



Joint Conference of the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG), the Department of Sociology of Work and Gender Relations, and the DFG Project *Vielfam*¹, in cooperation with Universität Hamburg

**Diverse Families:
Parenthood and Family/s beyond Heteronormativity and Binary Gender**

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

4./5.3.2021

What is a family and who can be part of it? Parenthood, family, and kinship are negotiated in many arenas throughout history: in politics and the media, comics and films, in the arts and sciences, technology and medicine, in law as well as the private sphere and in everyday life. In addition to the 'heterosexual nuclear family', which was legally and normatively institutionalized in the 'golden age of marriage', parenthood and family are and have been realized in diverse constellations. Today this plurality is partially recognized by law and society. At the same time, however, parenthood and the family beyond the heterosexual norm are fiercely fought against in many countries. The guiding principles, representations, and lived realities of family and intimate relationships – both historically and globally – are neither presocial nor definitively given, but are subject to constant change.

A variety of aspects are foundational to the current negotiations of family, kinship, and parenthood: In addition to social and cultural concepts of intimacy and families of choice, new reproductive technologies and the resulting notion of a 'genetic truth' play a central role. However, a restrictive focus on biogenetic-genetic kinship might obstruct the recognition of social and legal parenthood. Thus, in view of the increasing importance of new reproductive technologies, debates on contradictory concepts, on norms and practices, on opportunities and risks, on recognition and experience are more urgent than ever. Furthermore, ethical, economic, and sociopolitical implications of these possibilities need to be discussed in the context of transnational inequalities and national population policies. For example, in order to realize the 'promise of reproductive choice', LGBT*Qs (must) travel abroad, due to legal restrictions in their country of residence. Consequently, the global marketization of reproductive work produces new inequalities. Despite these growing opportunities to realize a variety of family forms, trans* and queer people, as well as racialized and economically deprived people, face different challenges than white, wealthy, heterosexual cis couples, if they want to claim legal and social recognition or make use of reproductive medicine, for example.

The conference will focus on kinship relations, family formation, and parenthood beyond heterosexual norms and binary gender. On the one hand, new reproductive technologies such as sperm donation, in-vitro fertilization, or surrogacy make it possible to found a family with a mixed group of participating actors. On the other hand, they privilege biogenetic parenthood over other types of parenthood. However, new concepts such as multiple parenthood and co-parenting show that participation in the reproductive process does not necessarily coincide with participation in parenting. Hence, social

¹„Ambivalente Anerkennungsordnung. Doing reproduction und doing family jenseits der 'Normalfamilie'“ (*Ambivalent Recognition Order. Doing Reproduction and Doing Family beyond the 'Nuclear Family'*) (DFG MO 3194/2-1, PE 2612/2-1, WI 2142/7-1). Principle investigators: Mona Motakef, Almut Peukert, and Christine Wimbauer, Duration: 1.1.18-31.3.21.



narratives and discourses, media and artistic representations, as well as legal notions of norms and normality reflect what parenthood and family are (not) or should (not) be these days. They do not simply react to technological-medical innovations, but rather create new multiplicities of 'family', generationality, and cohabitation. How old and new constellations of parenthood and family forms are lived, represented, and legally regulated opens up a multitude of theoretical, analytical, and empirical perspectives.

The conference *Diverse Families* aims to explore this topic in all its complexity, leaves room for the discussion of ambivalences, and invites contributions on the following topics:

- The historical change and persistence of ideals about motherhood and fatherhood: Parenthood beyond cis-normativity;
- Reproductive and familial actions, representations, and imaginations of queer utopias and visions in theater and literature, film and other media;
- (Unequal) legal and sociopolitical recognition orders for parenthood, family, and kinship;
- Biopolitical regulation and facilitation (or limitation) of reproductive medicine in a trans-/national context, including implications for a scientific-theoretical and/or practical everyday understanding of family and kinship;
- Family and reproductive (everyday) practices on within and beyond the heterosexual norm and gender binary;
- Population policies: gender - sexuality - racism - nation;
- Post-/colonial and migration studies perspectives;
- Legal imaginations of the "good family": best interest of the child and parental rights, knowledge of parentage, and contesting paternity;
- Family and/or childlessness: intergenerational relationships, single mothers and fathers by choice, the conscious decision for a life without children, etc.;
- Family(s) of the future? Utopias and dystopias between blood ties and families of choice, intimacy and solidarity, the nucleus of the state and political privacy.

We welcome contributions (maximum 1 page abstract and a CV) in English or German from a variety of disciplines such as cultural, social, historical, legal, regional, literary, film, and theater studies. Over the course of the conference, we will be discussing the above-mentioned topics from comparative, post-colonial, inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives, in particular gender and queer theory approaches. This call invites submissions of abstracts for 20-minute lectures or suggestions for other presentation formats (e.g. debates, short presentations, performances, commentaries). We ask you to check whether you dispose of sufficient funding for travel and accommodation, as there is only limited financial aid available.

Please submit your abstracts by **June 15th 2020** to ztg-vielfam@hu-berlin.de

Organization team:

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