

Darja Zaviršek

### BETWEEN BLOOD AND CARE

SOCIAL PARENTHOOD AS AN EXPANSION OF THE CONCEPT OF PARENTHOOD IN CURRENT SOCIETIES

Social parenthood is a social relation, social category, and a concept which due to changes in people's everyday life has gained growing scientific attention. The concept of social parenthood stands in opposition to the biological parenthood and challenges the assumption that parenthood refers to kinship. Parenthood has never been exclusively based on biological relations. Social parenthood refers to children and adults that are not related by blood. In Slovenia, parenthood is taken to equal consanguine relations. Conversely, adults and children that are not biologically related are usually not considered to be in the parents-children relationship. However, there is a growing number of families with a mixture of biological and social parenthood, often named »blended families«, »adoptive families«, »same-sex families«, and families that use reproductive technology for reproduction. Social parenthood is a permanent, intimate relation between an adult and a child that is not based on blood ties but on social-emotional ones and includes the adult's economic responsibility for the child. For the child, parents are »important others« regardless of whether they are defined as such in legislation. Using an historical and ethnographic perspective, the author shows how consanguine relations in Europe gained such an important status in comparison to social ties between children and adults, and points out a continuous demonising of non-blood parental ties that is still reflected in Slovenian family law.

**KEYWORDS:** social kinship, consanguine relations, non-blood relations, human rights, family law.

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Lilijana Burcar

### SOCIALISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH LITERARY FAIRY TALES

A CASE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PARENTHOOD

Literary fairy-tales have functioned as an important tool in the ideological reproduction of gendered schemes and the naturalisation of patriarchal nuclear family. A survey of Charles Perrault's and the Grimm brothers' collections shows that the role of the evil step-parent is always assigned to the second wife and surrogate mother, while the biological mother comes to figure as a good mother only with her obligatory passage into death. Classic literary fairy-tales thus establish a narrative frame that requires biological mothers to be silenced, and surrogate mothers punished and destroyed, for the father to emerge as the nucleus of the heteronormative family unit. The father is established as a benevolent authority figure and absolved from the responsibility for his incestuous acts or the cruelty he originally displayed in some folk tales. Most of the modern adaptations of classic literary fairy-tales continue to perpetuate this nuclear family pattern with the father figure functioning as the embodiment of indisputable authority and benevolence. With fairy-tales being one of the most ubiquitous genres for the young, this in turn has specific socialisation effects on young readers' perception and understanding of family units and kinship patterns.

**KEYWORDS:** Charles Perrault, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, Francesca Lia Block, Emma Donoghue, mothers, fathers.

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Maja Klun

### **ADOPTIONS IN SLOVENIA AS A FORM OF SOCIAL PARENTHOOD**

The paper draws attention to the problem of adoptions at the national level. In Slovenia, people facing infertility decide to adopt children when they lose hope of having their own. However, excessively long periods of foster care and long waiting lists (three to five years) result in a big discrepancy between the number of adopted children and the number of applications registered by the centres of social work. Although adoptions are the oldest form of social parenthood and are legally recognised, research shows that the responses of the environment to adoptive families are diverse. The adoptive family is viewed as different from the biological one, because adoptive parents do not share the same genetic material with their children. Apart from the usual problems occurring also in the biologically constructed family, adoptive families also face the problems brought about by the specificity of adoption which allows for no predictability of what it will bring, and does not guarantee success. As adoptive families are influenced by the circumstances and the attitudes of people involved in the adoption process, it is important for the adoptive parents to keep educating themselves about the potential problems of adoption.

**KEYWORDS:** adoptive parent(s), adopted child, biological parents, social parents, discrimination.

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Irena Rezar

### **INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS AS A FORM OF SOCIAL PARENTHOOD**

#### **EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WHO ADOPTED A CHILD ABROAD**

Adoption is one of the best-known forms of social parenthood. In contrast with neighbouring Austria where international adoptions are almost a daily

practice, the number of internationally adopted children is very small in Slovenia. However, the growing number of couples who cannot have children despite the progress of medicine, the five-year average waiting period for national adoption, and the emergence of new family forms are good arguments for international adoptions as a possibility for creating a family. The increase in international adoptions requires professional attention, social legitimacy and better conditions of the adoption process. This is also the view of those who already have the experience of international adoption. Their experience with the procedure as well as later when they already obtained the child shows that changes are necessary, as for most the adoption procedure depended on their own resourcefulness and they missed professional support. The research, aiming at revealing everyday experiences of those who wish to adopt or have adopted a child abroad, focused on the adoptive-social parents' perspective. It showed a relatively inactive role of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the absence of knowledge and good practice of social work centres, which are only beginning to work in this field.

**KEYWORDS:** adopted child, social parents, adoptive-social parent, the Hague Convention, social work centres.

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Ana M. Sobočan

### **SAME-SEX FAMILIES IN SLOVENIA**

Internationally, numerous researches on same-sex families exist. Their value lies in breaking the invisibility of non-heteronormative family forms and in disclosing the issues, hindrances and needs connected with deficient and inadequate rights and regulations implemented by the systems of family law. These issues are important for family policies and for social work, as the number of same-sex

families (also in Slovenia) is growing, and the needs and situations with which the children and parents in same-sex families are confronted due to their non-normativeness will have to be answered. The article identifies some of these issues and presents the first research on same-sex families in Slovenia, which includes interviews with 10 parents in same-sex families. It describes family life through issues that were demonstrated as important in interviews with the parents: equality, honesty, love, (non-) anonymity, identity, invisibility, parental competences, community, inclusion, normality, coming out.

**KEYWORDS:** discrimination, social parenthood, family, same-sex parenthood.

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Adital Ben-Ari, Tali Livni

**THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MOTHERHOOD IN SAME-SEX FAMILIES: BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL MOTHERS' PERSPECTIVES**

This study was designed to examine the experiences of Israeli mothers living in same-sex relationships. Eight women's couples who were parenting together and who had one, two or three children were interviewed. The data suggest that the birth of the first child to a same-sex couple marks a turning point in the lives of each partner as well as in the life of the couple, creating for the first time a significant distinction between the partners. It was found that lesbian mothers tend to organize their experiences into three circles of »being«: personal, couple-related, and communal (e. g. familial and social). Three themes contribute to the theoretical understanding of same-sex motherhood. First, although lesbian couples are known to value the sense of equality in their relationships, the birth of a child by one of the partners is an event that creates two different statuses of motherhood: a biological mother and a social mother. Second, the legal aspects of same-sex motherhood become a part of everyday life for the

same-sex family and shape the partners' relationship. Third, being both a woman, living with a woman, and a mother highlights the fundamental dialectic between marginality and mainstream conformity in life experiences of these mothers in Israeli society.

**KEYWORDS:** lesbian couples, biological and social mothers, phenomenological analysis.

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Jana S. Rošker

**THE GOLDEN ORCHID RELATIONSHIPS: FEMALE MARRIAGES AND SAME-SEX FAMILIES IN THE CHINESE PROVINCE OF GUANGDONG DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

The article presents the communities of female silk spinners in the Guangdong province from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and their remarkable practice of same-sex marriage, by which two women formally started a lifelong partnership, established a household, and at times also created their own family with (mostly adopted) daughters. From today's perspective, the latter was a form of social parenthood, based neither on biological ties nor on heterosexual marriage. Living in same-sex partnerships and families made the female silk spinners in the Guangdong province important and radical rebels against the two pillars of Confucian social doctrine, namely the institution of patriarchal matrimony and the tradition of patrilineal succession. Investigations in this topic also significantly contribute to the uncovering of pre-modern forms of same-sex unions.

**KEYWORDS:** same-sex marriages, anthropology of gender, economic conditions of gender roles.

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Špela Urh

#### **NEW TECHNOLOGIES – OLD IDEOLOGIES ARTIFICIAL REPRODUCTION**

Despite the increasing pluralisation of family forms, the politics of reproduction in Slovenia prioritize traditional, i.e. biological forms of parenthood. The law on artificial reproduction underlines the biological aspect in families by granting biomedical assistance only to heterosexual married or cohabiting couples with fertility problems. Same-sex couples and single women who want to have children are usually categorized as untraditional and a deviation from the »normal«. Slovenian legislation does not consent to artificial insemination in cases of same-sex couples and single women, which therefore have to find other ways to experience parenthood (e.g. insemination in foreign clinics, contractual relationships with surrogate mothers abroad, etc.). The glorification of biological relations is perpetuated even as regards donated reproductive material: a woman undergoing the process of artificial reproduction can only receive either female or male reproductive material but not both at the same time, to ensure that the child is biologically related to at least one of the parents. It clearly demonstrates that the biological parenthood is considered to be the only »true« parenthood.

**KEYWORDS:** same-sex couples, single women, gestational motherhood.

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Barbara Goričan

#### **INDIVIDUALISATION, PLURALISATION OF FAMILY LIFE AND FAMILY POLICIES**

The process of individualisation has influenced marital and family life throughout Western Europe. Traditional family forms are altering and a growing pluralisation of family life can be observed. The narrow definitions of the family that have been valid until now are becoming unsuitable and discriminatory. Reorganised or patchwork-families are not new forms of family – they have been present in practically all cultures throughout history. Today, they are growing in number and according to some estimates represent 30 percent of families in Slovenia. Individuals in reorganised families take on the role of social parents and with that also the emotional, economic and educational parental functions. Nevertheless, despite their growing number social parents are confronted with biological determinism. The prevailing public opinion still holds biological parenthood to be superior to social parenthood. Social parents face the prejudice that the biological parenthood is the only »proper« parenthood. Family policies have to find new ways of conceptualising the family to surpass biological determinism and offer new paradigms for social parenthood.

**KEYWORDS:** patchwork families, social parents.

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Dorijan Keržan

### **NATURAL PARENTHOOD?**

There are two ways of interpreting parenthood: by using the concepts based on the notion of nature, applying them to human species, and taking them as the basis for forming the necessary definitions; or by completely rejecting the concepts based on the notion of nature and creating new ones, based on social relationships. In an attempt to evaluate them, the author first defines natural parenthood through socio-biology and evolutionary psychology and then checks the adequacy of the concepts offered by these two disciplines through the interpretation of some facts brought to light with by the new reproductive technologies. On this basis, the relationship between natural and social parenthood is defined.

**KEYWORDS:** kinships, family, biology, genetics.

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