Non-normative Family Practices

ABSTRACTS

Krzysztof Arcimowicz, University of Białystok

Non-Normative Family Models in the Discourse of Polish TV Sagas

In Poland, TV sagas are the most popular programmes that focus the attention of millions of viewers every day. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of seven TV series (M jak miłość, Na dobre i na złe, Barwy szczęścia, Klan, Plebania, Samo życie, Na Wspólnej) leads to the conclusion that the notion of family in TV sagas is one of crucial values and constitutes the central element of the discourse. It is worth adding that particular family models take various positions in the discourse. The most prominent is nuclear family based on marriage. Non-normative family structures, such as mono-parental childless married couples as well as couples cohabiting are not actually stigmatised but usually hold less important place in the structure of the series. The discourse concerning family is limited inasmuch as in the series there are no "classical" family patchworks, polyamorous relationships, or LAT and DINKS relationships. In the series under scrutiny here there appear no transsexual families or lesbian relationships. I managed to identify just one homosexual family made up of gays. It is also significant to add that all the Polish series perpetuate stereotypes of non-normative sexuality and gender.

Keywords: non-normative family, TV saga, discourse, gender, sexuality, ideology
Katarzyna Banach, Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw

Gender Development in Children of Same-Sex Families: The Impact of Sexual Identity on the Perception of Sex Roles

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of research on gender identity development of children raised either in same-sex families or by a non-heterosexual parent. Not only is it significant to explore whether the families under consideration socialise their children in any different way than heterosexual parents do. It is also worth investigating whether or not children from non-heteronormative families exhibit any traits stereotypically ascribed to their sex/gender to a greater extent than their peers from heterosexual families. As it turns out, stronger gender nonconformity of children from non-heterosexual families may be one of very few differences between children from these two family models.

Keywords: socialisation, gender, gender socialisation, gender identity, same-sex families.
Tomasz Basiuk, The American Studies Center of University of Warsaw

**Difference as Similarity: The Giving of Testimony in Katherine Dunn’s *Geek Love***

Katherinne Dunn’s 1989 novel *Geek Love* tells the story of a “nuclear” family (composed of parents and their children,) who used to operate a travelling circus. It is narrated by the founder’s daughter, who reminisces about her happy childhood as she looks after her senile mother and a daughter who remains unaware of the family’s past. A reading of the novel proposed herein puts forth that the category difference paradoxically becomes the basis for a sense of commonality: although the differences between people may be irreducible, people can give testimony to those differences.

**Keywords:** difference, similarity, queer, family, childhood, witnessing
Mariola Bieńko, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw

**Dimensions of Intimacy in Non-Heteronormative Relationships**

The aim of the article is to identify and describe the construction of intimacy as a social phenomenon in terms of advanced modernity. The paper attempts to present a variety of conceptual perspectives as well as a range of ideas about intimacies in both public and academic debates. Much of the literature on intimacy involves the taken-for-granted ideological assumption that intimacy can properly work only and exclusively in heterosexual relationships. The main part of the article focuses on the description of qualitative research into the uniqueness of the experience of intimacy in non-heteronormative relationships.

**Keywords:** intimacy, relationship, non-heteronormative relationships, heteronormativity
Marta Bierca, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw

**Fatherhood in the Web: A New Trend’s Analysis and Sociological Implications**

The text describes the question of gender roles individualisation and their redefinition in relation to the notion of family. The analysis focuses on a new vision of fatherhood, i.e. a model that allows male care and sensitivity, which translates into active and committed child care (“caring masculinity”). The article is the analysis of selected Internet blogs and portals edited by men – source that will serve as material for reflection on both the condition of the father in contemporary Poland and dilemmas related to this.

**Keywords:** fatherhood, gender roles, family, the Internet
Romance or Family? Urfi Marriage and Western Female Tourists’ Perception of It, Egypt

Unofficial marriage (Arabic nikah ‘urfi, zawag ‘urfi) is an innovation used primarily in Egypt. In view of the high cost of marriage, ‘urfi’s role is instrumental in religiously legitimising a relationship. At the same time it is a step to enter the true, i.e. official, marriage. The ‘urfi institution has been applied over the last few years to relationships between Western female tourists and local men within so-called sex tourism or romance. The article analyses ways of understanding and perception of ‘urfi marriage by Western female tourists. The source material consists of the women’s online posts on forums devoted to intimate touristic contacts between European women and Arabs. Several types of the narrative can be specified, such as the partner’s sexual potential, urfi as the tool of discrediting Western women engaged in the model, legitimacy for having sex, or impure intentions of habib (‘lover’). Family affairs are of minimal importance in the discourse, which emphasises instrumental nature of the relationship.

Keywords: romance tourism, Egypt, ‘urfi, marriage
Urszula Kluczyńska, Poznan University of Medical Sciences

Non-Normative Heterosexual Family with a Child: Role Oppression

There is the stereotypical but socially accepted expectation as to the family notion: how it should be structured, how the tasks should be distributed and what functions each member of a family should perform. Social expectations are one-track and unambiguous: one person is to fulfil the role of a woman/wife/mother, and the other that of a man/husband/father. The divisions are clearly defined and every indication of diversity is treated as pathology. I assume that the category of role might be oppressive not only in non-normative families, but in all types, including heterosexual households.

Heterosexual family with a child (perceived as norm by the society) might be described as non-normative if norm, i.e. social expectations of the way of fulfilling the role by the father and the mother – is not conformed to the way people see it.

The main aim of this article is to denote role oppression (especially in the role of a woman/wife/mother and a man/husband/father) not only in alternative family types (especially homosexual ones,) but in heterosexual families with children as well. The article will try to examine what makes such families non-normative too. This is going to be an analysis of the case study of a heterosexual family with children, whose members do not assume the clearly defined roles of a man/father and a woman/mother, established as the norm. It is significant that the family described themselves as non-normative, because they notice the clash between the existing norm and their way of functioning.

Keywords: non-normative family, heterosexual family, role oppression
Kamil Łuczaj, Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

Family under Construction in Changing TV Series

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the post-soap series that tend to break limits of the genre as a new type of high-budget productions change media images of tabooed topics such as non-normative conceptions of social roles. Using the notion of family, I will show that the revolution in the area of TV series is trying to keep up not only with the latest advances in technology, but also with the issues explored by social sciences.

Keywords: TV series, post-soap, definition of family
Lesbians, Gays, and Their Children: The Diversity of Family Forms

The article concerns issues related to same-sex parenting. Families made up of lesbians and gays raising children are a challenge for traditional sociological definitions of family. First, the author will present suggestions as to new definitions that would perhaps be more adequate to the present times. Then, she will quote some basic data that emerge from the research on same-sex parents and their children. Additionally, some statements of Polish lesbians and gays about their attitude towards same-sex parenting will be introduced.

Keywords: family, gays, lesbians, same-sex parenting
Urszula Markowska-Manista, The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw

Episodic Non-Normativity and Traditional Normativity in Ba’Aka Family Relations in the Face of Changes

The following text is based on field research in Central African Republic and an analysis of textual sources. It concerns family relations – altered within the last two decades by processes of civilisational change – in the environment of settlements and villages, where members of traditional Ba’Aka, Bantu (Mbimou, Gbaya) and Mbororo communities live as neighbours in the Sangha Mbaéré region of the Central African Republic (CAR). Examples of family practices as well as the construction of families and family ties show the creation of new spaces for relationships, which were heretofore absent from the hermetic structures of individual communities in the region. Relationships and practices previously unacceptable and sporadically-appearing emerge too (e.g. single motherhood.)

Keywords: traditional family practices, single motherhood, clan, traditional family, development
Katarzyna Michalczak, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw

**Children, Female Lovers, Male Lovers, Parents, Friends... and Children Again: Family as Defined by Persons Self-Identifying as Openly Non-Monogamous**

This article attempts to answer the question what are the family definitions of persons who maintain openly non-monogamous relationships. In the theoretical part of this article I examine the difficulties and controversies around defining family. I also present the overview of research on non-monogamous persons' families. The second part of this article refers to my own study of non-monogamous people in Poland, particularly their family notions. First I briefly describe the methodology, research techniques and sample group, then I present my study results. I concentrate on how my respondents understand family and how these definitions relate to the notions of “family of blood” and “family of choice” (Weston, za: Mizielińska 2006). I also focus on the question of the role of children in the family as defined by non-monogamous persons.

**Keywords:** definition of family, non-monogamy, polyamory
Joanna Mizielińska, Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw

Agata Stasińska, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw

Once the Enemy, Now One of Forms: Families of Choice in Contemporary Polish Press Discourse

In our article we present the results of the analysis of press discourse concerning families of choice in Poland. We make a comparison between two debates over two projects of same-sex partnership law (written, respectively, by senator Maria Szyszkowska in 2003-2004 and the Initiative Group for Same-Sex Partnership in 2011,) as well as between two debates regarding social campaigns: “Let Them See Us” (2003) and “Love Does Not Exclude” (2010-2011.)

The aim of our analysis was to identify strategies that dominate in public discourse as well as to follow through the dynamics of their changes in an attempt to answer the question what/who generates these changes. In our article we point out how paradoxical/surprising the similarities can be between those who are against LGBT relationships and those who defend them. We reflect upon both the (un)effectiveness of some argumentation strategies and the dangers of using them.

Keywords: families of choice, discourse, non-heterosexual families, intimate relationships, homoparents
Magdalena Muszel, European University Institute

**Traditional Role in a Non-Traditional Family: A Case Study Based on Transnational Migration of Polish Wives and Mothers**

Family gender roles and family relationships influence the lives of Polish transnational families to a great extent. Traditionally adopted gender roles connected with being a mother and wife largely shape the experience and attitudes of Polish female migrants in Ireland: starting with the decision about the migration, through family relations during the separation period, and ending up at the point of reunion. Attempts to continue to perform the traditional role of a mother and wife in the face of the transnational migration is an effort to preserve Polish women's sense of identity as well as provisional power within their families.

**Keywords:** transnational family, gender, migration, mother, wife
Bartłomiej Nowak, Jagiellonian University

**Homo-Family in Polish Films and Their Press Reviews**

This text is an analysis of a few Polish films made between 2005 and 2009, in which gay and lesbian characters – as members of non-normative families – create and maintain (or try to do so) stable relationships. The author of this article examines the reception of these cultural texts in the press and Internet reviews as well as how they treat such topics as LGBT adoption, or how homosexual characters are represented in them. In addition, the author points to the conservative contents of the analysed movies and the ways they fight against stereotypes.

**Keywords:** homosexuality, Polish cinema, non-heteronormative family