility and motherhood. Among the (historical) stigmas of lesbianism there are its links to "unfemininity" and childlessness, and at the same time, lesbian and queer gender configurations challenge normative conceptions of femininity as defined by attractiveness to the opposite sex/masculinity. While important research has been done on how female and transmasculine pregnancies challenge conceptions of fertility as tied to femininity and motherhood, and on the discrimination faced by those who transgress from femininity norms of pregnancy, the femininity-fertility articulation remains complex. Given these trajectories, how do lesbians and genderqueers navigate (in)fertility and its treatments, and what does lesbian (in)fertility tell us about the role of wombs, including lesbian ones, in the reproduction of nation, race, and futurity?

Ulrika Dahl is a cultural anthropologist and associate professor of gender studies at Södertörn University in Stockholm. Prior to her recently started ethnographic project *Queer(y)ing Kinship in the Baltic Region,* she has written extensively on feminist theory, gender equality, heteronormativity and above all, queer femininities and the figure of the femme. She is author of a number of articles and a range of anthology chapters, and also of the monographs *Skamgrepp: Femme-inistiska essäer* (2014) and *Femmes of Power: Exploding (queer) femininities* (with Del LaGrace Volcano, 2008). Ulrika is also co-editor of *lambda nordica- Nordic journal of LGBTQ studies,* and recently edited a special issue on queer kinship and reproduction with Jenny Gunnarsson Payne (3-4/2014).

ANA CRISTINA SANTOS

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra

It Takes More than Two to Tango! Relational Citizenship and the Queer Ethics of Care and Choice

Plenary Session 4:

At the core of demands put forward by LGBTI and queer movements sit concerns around the absence or insufficient recognition of citizenship, care and choice. These concerns have been taken on board across the globe through the use of an array of notions. Citizenship has been decomposed into sexual, intimate and reproductive citizenship, often conflated terms, but with specificities. Care was mostly explored, theoretically and politically, by feminism, and framed as support networks, welfare and responsibility. Choice has a very long stand in collective action, from abortion rights to disabled people's demands around independent living. Shaped as self-determination, agency and autonomy, choice is crucial for intersectional politics and particularly important in the context of LGBTI and queer intimate biographies.

In this paper, polyamorous relationships are discussed in its potential to offer new understandings of doing relationships and challenging the hetero/normative constraints of mainstream coupledom. Shaped by significant developments regarding sexual and reproductive citizenship, the complex arrangements to do with care and choice in the context of non-monogamy push decision-makers (theorists included) to change the ways in which citizenship is framed and enacted by law, social policy and sociocultural outlets. Therefore, I suggest the notion of (non-monogamous) relational citizenship to capture both the disjunctions and possibilities for reframing how we perceive, represent and manage our intimate lives. This paper is based on empirical material gathered within INTIMATE, an ongoing international ERC funded research project which started in 2014. More information at www.ces.uc.pt/intimate.

Ana Cristina Santos is a Sociologist. She holds a PhD in Gender Studies, University of Leeds, UK. She is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, and Honorary Research Fellow at the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research, University of London.

Cristina has been involved in a number of research projects exploring issues of gender, sexual and reproductive rights, citizenship, disability and human rights. Between 2012 and 2014 she was Principal Investigator in the research Disabled Intimacies? Sexual and Reproductive Citizenship of Disabled Women in Portugal, funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology.

In 2013 she was awarded a 5 year Research Grant by the European Research Council to lead a comparative study on Citizenship, Care and Choice: The micropolitics of intimacy in Southern Europe. Being the first comparative study of intimate citizenship in Southern Europe, INTIMATE involves conducting cross-national qualitative research in Italy, Portugal and Spain on the following topics: lesbian coupledom, polyamorous relationships, assisted conception and surrogacy, naming a child, transgender and care, and living with friends in adult life. For more information please check: http://ces.uc.pt/intimate/; www.facebook.com/ces.intimate).

Co-coordinator of the International PhD Program Human Rights in Contemporary Societies and Vice-chair of the Sexuality Research Network of the European Sociological Association, Cristina is also an activist in the LGBT/queer and feminist movements in Portugal. Her most recent book is *Social Movements and Sexual Citizenship in Southern Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). cristina@ces.uc.pt

What Therefore Discourse Has Joined Together: Kinship, Performativity and Everyday Use of Public Spaces

Plenary Session 4:

Whereas the contingency between the institution of family, public recognition, and politics of belonging in LGBT lives has been intensively scrutinized, questions regarding the forms of publics and belonging, which emerge as a result of relational failures, are scanter. Of particular interest is the potential offered by these failure to adhere to normative convictions of coupledom, namely stability and respectability on the one hand, and normative convictions of storytelling, namely progress and redemption, on the other. Hence, the access to exceptional citizenship through assimilation to heteronormative modes of family is (repeatedly) damaged by what my interview partners in a research on lesbian relationship dissolution fondly referred to as the 'lesbian drama.' The lesbian drama is the euphemism used by many Jewish Israeli queers to illustrate a repeated, intensely staged and never-ending separation, which gained a folkloric dimension as an essentially lesbian trait, performance and destiny. The lesbian drama, as a long-term engagement, intimacy, and feud, may endure well beyond the initial relationship and literally spill over to the public sphere. However, neither coupledom nor post-coupledom entanglements are publicly and legally affirmed by the State of Israel. In the absence of public recognition and rituals that organize life around those moments, improvisation is always necessary for the speech act of pledging (to paraphrase Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner). Engaging with narratives of lesbian relational failures in the Israeli context, as a case study of sexual politics anchored in familism and the nation, the present paper explores everyday use, penetration and appropriation of publics and asks, what is queer about queer kinship.

Ruth Preser is an affiliated fellow at ICI – Berlin, Institute for Cultural Inquiry, a teaching fellow at the University of Haifa and a feminist activist at Isha L'Isha Haifa Feminist Center. A gender studies scholar by training and a narratologist by passion, Ruth's interdisciplinary scholarship combines queer theory and empirically informed inquiry. She received her PhD in gender studies from Bar-Ilan University with a dissertation entitled *A Narrative Investigation into Queer Separation* (2012), which explored how belonging is negotiated and worked once life/stories cannot adhere to neoliberal convictions of 'proper gayness.' In the ICI, she is working on her book project entitled *Belonging Travels,* which explores the intersection between sexuality and belonging by turning to the Jewish-Israeli queer diaspora in Berlin. Prior to arrival at the ICI, she spent a year as a fellow at the Institute for European Ethnology and the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin. Her recent publications include "A Methodology of Damage," published in the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* and "Things I Learned from the Book of Ruth," published in *Theory and Criticism.*
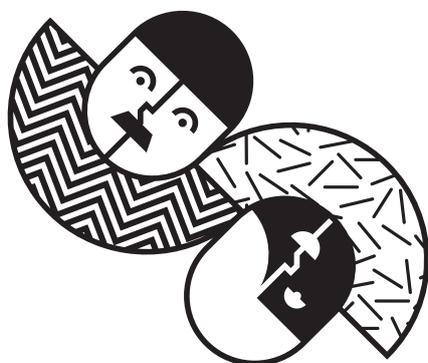
Parallel Sessions

– Abstracts in Alphabetical Order (by Surname)

ALMACK, KATHRYN | School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham

PATTERSON, ANNE | School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham

MAKITA, MEIKO | School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham

Friends, Families and Kinship: Proximity and Intimacy in the Support Networks of LGBT Elders

Session 5: Queering Heteronormative Life Cycle

This paper reports on qualitative findings from a two-year mixed-methods study in the UK, exploring end of life experiences and care needs of older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people (aged 60 or over). We carried out 60 interviews and in this paper we focus on findings about participants' sources of support, particularly important given estimates that two-thirds of LGBT people live alone.

Findings suggest that participants' personal networks were complex with varying degrees of importance placed upon friends, families, and multi-faceted 'kin' relationships at the end of life. Experiences were diverse, ranging from those who identified multiple sources of support across different generations to some who built their networks among their LGBT peers. Some described more isolated experiences of ageing alone with limited networks. The impacts of these varying configurations are highly significant especially as participants were asked about advance plans they had made for later life – arrangements about health and social care as well as financial matters.

Issues about closeness and distance (both geographical and emotional) emerged repeatedly during these discourses. We discuss how people negotiated them within their networks of support. Many participants described situations in which their closest and most intimate confidantes were seen as a key source of emotional support but were not necessarily able to offer practical support due to geographical distance. Others had extensive networks of acquaintances who might be able to offer practical help, though the intimacy in such relationships was limited and/or not desired.

These accounts reveal the complexities of support available in older age and towards the end of life. We address the implications of this for the care and support that is available and desirable as LGBT people navigate through a time in their lives when greater support might be required.

ANZOLA, JUAN | School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham

Words & Things that Matter: Exploring Intimacy within Transnational Same-Sex Coupled Relationships

Session 8: Challenging Understandings of Intimacy

The queer subject has remained significantly absent in the study of global migration and mobility. Moreover, scholarship on migration has only incipiently acknowledged the role of intimacy, feelings, and emotions as key factors that stimulate, shape, and sustain migration patterns. Accordingly, this paper is based on an ongoing research project that interrogates the way that concepts such as "home", "belonging", and "intimacy" are conceived and deployed within transnational same-sex coupled relationships. Specifically, it examines the challenges and expectations that exist within these relationships in terms of home-building while also enquiring on the multifaceted intersections between sexuality and migration.

The project's methodology involved in-depth semi-structured interviews and the construction of narratives around material culture at the home with 10 different transnational same-sex couples (5 lesbian couples and 5 gay couples). The paper's data intends to explore how transnational same-sex couples have accommodated and negotiated different understandings home and family life; how familial attachments and a "coupled" life between two (or more) countries are handled; and also how certain materiality (decorations, portraits, music, meaningful possessions, food, kitchenware), spaces, and places can be helpful in understanding the "doings" of intimacy, while at the same time manifesting the beliefs, feelings, and belongings of the research participants.

This paper will offer empirical insights into the subject of contemporary queer migration. Additionally, it wishes to promote purposive conversations among scholars studying intimacy, human geographies, transnational practices, sociology, and sexualities, as means to better understand contemporary dynamics of migration and intimate life. This paper will also provide queers in transnational relationships with additional tools to reflect on their lives, their cultural belongings, their citizenship status, and the value that is politically and socially bestowed on their families and overall personal commitments.

BARNES, REBECCA | Department of Criminology, University of Leicester

DONOVAN, CATHERINE | Department of Social Science, University of Sunderland

Making Sense of Domestic Violence and Abuse in LGBTQ Relationships

Session 3: When Something Goes Wrong…

It is no longer in question that domestic violence and abuse (DVA) happens in LGBTQ relationships too: a growing international body of research indicates that DVA in LGBTQ relationships takes similar forms, has similar impacts, and is underpinned by power and control, as in heterosexual relationships. What is contested is whether feminist theoretical frameworks used to explain men's violence and abuse towards their female partners – rooted in a gendered analysis of the oppressive hetero-feminine/hetero-masculine gender binary – can be applied to LGBTQ DVA. Sociological literature on LGBTQ relationships has often constructed them in very idealized terms, focusing on their distinctive and superior qualities. In particular, their potential for greater equality, democracy, and liberation from restrictive, dichotomous gender roles suggests that LGBTQ relationships sit outside of the hierarchy which has traditionally been associated with men's violence towards women. This paper presents findings from a mixed-methods study conducted in the UK with LGBTQ people and professionals to study "abusive" relationship practices in LGBTQ relationships. Our findings indicate that when DVA happens in LGBTQ relationships, it is difficult to recognise and explain. In this paper we argue that, far from requiring a gender-neutral analysis which overcomes the perceived irrelevance of a gendered analysis to LGBTQ DVA, gender-based theoretical explanations which examine how the hetero-masculine/-feminine binary shapes expectations, norms, and practices within LGBTQ relationships are required. This heterosexual gender binary has a number of possible implications: it informs the models of "doing relationships" available to LGBTQ people; it shapes LGBTQ victim/survivors' ability to recognise DVA; and it informs how help-providers determine whether a relationship is abusive and who the "victim/survivor" and "perpetrator" are. These factors point to the pervasive "public story" of DVA which, until dismantled, will continue to render some forms of DVA more visible, serious, and worthy of support and intervention than others.

BASIUK, TOMASZ | American Studies Center, University of Warsaw

Reimagining Relationality in American Gay Men's Life Narratives

Session 12: Chosen Families And Friendships

Some gender theorists hold that an emphasis on relationality is particularly associable with modes of female identity construction, whereas traditional masculinity is more readily definable as individualized; the former model is sometimes linked to a leftist sensibility, the latter to neoliberalism. This gendered distinction has been alleged also for lesbians and gay men, for example, Robert McRuer (1997) asserts it in a comparison of two coming out narratives published in 1982: Audrey Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* and Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story*. The view contradicts Michel Foucault's earlier and more optimistic observation that homosexuality, also among men, provides an occasion for an inventiveness when it comes to forms of relationality ("Friendship as a Way of Life," 1981). It would seem, with the advent of gay marriage, that Foucault's optimism has been misplaced. Indeed, the recent struggle for civil unions and for same-sex marriage has drawn criticism from the queer left, notably from Michael Warner and Lisa Duggan, for its assimilationist tendencies and its investment in neoliberalism. But in engaging examples drawn from gay men's life narratives, I seek to complicate this account of the present developments and suggest that a sweeping critique of institutionalized same-sex coupling risks overlooking ways in which forms of relationality are being reimagined both within and alongside these newfound institutions. I will also reference Leo Bersani's anti-relational thesis and speak to its subsequent elaboration.

BORGOS, ANNA | Research Institute for Psychology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

A Precarious Status: Hungarian Co-Mothers in the System of Family and Society

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

In recent years, an increasing professional and media discourse has started in Hungary about the possibilities, specificities, and consequences of same-sex parenting. The cause and also the result of that is the fact that (in spite of the unsettled legal situation) there are more and more realized and planned (mostly lesbian) rainbow families here. The news about some Western psychological studies in same-sex parenting has also reached the public. These studies usually explore the psychological "fitness" of rainbow parents and kids as compared to traditional families. At the same time, rainbow families raise a set of other exciting questions apart from comparing them to straight families. One of them is the psychological and social aspects of biological and non-biological parenting. In my paper, through open-question interviews, I explore the status of co-mothers in a Hungarian context. My questions address their parenting motivations, their roles and relationship dynamics within the family system, and their concepts of the family in general; on the other hand, I explore their visibility and relations in the outside world, including the wider family, the neighborhood, the nursing institutes, or the media. Studies in the subject have suggested that co-mothers are usually more vulnerable in the situation of joint parenting. They have to face an asymmetrical legal, cultural, psychological, and biological situation at the same time, and they are less visible in society as well. I try to interpret how co-mothers think about and cope with these issues in Hungary, and thus to understand better the interrelations of their social and psychological status.

BRAGA, GIBRAN TEIXEIRA | Universidade de São Paulo

Me and My Boys: Queer Kinship, Eroticism and Friendship among a Young Woman and Some Gay Guys

Session 12: Chosen Families and Friendships

The fieldwork in my doctoral research takes place at parties where people meet to drink, dance, and flirt. In this paper, I chose an excerpt from participant observation in a series of parties attended by a group of gay men and a woman whose erotic-affective preferences hardly fit in the traditional classifications of heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. I analyze a group of friends centered around Magui, a 32 year old woman who had since very young age revolved in queer environment. However, for a period of five years she was married to a psychologically abusive man and was distant from the queers. After the separation, Magui felt displaced in the "straight" world and decided to re-circulate in queer environment. Then she has started to develop ties with young gay boys with whom she maintains relations of "quasi-motherhood", resulting in a particular kind of kinship; some boys call her "mother" and call another older boy "father" while she calls them "her daughters". Magui maintains a protective attitude towards the boys, giving them advice on their emotional lives, and occupying a central place in the articulation of the group which frequents nightclubs catering to non-heterosexual audience. However, such a family relationship does not equal a ban on erotic practices between Magui and the gay guys. Magui does not hide her preference for male gay partners; moreover, she says that she prefers the bottom ones. The relationship between Magui and her gay friends defies the binary notions of sexual orientation while her erotic preferences question the male/female, active/passive polarities. I intend to analyze the relations between gender, sexuality, and other social markers of difference from an intersectional perspective, being alert to arrangements not always obvious between categories and markers.
Key-words: gender, sexuality, sociability, kinship, friendship, style.

BRAINER, AMY | Women's and Gender Studies, University of Michigan-Dearborn

New Identities or New Intimacies? Reframing "Coming Out" Through Cross-Generational Ethnography in Taiwan

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families

This paper analyzes the emergence of "coming out" (chugui) as a social discourse and a family practice in 21st century Taiwan, and the generation gap this has created within Taiwanese lesbian, gay, and queer circles. Existing models of "coming out" to the family have focused disproportionately on the psychological aspects of sexual identity development and integration, and the closet as a political construct. But in ethnographic fieldwork with three generational cohorts of gender and sexually nonconforming people, and with their families of origin throughout Taiwan, I find that sexual identities and sexual politics are not the chief determinants of who does or does not "come out" to their parents, siblings, and other kin. My findings point instead towards generational shifts in family interdependency and intimacy which require new and hybridized strategies for managing gender and sexuality within families.
Combining Carlos Decena's theory of "tacit subjects" with Kyung-Sup Chang's "compressed modernity," I show how tacit negotiations about gender and sexuality have not been supplanted but rather coexist with and interpenetrate the new discourse of "coming out" that is gaining traction among younger Taiwanese queers. At the same time, the meanings of silence, disclosure, and intimacy have changed so significantly that their interpretations are often mutually unintelligible across generational divides. I focus especially on the shift from structural interdependency to the incorporation of interpersonal sharing as a meaningful axis of family intimacy; new parenting logics that emphasize surveillance of children's inner as well as outer worlds; and material changes in the timing and flow of resources between parents and their children. Across each of these overlapping areas, I argue that studies of lesbian, gay, and queer family of origin relationships must move beyond a narrow emphasis on sexual identity and disclosure, to engage broader conversations about family changes and continuities in different cultural and structural locations.

CARLSTRÖM, CHARLOTTA | Department of Social Work. Centre for Sexology and Sexuality Studies, Malmoe University

BDSM - a Way of Living

Session 8: Challenging Understandings of Intimacy

BDSM, i.e. Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission and Sadism and Masochism is an acronym used to describe a variety of (sexual) behaviours including an implicit or explicit erotic power exchange. The practitioners adopt either dominant, submissive, or switch roles. For some practitioners the roles are limited to the sexual role-play while others adopt them 24/7. In this paper I focus on 24/7 relationships. There has been an increasing amount of research on BDSM in the recent decades focusing on BDSM as a sexual practice. However, forms of relationships where people live in constant shifts of power still remain a blind spot, although many practitioners live in these sorts of relations. In 2013, ethnographic fieldwork was conducted within several BDSM communities in Sweden. I conducted 28 interviews with people who define themselves as BDSM practitioners of whom eight persons live in 24/7 relationships. I participated in several forms of meetings, such as workshops, pub evenings, and clubs. I also visited people living in 24/7 relationships in their homes to learn more about the everyday life in these kinds of relations. In this paper I want to highlight both reasons and challenges of living in a 24/7 relationship. There is a preoccupation among 24/7 practitioners to find and shape strategies to manage and balance BDSM practice in relation to the surrounding community in everyday life. The persons who are parents reflect upon the challenges of parrying the parental role and the BDSM role. Further, I will argue that for some practitioners BDSM has little to do with sexuality. Instead, power exchange, discipline, and security are important factors where the significance of consent is central. Although the consent in 24/7 relationships differs from the overall BDSM practices since there are no concrete beginnings and ends in 24/7 relations. Contracts, agreements, and weekly "communication timeouts" are common ways to establish consent.

CHALKIDOU, ASPA | University of the Aegean

It's My Party and I'll Inseminate If I Want To: Some Thoughts on Sex, Sexuality and LGBT Parenting

Session 11: Narratives of Reproduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the complexity of the issue of sexuality (focused on sexual practices) in regard to public and state discourse on non-heterosexual reproduction and same-sex parenting. Using data from interviews conducted for the purposes of the research program (In)-FERCIT[1] - with people who identify themselves as lesbian or gay, and who are or wish to become parents by using methods of assisted reproduction - drawing from public discourse on (homo)sexuality, state discourse on the debate of same-sex civil partnerships, and notes from interdisciplinary academic conferences on queer and LGBT parenting and (new) kinship models in Greece, this article explores:
1. The complicated ways through which concepts of sex as practice reveal the limits of neoliberal tolerance about conceivable and acceptable forms of family, kinship, and relatedness.
2. How sexual practices or their absence (re)make concepts of assisted reproductive technologies.
3. How state recognition and public discourse use concepts of same-sex sexual practices in order to justify the legislative exclusion of LGBT people from legitimate forms of kinship.

DE CORDOVA, FEDERICA | University of Verona

HOLLOWAY, SUSAN D. | University of California, Berkeley

SITÀ, CHIARA | University of Verona

DOMÍNGUEZ-PARETO, IRENKA | University of California, Berkeley

Strategies of Disclosure in Same-Sex Parents in Italy: Between Self-Invention and Normalization

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families

This paper deals with "doing" same-sex parenting in Italy, characterized by an absence of legal, institutional recognition of lesbian/gay family relationships. Such recognition – or its absence – shapes rules for social coexistence, and forms a symbolic basis contributing to the concepts of the self and approaches to everyday life (Massimini, Calegari, 1979; Inghilleri, 1999). This structural vacuum challenges same-sex parents to invent themselves, displaying or performing family in daily interactions with individuals who have significant influence over their welfare, including physicians and teachers (Finch, 2007; Morgan, 1996). Our multi-method research includes surveys, interviews, and other techniques for understanding crucial points in the process of forming, displaying, and performing parent identity (Gabb, 2008; Holloway, 2010).
Positioned in a psychosocial and educational frame, we will discuss the construction of parenting identity as shaped in interactions with intimate partners (Feeney et al., 2001; Smyth, 2012), which we construe as a creative process of appropriating some cultural tools concerning family life, while adapting or rejecting others that are undesirable or of limited value to same-sex families. Locating parents within multiple contexts characterized by varying levels of resources and social status (Moore, 2011), we also examine the role of social support from kin members ("chosen" as well as biological) and social service providers. We also examine how parents' non-dominant status – and the resulting constraints on their agency – requires vigilance and "emotion work" as they appraise and respond to individuals and institutions with power over their family's welfare (Hochschild, 1983/2012). In summary, our analysis explores same-sex parents' deep work of responding to the symbolic level of culture in creating a parenting identity that must be displayed within a network of distinctive institutional settings. We conclude by discussing the implications for developing a more inclusive approach to family support and welfare within social service organizations.

CROUCH, SIMON | Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne

MCNAIR, RUTH | The University of Melbourne

Heteronormative Conflict: Socially Constructing Child Health in Australian Same-Sex Parent Families

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

In a socio-political context where legal equality for same-sex families has all but been achieved, yet marriage equality is still not embraced by politicians and aspects of the community, understanding child health and wellbeing in Australian same-sex family contexts is complex. Emerging from families of choice, discussions around lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans* parent families in Australia have moved from an idea of doing parenting to doing family. The Australian Study of Child Health in Same-Sex Families sought to build on the concept of doing family to understand the multidimensional aspects of child health and wellbeing in families with at least one same-sex attracted parent. This mixed methods study captured both quantitative data around child health and wellbeing, reported by parents and children themselves, as well as a more qualitative understanding through family interviews. By integrating these findings an overall picture of wellbeing was identified that described generally positive outcomes for children but in a context where stigma can have a negative impact. Families described feelings of heteronormative conflict: at once fighting the constraints of a socially constructed heterocentric world, while simultaneously striving for acceptance by building heterocentric ideals into their family lives. This paper seeks to explore heteronormative conflict in the context of child health and wellbeing in Australian same-sex parent families and how this conflict is seen through aspects of family formation and functioning including family structure, gender, discrimination, and organisations and institutions (the Establishment). By drawing on the findings of the Australian Study of Child Health in Same-Sex Families an understanding of how a socially constructed view of same-sex parenting can inform child health in this context will be described.

DEMPSEY, DEBORAH | Swinburne University of Technology

Enduring Choices: Friendship, Blood Ties and the Persistent Appeal of the 'Homo Nuclear' Family

Session 12: Chosen Families and Friendships

In *Families We Choose* (1991), Kath Weston emphasized the pivotal importance of friendship in lesbian and gay notions of family. Weston argues that if dominant familial ideology maintains friendships are tenuous because they are chosen, gay and lesbian kinship ideologies reverse this idea. Friendships often prove to be the relationships that endure where blood ties prove grounds for ephemeral social relationships. Two decades since the publication of Weston's canonical text, an increasing body of empirical work on lesbian and gay male parenting documents the extent to which friendship is somewhat marginalized in the creation of families with children. Surveys of queer parents consistently find that the "homo-nuclear" cohabiting couple based family is far more popular than one, three, or four parent variations on this norm. Much recent work on lesbian-parented families formed through donor insemination and families created by gay men through surrogacy emphasizes the sharing of parenting by a cohabiting couple, in which one or both partners are biologically related to the children. In this paper, based on my empirical work in the Australian queer parenting communities, I explore the conditions under which friendship is the grounds for the creation of parenting relationships, arguing that the evidence undermines rather than supports Weston's argument about the distinctiveness of friendship in queer notions of kinship. I also explore reasons for the persistent appeal of the couple-based family form when it comes to creating families with children, notably, the enduring symbolic power of conjugal love and blood ties in maintaining a sense of family unity.

EPSTEIN, RACHEL | LGBTQ Parenting Network, Sherbourne Health Centre

Space Invaders: Queer & Trans Bodies in Fertility Clinics

Sessions 10: Practices of Trans-Parenting

The ontological choreography of the fertility clinic is a process by which things come together to facilitate a (heterosexual, cisgender) patient's flow through the clinic. This flow is supported by gender work, i.e. the work the clinic does to repair and bolster damaged heterosexual cisgender identities, and the various processes by which patients, their body parts, and gametes are objectified in the service of a long-range self — the self that wants to be pregnant. These processes of objectification can enhance agency when there is no rupture to a patient's sense of personhood or subjectivity. But when queer and trans people enter the fertility clinic, the flow of the patient through the clinic is disrupted by the inability of clinic staff to disentangle the assumptive links made between body parts, gametes, bodies, gender, sex, sexual orientation, sexual practice, and family configuration. As a result, the gender work typically carried out in clinic settings works against LGBTQ clients' subjectivities, and processes of objectification that might otherwise enhance flow through the clinic serve to further the misrecognition and lack of intelligibility of LGBTQ clients. Ruptures to personhood also occur as a result of administrative misclassification, particular in relation to trans identities. The flow of queer and trans bodies through the clinic is interrupted by ruptures to personhood or subjectivity. If ethicality is evaluated by the presence or lack of violations to personhood, this paper points to the failure of clinics to recognize the personhood of those whose subjectivities lie outside of normative cisgender heterosexuality and to the need for clinics to examine their ethical practices in relation to LGBTQ clients. Data is from a Canadian study that interviewed 66 LGBTQ people about their experiences in fertility clinics.

GAHAN, LUKE | Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University

Separated Same-Sex Parented Families: Rethinking the Queer Family through the Experiences of Separation

Session 3: When Something Goes Wrong...

There is a paucity of research on the separation experiences of same-sex parented families. As increasing numbers of same-sex couples enter into parenthood, there is a need to understand more about how these parents and their children cope in cases of parental separation. While separation in opposite-sex families with two parents is perceived to be difficult, separation for same-sex parented families often involves three or more parents and may later involve numerous step-parents. How they share custody and construct their post-separation family is often defined by laws, heteronormative family concepts, biological parent status, the availability of support networks and queer counselling services, and by how they had defined their queer kinships before the separation. While some of the parents, both before and after separation, actively defended traditional definitions of family, parenthood, gender, and biological importance, other families challenged these hegemonic kinship practices by rethinking heteronormative constructions of intact and separated families.

Even before separation, some same-sex parented families shared their child/ren between two households. When one of those households splits the family has to decide how to continue the sharing of the child/ren and whether this will occur over 3 or more households. Separation saw some families grow, adding more parents as people re-partnered, while within other families parents' roles became significantly redefined as that of an uncle, grandparent, or sibling.

Societal definition and expectations of non-biological parents were largely framed by local laws. As laws changed to recognize queer kinships, non-biological parents experienced a newfound understanding of their status as an equal parent and this accompanied greater support during their separation.

This presentation presents findings from a qualitative study with people who had separated from a same-sex partner after having children within that relationship. 25 in-depth interviews were conducted with separated same-sex parents in four Australian states.

GRUNT-MEJER, KATARZYNA | Uniwersity of Zielona Góra

CHAŃSKA, WERONIKA | Department of Philosophy and Bioethics, Jagiellonian University Medical College

Disciplining Debauchery: Psychologization and Pathologization of Polyamory in the Experts Discourse

Session 9: Polyamory - Discourses and Practices

We are to present an analysis of the expert discourse on polyamory in Polish media (press and TV). Polyamory is one among the consensually non-monogamous types of relationship where partners agree on having more than one intimate (sexual and emotional) relationship at a time. It therefore represents double transgression against the psychological paradigm of a healthy intimate relationship which is traditionally perceived as formed by two individuals whose intimate needs can and should be fulfilled in the coupledom. Our presentation aims to reveal the ways in which polyamory is described and evaluated in Polish media. We will concentrate our analysis on the opinions and evaluations voiced by the experts in the field of psychology and sexology. The processes of psychologization and pathologization of polyamory will be demonstrated with the possible hypotheses about their roots. Complementary to presenting a content analysis of the expert discourse on polyamory we will provide remarks concerning rhetorical and linguistic strategies used by the specialists to convey and legitimize their expertise and authority. In particular, we will concentrate on the irresistible urge to provide not only a scientific explanation of the new social phenomenon but also the moral assessment of it.

HAMMERS, CORIE | Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department, Macalester College

Queering Kinship through the Bonds of Leather

Session 8: Challenging Understandings of Intimacy

Drawing on over five years of empirical research on lesbian/queer sadomasochists in the US, I discuss how lesbian/queer leather families (or leatherdyke families) "do" queer kinship. In this paper I foreground formations of (queer) intimacy as it operates in lesbian/queer leather families in order to do two things: show how these familial formations and leather configurations of kinship radically challenge heteronormative ideals of family/kinship and thus function as sites of resistance to the normative order; and through this queering of kinship, leatherdyke families challenge a certain strain of queer theory (most notably detected in anti-social queer theory) that positions domesticity/relationality as dangerously conservative. That is, this strain of queer, in privileging de-tachment, too easily collapses the domestic with "domestication," whereby queer families are automatically deemed "homonormative" – as collaborating with the logic of reproductive futurity (Edelman, 2004). I argue that this facile equation of the domestic with normativity is an instantiation of misogyny and masculinism, for this fear of queer domestication denigrates all things associated with the feminine and in this (re)centers men's sexual economies as the exemplar of "queerness." In this paper I highlight how leather families reconfigure kinship/family/community, with particular attention to "service" and care-work within BDSM relationships. In short, leatherdyke families challenge patriarchal modalities of intimacy. Following Freeman (2008), I seek to show how forms of queer attachment, as mechanisms of renewal and resistance, are generative and enduring and in this way rupture the very "lines" that suspend and undergird dominant power.

HINES, SALLY | Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds

Pregnant Pauses: Trans* Blokes, Bodies and Babies

Session 10: Practices of Trans-Parenting

Over the last decade, same-sex parenting practices have received increasing social and cultural visibility, while legal shifts in many European countries have foregrounded the rights of same-sex people to parent. Moreover, lesbian and gay parenting has emerged as a central site of enquiry within the field of sexuality studies, and in sociological studies of intimacy, kinship, and personal life. Transgender practices of parenting, however, have received much less attention across social, cultural, legal, and academic spheres. My earlier work (Hines, 2007) looked at the impact of gender transition on parenting relationships – thus exploring parenting through gender shifts. This paper, and my current research on which it draws, takes a different turn in exploring the experiences of trans* people who become parents after transition. In particular, it looks at the experiences of trans* men who conceive, give birth and parent. In considering the relationship between gender identity, gendered bodily aesthetics, and masculinity and femininity at corporal and subjective levels, the paper seeks to examine how trans* male narratives of conception, pregnancy, labour, and child rearing bring new understandings to the embodied and social gendering processes of parenting.

HORTON, BRIAN A. | Anthropology, Brown University

Rethinking Visibility: Non-Disclosure as "Coming Out" for Queer Mumbai Youth

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1

As the LGBT movement in India grows to even greater heights of national and international visibility there has been an increased pressure for LGBT persons to come out. For queer youth especially, coming out has become touted as a popular rite of passage. However, many young LGBT persons in urban spaces are financially dependent on their families, and their extended family networks are the linchpins of their social lives. Coming out for many young LGBT persons in India is coterminous with the possibility of being thrown out of their homes, rejected, or dismissed. In an effort to bridge the binaried opposition between coming out and potentially being cut off, many queer youth have developed more inventive ways to sustain kinship networks and embrace their sexualities. Drawing on examples from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Mumbai in 2013 and 2014, this presentation explores the strategies queer youth have invented for negotiating their obligations to their kinship networks with their sexual identities. One of these strategies many queer youth embrace is to disidentify the public "coming out" and to maintain an ambiguous visibility regarding their sexual orientations. This presentation will discuss and analyze examples of LGBT youth in India gesturing towards their sexual orientations without making definitive claims. Instead of seeing the family as the site of queer oppression, in what ways do the attachments of young queer Mumbaikars to their family lives offer us a politics of non-disclosure, something that evades the forced binary of visibility and invisibility? My theoretical framework intersects queer theory and Indian sociology, and post-colonial studies to suggest that the interactions between Indian LGBT youth and their families trouble the universalized western metaphors of the closet and coming out, and offer us instead a local queer politics of coming to terms with family limitations and strategies of negotiation.

JONES, REBECCA | Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University

Queer Kinship in Bisexual People's Imagined and Experienced Later Life

Session 5: Queering Heteronormative Life Cycle

Longevity of relationship is commonly identified as an important constituent of queer kinships, so thinking about queer kinship relatively late in the anticipated life course may be fruitful. Later life is strongly discursively associated with frailty and an increased need for support from kin. It is also less strongly corporeally associated with the same. This may change, or be anticipated to change, the nature of queer kin relationships, both in prospect and at the time of any such need for support. This paper presents findings from two UK-based qualitative studies about ageing and bisexuality. The first study asked bi-identified adults (n=33, aged 20-66) to imagine their own ageing and later life through participation in a workshop and picture-making. The second (ongoing) study focuses on older people (age 50+) with some relationship to the identity 'bisexual' and asks them to reflect on their life course so far, their current experiences of ageing and their imagined further ageing. Participants in both studies imagined and experienced kin relationships in later life, and these included both 'traditional' types of kinship and queerer types. Their experiences and imaginings raise questions about what constitutes queer kin and suggest that the distinction between queer and 'traditional' forms of kinship may be becoming more blurred, especially in societies such as the UK where marriage and forms of kinship centered around child-rearing are becoming much more available to queer people. However, the experiences and expectations of poly people within both data sets suggest that some forms of kinship remain much queerer.

JUVONEN, TUULA | University of Tampere

Army of Ex-Lovers? Lesbian Community Building in Tampere from the 1970s to the 1990s

Session 12: Chosen Families and Friendships

Lesbian communities are understood to be communities of shared same-sex sexual interest. Yet what is, after all, the role of sexual relations in establishing a lesbian community? I seek to answer that question in my paper, which is based on my ongoing Academy of Finland funded research project "Queer Narratives: Intimate and Social Lives of Women with Same-Sex Sexual Attractions in Tampere 1971–2011" (grant number 249652).

On the one hand Rebecca Jenkins (2007) has cited *Arena Three*, a UK lesbian magazine published in the 1960s, about the stages of lesbian relationships as follows: Teenager lesbians "shop" for short term relationships, the more mature ones have relationships in which they share homes with their respective partners for some years, before settling down for their long term relationships. Would that sequencing equally describe the relationships patterns in Tampere in the decades following the decriminalization of lesbian deeds? On the other hand, previous research done about lesbian friendship patterns in the U.S. suggests that lesbian relationships often grow out of friendship, and that lesbians, even when they separate from their partners, seek to remain friends (Degges-White 2012). How do the different relationship patterns mentioned above relate to the im/possibilities of creating and maintaining friendships and how does that affect lesbian community building?

Since lesbian deeds were illegal in Finland until 1971, many lesbians found themselves in heterosexual marriages. My third question addresses the role of heterosexually married women in creating lesbian communities. How the familial constraints of these women affected their relationship patterns with other women and how that has shaped and demarcated the lesbian communities in making? I look forward to answer these questions by analysing those oral history interviews I am currently conducting with women who have experienced same-sex sexual attractions while living in Tampere between 1971 and 1999.

LAGUNA-MAQUEDA, OSCAR | Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales Museo UABC

Queer Families in the Making: the Case of Gay Fathers in Mexico City

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2

Gay and lesbian historical movements in favor of recognizing non-heterosexual people's human rights have helped these groups to gain access to different rights that were not recognized previously. Nevertheless, as those movements advanced very slowly, at least in Latin America, people of the sexual and affectionate diversity developed different practices for accessing parenthood and childbearing.

In the year 2009, Mexico City civil code was modified to acknowledge same-sex marriage, however, long before that gay men had developed different ways for configuring parental arrangements with the purpose of raising children and becoming fathers. During my Ph. D research on gender and non-hegemonic masculinities, I found out some of the ways Mexican gay men utilized to found a family and take care of their children. In this paper, I will describe the means used by gay men to access parenthood and become fathers, as well as the strategies for protecting their parental arrangements from homophobia. These experiences help them to develop different stratagems for parenting, some of them are quite traditional but some others are very creative, I consider that the latter may be helpful for remodeling the idea of family.

The hypothesis I want to discuss is the following: gender culture and heteronormativity delineate different limits for gay men to have a family, for that reason these men need to bend the rules and use different strategies to have children and make a family. These strategies influence directly on how they configure their parental arrangement and on their parenting experiences, which may lead to innovative practices that could result in neo-parenthood.

LAHTI, ANNUKKA | Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä

Ambivalences and Tensions in Bisexual Women's and Their Partners' Relationship Talk

Session 3: When Something Goes Wrong…

The discourse of romantic love continues to function as a normative frame for our cultural understanding of relationships. In the Finnish public debate same-sex relationships are routinely defended by stressing their sameness to heterosexual relationships in the context of "marriage and family". At the same time it has been argued that contemporary (heterosexual) relationships are no longer shaped so much by the traditional or juridical ties like marriage but have become instead more of a matter of individual choice and negotiation. My interest within this research area lies in how bisexual women and their partners, whose relationships and/or desire transcend the homo/heterosexual binary, make use of these discourses. Furthermore, I will pay attention to the ambivalences and tensions that arise when they seek to fit their relationships into these discourses. Implementing discourse analysis I will analyse a longitudinal set of interview data. It consists of five couple interviews with bisexual women and their partners in 2005 and 10 follow-up individual interviews in 2014. In this presentation I will explore how the interviewees talk about their situation in life in 2014 and look back to their former relationships. By the time of the follow-up interviews most of the couples had separated and many of them had new partners. One opposite-sex couple had remained married. Given the relatively limited set of cultural meanings to construct relationships, it is probable that the romantic discourse of exclusive, enduring relationship will appear strong also in the follow-up interviews. In this presentation I will focus on the ongoing uses and effects of this discourse and how bisexuality is negotiated in it. I will also pay attention to ambivalences, incongruences, and "failures" when the interviewees position themselves into this discourse.

MACHADO, TANIA | Sociology, Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Minho

"Sometimes I Feel like I'm the Father": Portuguese Lesbian Families (Re)designing Gender Roles

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2

This paper results from an ongoing doctoral research focused on planned lesbian families in Portugal. According to the results from semi-structured interviews with lesbian mothers, gender roles are an inescapable issue in the daily life of lesbian families. The long-term incorporation of a dichotomous gender system by lesbian women ensures its reproduction even among family arrangements that seem to disrupt it. This means that lesbian families tend to reproduce the dominant gender system by performing both masculine and feminine normative roles on a daily basis. However, this does not mean that these roles are always performed by the same woman. Although the woman that experienced the pregnancy tends to perform childcare and homecare tasks more frequently, she may also assume a power and decision-making role usually associated with normative masculinity. Similarly, if the woman that lacks the biological experience of pregnancy tends to assume the family provider task and to feel as "the father", she often performs tasks usually associated to women, such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping. Thus, on the one hand, lesbian families seem to reproduce the dominant gender system mediated by the (non)biological experience of motherhood; but on the other hand, we find a process that also redesigns normative gender roles by merging dominant feminine and masculine features and reshaping their meanings.

MAYERCHYK, MARIA | Center for Cultural-Anthropological Studies

PLAKHOTNIK, OLGA | Center for Cultural-Anthropological Studies

"From Coming Out to Queering Act": Queer Reflections on Kinship Politics

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families

"Coming out" is the key concept of LGBT studies, based on the metaphor of the "closet" (Kosofski 1990, Seidman 2004). Despite being well known and popular, it was critically interpreted by queer theorists for its essentialism and creation of a new binary opposition (Butler 1991). Fuss (1991) also sees the inside/outside rhetoric as problematic: coming out constructs the closet it is supposed to destroy and the self it is supposed to reveal. These critiques are grounded on the Foucauldian idea: coming out creates subjectivities that are products of discursive power.
Can we reclaim coming out as practice of subversion?
Coming out as an act presumes a decisive talk or series of talks to others (parents, relatives, friends, colleagues). Coming out is expected to result in acceptance by others. In this meaning coming out has usually been discussed from psychological perspective and as a counseling issue.
Our study, based on co-autoethnography, is focused on "coming out" to parents' family. We discuss how the introduction of the same sex couple to the parents' families may be seen beyond the discourse of closet, identity, and acceptance. We consider our experience of coming out from poststructuralist queer theory perspective. From this point of view "coming out" is not about "disclosure of the identity", but rather about challenging the system of normativity for the parents' family. We propose to change the rhetoric of coming out to "act of queering". Contrary to "coming out" the queering act never ends; this is not an act of "leaving the closet"; there is no closet at all now; (2) queering act is not necessary linear, it does not mean shifting from lack of knowledge to awareness, and from rejection to acceptance. It may bring audience to unawareness and non-acceptance as a final result; (3) from this perspective the age and gender of the "queering actor" matters. In our view, this approach may preserve the tradition of talking to others about non-normative relationships as politically valuable act that could be situated beyond identities and binaries.

MCGUIRE, JENNIFER K. | Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

CATALPA, JORY M. | Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

Negotiating Kinship Ties for Transgender Young People

Session 4: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 2

In this study, we attempt to critically frame a study of family relationships among transgender youth with a feminist lens. Many transgender youth experience disapproval and rejection from their parents (Koken, Bimbi, Parsons, 2009; Grossman, D'Augelli, Howell, and Hubbard, 2005; Grossman, D'Augelli, & Salter, 2006). Family rejection behaviors have been linked to negative health outcomes in LGB youth (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, Sanchez, 2009), and being forced out of the home has been linked to additional risks for transgender youth (Koken, Bimbi, Parsons, 2009; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006). Prior literature suggests natural foci of resiliency among sexual minority youth including: negotiation of ambivalence in family boundaries (Oswald, 2002; Dziengel, 2012; Scourfield, et al., 2008) and seeking social support (Singh,et al., 2011; Kwon, 2013). We utilize developmental studies of sexual minority youth to frame constructions of queer kinship among young people in response to relationships with the family of origin. Interview data were collected for 90 transgender identified young people, aged 15-26, in 10 cities across 3 countries (U.S., Canada, Ireland). The U.S. sample was ethnically diverse with 48% reporting an ethnic minority identity. Fourteen youths (13 from the U.S. and 1 from Canada, 2 African-American, 1 Native American, 3 Latino/a, 8 white) reported experiences of being homeless (being kicked out or running away) prior to the age of 18. We will present data and discussion of six major themes identified within the interview transcripts. Specifically, we report processes of negotiating ambivalence including relational and instrumental breaks with family of origin, pathways of reconciliation, and redefining parent-child roles. With regard to seeking social supports, we describe processes of finding alternative parent figures, intimate partners and friends as family, and queer community as family.

MONK, DANIEL | Birkbeck University of London

'Too Gay to Foster?'

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

A gay couple is welcomed by a progressive local authority as potential foster parents. But then the authority discovers that the couple is in an open relationship. What happened? What should happen? This paper takes this real life story as a starting point for exploring a number of contemporary concerns: the limits to formal legal equality for gays and lesbians; shifting understandings of 'the best interests of the child' and adult sexuality; and the uses of 'childhood' in social policy.

MOZISOVA, ALZBETA | Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University

Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian Relationships in the Context of Heteronormativity

Session 3: When Something Goes Wrong...

The paper focuses on intersections of gender and sexuality within intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships. It presents preliminary results from a quantitative-qualitative study in the Czech Republic. The aim of this pioneering study is to understand and explore the experiences and attitudes of lesbian, bisexual, and queer women towards partnership violence. Results from over 200 questionnaires with LBQ women and several in-depth interviews with women who have experienced relationship violence in a same-sex relationship are examined with a particular focus on the effects of heteronormativity and the specific interactional-structural context in which the violence takes place, that shapes the forms and characteristics of the violence, the ability to name it, react to it, and the strategies of resistance. The paper critically reflects upon the discourse of domestic violence based on the feminist theory and discusses its potential in addressing and researching intimate partner violence outside of the heteronormative framework.

NEUFELD, MASHA | Department of Psychology, Dresden University of Technology

KATHARINA WIEDLACK | Gender Research Office, University Of Vienna

"Children 404 - We Exist!": Russia's New Queer (Activist) Communities, Belonging and Kinship

Session 4: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 2

In June 2013 the Russian parliament passed an amendment to the federal law "On Protecting Children from Information Harmful to Their Health and Development", and it soon became known as the "Anti-Gay Propaganda" law. Many solidarity campaigns have been launched since then, supporting the Russian queer community, but little attention has been paid to the biopolitical context within which the rhetoric of propaganda arose and the actual subjects targeted by the law: Russian LGBT teenagers.
We explore the complex interplay between the Russian state (bio-)policy and nation-building, discourses on adolescent (homo-)sexuality, Russian and international LGBT activism, and the "North/Western" hegemonic models of queer activism and development. On the example of the activist project "Children 404" we analyze the way (new) Russian queer activisms and identities emerge within the current political framework. "Children 404" is an anonymous internet platform launched by the journalist Elena Klimova in 2013 which soon turned into a Russian-wide online support network for teenagers rejected by their families. A semi-professional project team offers legal and psychological counseling, and helps to provide homeless teenagers with shelter in LGBT(-friendly) homes and foster families. Analyzing the development of this project, its general success in reaching and supporting the vulnerable und much neglected target group, as well as its broader oblivion by "North/Western" discourses on "Russian gay activism", we view "Children 404" as a part of a new Russian queer community building that has developed only recently within and partly because of the current "propaganda" discourse. Therefore, we analyze how new queer identities and activism forms arise against the background of increasing political pressure, asking how a new sense of queer belonging and kinship is formed, especially in the unprecedented cases of queer foster care and support groups/families.

Keywords: Russia, LGBT teenagers, propaganda of homosexuality, queer community-building, queer belonging, "North/Western" hegemony.

PETERSEN, MICHAEL NEBELING | Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark

Between Precarity and Privilege. Claiming Motherhood as Gay Fathers through Transnational Surrogacy

Session 11: Narratives of Reproduction

Gay men have traditionally formed kinship in "chosen families" or "rainbow families", consisting for instance of two mothers or two fathers and child/ren, where the biological parents have no sexual relation to each other and thus inherently different from the classic nuclear family and the ideologies of heteronormative procreation. The impossibility of "heteronormative procreation" has worked in tandem with the cultural configuration of gay men as always already dying where degeneration has been linked to the non-reproductive nature of (male) homosexuality.

However, gay men go abroad increasingly often to become parents through surrogacy. Surrogacy as a reproductive technology makes procreation in a more classical (heteronormative) form possible for gay men who now can become the sole two parents in a classical nuclear family. These new possibilities change gay men's (queer) precarious position outside 'the family' and reproduction, and these men are increasingly becoming part of heteronormative procreation and included in heteronormative institutions. Still gay fathers continue to experience discrimination and marginalization. The gay men's families are precarious in the sense that they are discursively and affectively vulnerable, and constantly in the risk of losing intelligibility.

Based on interviews with Danish gay men who have became parents or who are in the process of becoming parents through transnational surrogacy this paper will analyze how gay men re-negotiate this double position between precarity and privilege by negotiating and diminishing the position of the Mother. The paper will argue that the gay fathers make their precarious (queer) families and fatherhood/parenthood affectively and discursively recognizable, and thus livable by clinging to other forms of power in form of economic, racial, and gendered privilege.

PARK, SHELLEY | University Of Central Florida

Polyamory Is to Polygamy as Queer Is to Barbaric?

Session 9: Polyamory - Discourses and Practices

Many queer scholars and activists in North America and Europe readily accept polyamory as a queer form of kinship. In contrast, many of these same scholars and activists vilify polygamy. Three interlocking distinctions between polyamorous and polygamous kinship undergird the embrace of polyamory and rejection of polygamy. First, polyamory focuses on parallel love rather than plural marriage. Secondly, polyamory is a secular practice whereas polygamy is often rooted in religious beliefs and traditions. Thirdly, polyamory is a gender-egalitarian form of kinship whereas polygamy is a heteropatriarchal practice placing women and children at risk. In this paper, I interrogate the respective positioning of these monogamy-resistant practices by western scholars and activists. My concerns are two-fold: 1) that treating polygamy as barbaric upholds racist, colonialist rhetorics and practices; and 2) that treating polyamory as queer risks ignoring the relational imbalances of power and coercion that may exist within polyamorous relationships. In discussing these points, I examine the ways in which western critiques of polygamy frequently advance (Orientalist, racialized, and metronormative) stereotypes of the barbaric Muslim, the African savage and the backwards Mormon fundamentalist. In current neo-colonial rhetoric, the images of religious zealotry that characterize polygamy simultaneously connote terrorist atrocities against the west and human rights abuses against women and girls. Thus, the polygamist becomes the racialized, hyper-heteropatriarchal other who must be contained. In contrast to the hegemonic picture of polygamy as a coercive, male-dominated kinship practice, polyamory promises sexual and affectional freedom within freely chosen kinship arrangements. This whitewashing of polyamory, I suggest, relies on neo-liberal notions of agency and liberty that should be interrogated. When we begin to unpack these neo-liberal and neo-colonial assumptions, the tenability of the distinction between (queer) polyamory and (barbaric) polygamy itself becomes questionable.

PEARSON, DANIELLE | Social Sciences, The Open University

'I Just Want to Get a Dog and See How That Works…' Family Planning among Young Same-Sex Couples

Session 5: Queering Heteronormative Life Cycle

This paper discusses findings from my PhD research exploring the experiences of young (20-35) same-sex couples in long-term relationships. The study utilised an in-depth psycho-social approach and qualitative mixed methods consisting of visual scrapbook/diaries, emotion maps, and individual and couple photo collage interviews with 14 young same-sex couples. My analysis is focused on how these couples experienced and understood their relationships, paying particular attention to the interesting and varying ways couples talked about being, becoming, and desiring a family. This includes introducing and examining their narratives on the presence and/or absence of children and animals in their ideas around 'family'. I explore the ways participants envisioned and planned for children, and equated pets and/or animals with children and family. I present the unique and diverse ways in which the methods and analysis employed enabled access to the couples' ideas around family planning and kinship which were central to these narratives.

PEEL, ELIZABETH | Psychology, University of Worcester

CRAVEN, CHRISTA | Anthropology, College of Wooster

Stories of Grief and Hope: Queer Experiences of Reproductive Loss

Session 11: Narratives of Reproduction

When parents and researchers talk of queer perspectives on pregnancy, birth, and parenting, an issue that we often avoid is queer experiences of loss during pregnancy, birth, or adoption. We take a feminist psychological and anthropological stance on this issue, drawing on data from an online survey of 60 non-heterosexual women from the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia, and 50 interviews with LGBTQ people who had experienced loss in the USA and Canada. We argue that for LGBTQ people challenges in achieving conception and adoption amplify stories of loss, and that both grief and hope suffuse stories of reproductive loss. We identify several factors such as the severely under-researched experiences of non-gestational or "social" parents, financial concerns about loss following assisted reproduction or adoption expenses, and fears of further marginalization as non-normative parents. Queer researchers, we suggest, are (understandably) enjoined to present positive stories about pathways to parenthood. However, this emphasis does little to challenge the deafening heteronormativity that characterizes mainstream pregnancy loss literatures and support, nor does it contribute to challenging generic cultural silences about reproductive loss(es) which impact many queer and non-queer experiences of kinship and family formation.

PICHARDO-GALÁN, JOSE I. | Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Rethinking Same-Sex Sexuality and Kinship in Spain

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

When I think about queer kinship there are two questions that come to my mind: what is queer? And, of course, what is kinship? Social anthropology have been dealing with the second question for decades and queer theory is so fluid and liquid that it is not always clear what we put under this umbrella (we might be thinking that we are talking about the same thing and they are different in our minds). What is the difference between queer and LGBT parenting? Is a non-monogamous married gay father of a three-parents' kid an LGBT or a queer parent? I have been doing fieldwork with self-identified LGBT or rainbow families in Spain for a decade. Naturally, I started at the beginning of the 2000s with the only conception and ideas that I could find in the international bibliography of the time, namely, the always present concept of "chosen families" when referring to gay and lesbian kinship (Weston, 1991). But the people I met (homosexual, gay, lesbian, bi, queer... people) did not reproduce the dichotomy between biological and chosen families as it seemed to happen in the US, UK, or even the Eastern Europe. In fact, even facing non-acceptance, neither the LGB/Q person nor his/her biological families broke their ties. In a society where familism plays a key role as it happens in Spain, they just could not afford it. In my presentation, I would like to discuss this and other outcomes from my research that show us the need to do situated fieldwork in order to try to understand how the global and the local interact and to put all these reflections in contrast with the hegemonic academic discourses. I would also review the situation of LGBT families in Spain and the challenges they face in a country with high levels of legal and social recognition.

PITONAK, MICHAL | Charles University in Prague

Me and My Partner, a Same-Sex Couple: Are We Family Yet?

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families

Family scholars from various fields of study enthusiastically dispute the potential extension of the traditional definition of "the family" towards a more diverse and inclusive definition that would include also for instance same-sex couples living without children. Similar discussion lamenting over the "decline of family" has recently gained momentum also in Czech popular media. This study is an intimate auto-ethnographic insight into the author's long-lasting monandrous relationship. The present author, with his partner, ponder over their constant negotiation of their "family status" and desires (or rights?) connected to "family" prospects and potential reproduction. Relatives of both partners were given a chance to articulate their attitudes and understandings of what "family" means, as they were interviewed regarding their perception of legitimacy in partners' own "family status." Everyday spaces and places such as home, households, or workplaces together with flows, in which and through which partners interact with their families, colleagues, and friends, constitute a certain "web of (re)productive power relations." In this study the author strives to understand what constitutes, facilitates, and impedes his own "family" and relationship. What motivated him and his partner to recently enter into "registered partnership" which in turn, according to current Czech legislation, has cost them their eligibility for being considered as prospective adoptive parents? Is there a legitimate future for having a queer family?

PUCCINELLI, BRUNO | Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Unicamp

PERILO, MARCELO DE PAULA PEREIRA | Universidade Estadual de Campinas - Unicamp

Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger: Transits, Visibility and Parenthood between "LGBT Families" in São Paulo (Brazil)

Session 12: Chosen Families And Friendships

Through an ethnographic approach, this presentation discusses relations between notions of family and parenthood, political agency and transits in the city of Sao Paulo (Brazil) when considering groupings called "LGBT families". "Families" here are groups formed by young people with homo and bisexual behaviors. These groups emerge as opportunities for protection and as a possibility to expand the transit of its members through the metropolitan area. They have at least one founder, the "father", but may also have "mothers", and usually these founders elaborate the rules of coexistence and parameters for adopting "sons" or "daughters". In Sao Paulo, there are diverse "families" - some with a few dozens, others with hundreds of members – differing even in their manners of organization and management. The "families" considered here arose in the 2000s, indicating effects of some processes intensified in Brazil in the last decades such as increasing visibility of homosexuality, elaboration of public policies aimed at LGBT population, expansion of a targeted market, and further diversification of spaces of sociability. While part of the discourse on the "myth of origin" of these "families" refers to groups of transvestite prostitutes in downtown Sao Paulo in the 1980s, the vast majority of "fathers" and "sons/ daughters" are young people whose main justification to their links refer to protection against violence in the streets and from the "families of origin". It is also up to the "fathers" of "families of choice" to safeguard their "sons/daughters" in cases of discrimination in their places of work and study, and in their relations with their "families of origin". Such ties have extrapolated the internal dynamics of these groups receiving recognition and visibility in public spaces of political action, precisely within parties and government bodies, such as departments related to human rights.

RIGGS, DAMIEN W. | Flinders University

The Differential Use of Claims to Genetic Relatedness amongst Gay Men who Enter into Transnational Surrogacy Arrangements

Session 11: Narratives of Reproduction

Over the past decade we have witnessed a number of key developments in terms of the opportunities available to gay men wishing to become parents. Primary amongst these has been the rapid increase in availability of transnational commercial surrogacy services. Yet whilst many gay men welcome such services, their uptake requires ongoing examination in terms of the normative assumptions that may underpin them. Specifically in this paper it is argued that claims to genetic relatedness are differentially deployed by gay men who enter into surrogacy arrangements, dependent on whether or not the discussion focuses on the gay men themselves, on egg donors, or on women who act as surrogates. Through an analysis of interview and media data, this paper suggests that in some instances, genetic relatedness acts as a truth claim by gay men used to warrant a stake in reproductive citizenship. By contrast, in some cases where gay men discuss egg donors or women who act as surrogates, the role of genetic or biological relatedness is minimised, instead treating donor eggs or women's bodies as means to an end, rather than as materials that potentially establish relatedness. A third evocation of genetic relatedness is evident when gay couples discuss their decision making over which man's sperm is used in the conception of a child. Yet despite the apparent differences between these accounts, it is nonetheless the case that genetic relatedness is treated as salient. Given the ways in which genetic arguments are used against both gay men (in terms of the pathologisation of homosexuality) and against certain groups of heterosexual people to warrant the removal of their children, it is important to examine the limits of claims to genetics in the context of gay men's desires to have children.

SCHADLER, CORNELIA | Department of Sociology, Ludwigs Maximilians University Munich

Polyamorous Networks and Parenting

Session 9: Polyamory - Discourses and Practices

While families which differ from the standard nuclear family but resemble the two adults and their children scheme have gotten more attention within the last decades, families that include more than two adults with children have not received enough attention. In my talk I will explore the everyday practices of parents in polyamorous relationships in Germany and Austria. These chosen families live within structures where two people relationships are the norm and poly-relationships of various kinds are mostly not intelligible. Consequently, institutions from health care to custody laws are not accustomed to cases of collective parenthood. When it comes to the formation of a boundary between family members and non family members those forms of chosen families often cannot draw on many legal regulations that define those for them (like marriage, adoption, custody). Drawing on the theories of new materialisms (Braidotti 2002, 2013; Barad 2007; Haraway 1992, 2008) my talk shall explore the enactment of belonging to a chosen family and who and what must be included in such a performance. The data includes face to face interviews, public diaries, and e-mail interviews with members of poly-relationships, observations within poly-relationships and websites about and from poly-relationship organizations.

SELMI, GIULIA | University of Trento, Centro Studi Interdisciplinari di Genere

FRANCHI, MARINA | London School of Economics, Gender Institute

Narratives on the Border: Negotiating Queer Kinship in Contemporary Italy

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1

In the context of Southern Europe Italy represents a peculiar situation in relation to the legal recognition of non-heterosexual relational claims (Santos 2013). In 2014 the Italian legislative system lacks recognition of relationships outside the heterosexual marriage; a situation that profoundly impacts on the possibility of accessing sexual and intimate citizenship rights for LGBT and queer individuals. Mainstream LGBT groups have campaigned since the early 2000s for the recognition of de facto unions while queer and radical groups began to question the centrality of marriage in the claims for recognitions. The centrality of the family and family matters are profoundly conservative cultural constructs that came to represent an internationally renowned trait of Italian culture. Public and political discourses are occupied by a notion of the natural family fostered by Catholic ideology and defended by political parties across the spectrum. At the same time, Italy is also characterised by profound changes of public attitudes with regard to same-sex couples and homoparentality. The aim of this paper is to investigate how LGBT and queer individuals frame the impact of the law (or lack thereof) on their organisation of intimacy, kinship, and cathexis, as well as the ways in which they navigate the constraints of the law in their daily life experiences. In particular, first it explores how different political affiliations (i.e. belonging to mainstream LGBT movement vs. radical queer groups), age, and parenthood intersect and impact on individual narratives of kinship formation, and affect intimate practices. Second, it questions how these narratives negotiate the public debate on sexual citizenship. From a methodological point of view, it draws on 30 in-depth interviews carried out with 30 gay, lesbian, and queer people aged 20 to 60 in 5 urban centers in Italy as a part of a European comparative project.

ŚMIETANA, MARCIN | Gender and Women's Studies, University of California

Gay Father Families in Spain: Inclusion within the Nuclear Family and the Nation State

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2

The paper deals with how gay father families in Spain define and enact their family relationships, both towards their communities such as the children's schools and towards the other participants of family construction such as the adopted children's families of origin or surrogates and donors. It is based on the author's original qualitative study carried out with 20 families with young children, created by adoption or surrogacy, including observation and interviews with the fathers and the children. The findings showed that the participants framed themselves as nuclear families of two fathers with exclusive rights over their children, even though some of them maintained transnational contacts with their surrogates. Such a positioning enabled their challenging of the existent heteronormative assumption and their inclusion in their communities where they came out openly and faced no discrimination or bullying. These findings, contrary to the early Anglo-Saxon studies by K. Weston and J. Weeks, show that with the extension of relational and parental legal rights the "families of choice" have been incorporated in the dominant representation of family structure. However, they have also maintained certain innovative elements regarding gender and biology as they had no belief in the superior role of genetic links between parents and children and they interpreted gendered parental roles and identities in novel ways.

SMITH, ELIZABETH | La Trobe University

WARD, ROZ | La Trobe University

Transgender and Gender Diverse Kinship: the Role of Parents, Friends, and Families of Choice as Protective Factors for Gender Diverse and Transgender Young People

Session 4: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 2

Gender diverse and transgender young people have much higher rates of depression and suicidality than their cisgender peers. However, supportive friends, family, and families of choice, which for some may include teachers and older community members, can help to mitigate negative effects such as anxiety and depression. This paper will report on an Australian study into the mental health and wellbeing of gender diverse and transgender young people (aged 14-25 years) in Australia. To date there has been more research into the risk factors associated with young people with diverse gender identities than with the positive and protective factors engaged by these young people. This study sought to fill this gap. Using mixed methods, the data comprises of 189 survey participants and 16 online qualitative interviews with young people from around Australia. The findings point to the highly valuable role that kinship (including parents and families of choice) play in young people's mental health and wellbeing. This supports the importance of educating parents, school teachers, and the general public on the varied ways that gender can be felt and expressed in order to optimize the support that these young people receive.

TEMPLE-MALT, EM | Sociology, University of Manchester

Displaying to Family and Friends

Session 7: (Non) Displaying Families

The paper explores the theme of the relational significance of the availability of civil partnership by focusing on the significance of who the couple selected as their audience to display their intention to become civil partners (e.g. family and/or friends). The findings are taken from 30 interviews conducted for a doctoral project (at the University of Manchester 2010-2014). The study explores the significance that entering a civil partnership has for a generation of people who formed and sustained relationships without access to legal recognition. Exploring why friends or family were prioritised in their thoughts about who should be the recipient of the couple's news complements and extends findings from the existing studies. The analysis presented in this paper complements the observations from recent studies that have explored the experiences of those who become civil partners (Lewin 1998, Smart 2007a, Ellis 2007, Jowett and Peel 2007, Peel 2009, Goodwin and Butler 2009, Heaphy et al. 2013) by illustrating why kin are important audiences for the couple's display. Additionally, the analysis presented here extends these insights by demonstrating the continuing importance of friends in members of sexual minorities' lives (Weeks et al. 2001, Weston 1997), which with a few exceptions (Smart 2007a, Heaphy et al. 2013) has been overlooked in these studies. There was a distinctive generational divide in terms of who narrators prioritised as the recipient of their display. Whether friends or family were selected as the audience for the couple's display depended on the meaning the couple were trying to convey about their becoming civil partners and on prior relational histories with kin.

TOPPER-EREZ, YUVAL | Hoshen - LGBT Education Center

Transgender Pregnancy and Queer Parenting from the Personal Perspective of Yuval Topper-Erez

Session 10: Practices of Trans-Parenting

The journey taken by transgender people presents complex personal relations with the concept of gender. On one hand, some transgender persons' experience with gender clearly allows them to see how gender is an artificial, socially constructed idea. On the other hand, despite that recognition, transgender people often experience the recognition of their chosen gender as essential to their survival and well-being. This experience is even more crystallized when a transgender person chooses to perform an action which is dramatically recognized as a role of the other gender – such as a transgender man choosing to become pregnant and carry his own children. Yuval Topper-Erez has come to local and global public attention after becoming the first transgender man in Israel to become pregnant and carry his 2 children. He was also the first pregnant man covered by the media to identify as gay and carry the children of his own cisgender partner. In this lecture, Yuval will discuss his personal experience both as a transgender youth, utilizing the storytelling method used by Hoshen (the Israel LGBTQ Education Center) to educate and inform about various LGBTQ identities. Yuval will discuss his pregnancy at length, touching on both his own personal dysphoria and joy at the pregnancy and the experience of meeting society as a pregnant man and a transgender parent – especially the experience with healthcare providers and bureaucratic institutes. Finally, Yuval will present the unique perspective his identity and experience has given him on parenting, creating a queer parenting style which attempts to avoid preconceptions about the child: starting from their gender identity and sexual orientation, but also tackling many other notions parents have about children and the way to raise them.

TRUJILLO, GRACIA | Sociology, University of Castilla-La Mancha

Queering the Family Institution? Bio-social Discourses, Resistances, and Chosen Families

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2

This paper analyzes motherhood(s) from a feminist and queer perspective trying to answer the question of to what extent lesbian co-mothers reproduce or rather question the heteronormative family model (being aware of that it is not a black or white matter). We - Elena Burgaleta, co-author of this work, and I - begin with a socio-historical revision of the construction of motherhood(s) in Western cultures, including the most relevant contributions made by different feminist perspectives about issues such as sexuality, reproduction, and kinship. The empirical analysis focuses on lesbian identified couples which have used assisted reproduction techniques in the Spanish context; in order to know their opinions, concerns, and identity dilemmas, and gather their voices. A total of twenty in depth interviews were carried out. Conclusions of the field work spin around issues such as re-naturalization processes, the debate about the maternal instinct, identity conflicts between being non-heterosexual and mother, and changes in the relationship with their families of origin, among others. We conclude with some proposals and suggestions to continue the analysis, reflections, and much needed dialogues about these issues.

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By the Authority Vested: Constructing Marriage in LGBT and Indigenous South African Communities

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1

Queer theoretic critiques of marriage often worry that pursuing marriage necessarily means entangling oneself in the state. Yet Judith Butler (2002: 26) reminds us that "the state" does not necessarily "monopolize ... the resources of recognition." Indeed, the state needs not monopolize the resources of marital recognition, specifically. While state and marriage are deeply entangled in the Euro-American societies where queer theory has most flourished, reifying this entanglement leaves under-theorized important possibilities — and limitations — for intimate recognition. This paper addresses this problem through comparative qualitative research in the world's only jurisdiction to have recently incorporated multiple sets of people into its state marriage laws: South Africa. Having extended state recognition to marriages concluded under indigenous or "customary" systems of African law in 1998 and to same-sex couples in 2006, South Africa offers a unique opportunity to explore how the salience of state marital recognition varies across social settings. Through several years of research among LGBT-identified residents of Johannesburg and Cape Town and in a customarily governed community in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, I have found that LGBT participants often see state recognition as deeply meaningful while customary community residents see it as largely irrelevant. Arguing that these differences reflect different articulations between the state and other marriage-recognizing institutions across differing social locations, I find this comparison to hold ambivalent lessons for a more liberatory project of intimate recognition.

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„We Just Want to Be Normal": 'Double Bind' of Reproductive Pressure on Lesbian Mothers in Ukraine

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

The aim of this paper is to examine the construction and social framing of queer families in anti-gay campaigns and their effects on lesbian parenting in Ukraine. It is based on our fieldwork from the collective research projects "Gender, Religion, and Nationalism" and "LGBT Families in Ukraine" conducted in 2011-2013. In the past few years, anxieties about the decline of the heterosexual nuclear family have shaped a moral panic around homosexuality and transformed into new anti-gay campaigns in Ukraine. Lesbians and gay men are depicted as villains who morally corrupt innocent youth, thus posing a threat not only to the 'traditional Ukrainian family' but to the nation at large. Media hysteria around homosexuality has recently found its expression in legislative initiatives criminalizing 'homosexual propaganda' in the name of the vulnerable child. Conservative Ukrainian media depict homosexuality as pathological and violent, and queer families as an unstable and abusive environment for children to grow up in. A more liberal view, however, also considers non-heterosexual parents as highly problematic due to their alleged transfusion of stigma of their homosexuality to their children thus dooming them to life of homophobic bullying and violence. At the same time, in a society which naturalizes motherhood as inherent to proper womanhood, lesbians feel enormous pressure to become mothers. Together, this constitutes a 'double bind' of reproductive pressure for lesbians where, on the one hand, childlessness is constructed as improper womanhood, and on the other hand queer parenting is seen as either irresponsible/selfish or 'unhealthy'/dangerous for children. Thus, it is not surprising that the notion of 'normalcy' was a recurring motif in the interviews of lesbian mothers in our research. Their accounts of family life were often constructed in opposition to popular depictions of homosexuality, where well-being and 'normalcy' of their children was manifested in no small measure through acquiring proper femininity/masculinity and heterosexuality.

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Living Cohabitation in Contemporary Korea: The Experiences of Lesbians, Gays and Heterosexuals

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1

In the contemporary western culture, cohabitation is not a major issue - it has become a normal practice in everyday life. This is not at all the case in Korea where the institution of marriage is still considered the pivotal relation that authorises "adult citizenship" (Josephson 2005: 272). Non-marital cohabitation is therefore something of a taboo. At the same time, homosexuality, though neither legal nor illegal, is also taboo and hence same-sex couples' cohabitation has hardly been discussed in Korean academe because firstly, it is expected to be hidden and, secondly, given that homosexuality is not generally accepted in Korean culture, the issue of same-sex couples' cohabitation is constructed as outside of public interest.
Hence, overall, little attention has been paid to the question of how Korean cohabiting couples live their cohabitation and what the similarities/differences in experience might be among same-sex and different-sex couples. My research centres on cohabiting couples' reported experiences of living cohabitation, that is the dailiness of their lives together and its meaning as they articulated it in terms of particular practices. I draw on interviews carried out between April and September 2012 with 12 heterosexuals, 9 gays and 14 lesbians, all of whom were cohabiting. In this paper I shall focus on the ways in which cohabitation was viewed as emulating and/or rejecting traditional Korean family norms, looking closely at the meaning of having pets, the relation between the cohabiters and their partner's family, and the ways of division of housework and financial contribution to the household. I shall argue that same-sex and different-sex cohabiting couples did cohabitation differently in a number of important ways.

ZHABENKO, ALISA | Allegra Laboratory Association

Lesbian Lives in Russia under the Rapidly Changing Legal Landscape

Session 1: Different Dimensions of Parenting 1

I will discuss the changes that have taken place in everyday lives of lesbian women – particularly lesbian mothers – after the passing of the federal law which penalized the dissemination of all materials promoting homosexuality and pedophilia among minors, and other laws that concern the homosexual community in Russia. My discussion will be based on the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews collected in 2010-2012 for my research project focusing on lesbian families in Russia. I will also draw on the quantitative data from online questionnaires collected in several research projects that I and other researchers/activists conducted with the support of the Russian LGBT Network and LGBT Organization Coming-Out in Saint Petersburg at the end of 2013. I will trace the kinds of changes that have taken place in the lives of Russian lesbian women during the last two years after the above-mentioned "anti-gay legislation" was introduced and the control of queer people in the Russian society heightened. In particular, I will explore how these recent, dramatic changes have influenced the reproductive choices and family arrangements of lesbian women in Saint Petersburg. The focus of my paper is on the changes in the processes of thinking about making the coming-out, and in the decision processes about emigration from Russia because of the intensified control of queer people and lesbian families in the society.

ZHU, JINGSHU | University of Amsterdam

"Fake" Marriages of Chinese Queer Comrades: Negotiating Queer Kinship within Family Normativity

Session 2: (Non)Recognition: Strategies of Resistance 1

China is witnessing an increasingly visible and active queer, or "comrade" (*tongzhi*), population. Nonetheless, marital pressure is always like a ticking bomb for Chinese *tongzhi*. Unlike the out-and-proud paradigm of LGBTQ rights movements in the Global West, some Chinese *tongzhi* find more space when they tactically conform to heteronormativity in some aspects –– especially when they have a normal-looking marriage as a façade.

I would like to discuss two seemingly conformist strategies against the marital pressure. One is mixed-orientation marriage, which is deemed highly problematic with the emergence of a new identity-based group, *tongqi*, or gay men's straight wives. Another strategy is cooperative marriage between a lesbian and a gay man which serves to meet the social expectation for a conventional family. Such marriage has been despised as self-deceiving and counteractive to the struggling for visibility and for the legal recognition of same-sex partnership.

My 7-month fieldwork in China nevertheless puts in doubt the mainstream critiques of mixed-orientation marriage and cooperative marriage. The experiences of many of my informants disproved the common-sense idea that these marriages are "fake" and loveless, doomed to failure and agony. Instead, they negotiate their non-conventional marriages in various ways. They may not have romantic love but some of them clearly have a feeling of kinship.

Therefore, in this presentation, by sharing some dramatic real-life cases of "fake marriages" in China, I will discuss the following question: Must queer kinship look confrontational to heteronormative institutions? When our society highly values authenticity to what extent can deception or fakeness be a justifiably subversive queer art? And, could these cases open up political opportunities for queer activism, parallel to the out-and-proud gay rights discourses in China and in the world?

Querying Lesbian Fatherhood

Session 6: Different Dimensions of Parenting 2

Queer embodied kinship has given rise to some unique parental identity categories. One of these is the category of "lesbian dad." This hybrid category, in which lesbian gender inflects kinship, instances the queer effects produced when queer subjects enter – as queers – the realm of reproduction. At the same time, of course, parenthood transforms the very meaning of "queer" by turning it from an identity that revolves around sexual and gender non-conformity into a kinship defining principle. This paper explores the subject position "lesbian dad" based on my own experience as a self-identified lesbian father. I tentatively define lesbian fatherhood as located at the intersection of lesbian masculinity and non-biological parenthood in the context of a lesbian-parent family. I discuss this position as an interesting vantage point from which to observe the social construction of parenthood, as well as a singularly queer one in terms of the spaces of incoherence, illegibility, and non-recognition that form part of the experience of lesbian fatherhood. Exploring the types of resistance to this category, I argue that they indicate, among other things, the fact that the prevailing public discourse on same-sex families attempts to obscure queer difference and denies queerness as a cultural identity rather than a merely variant sexual orientation. The socio-cultural context of my experience is the Israeli lesbian and gay baby boom of the last two decades. While the category "lesbian dad" is, like many others, a Western import, I will discuss the ways in which my experience of inhabiting it is shaped by Israeli pro-natalism and the ideology of motherhood, as well as by the thoroughly gendered character of the Hebrew language.

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