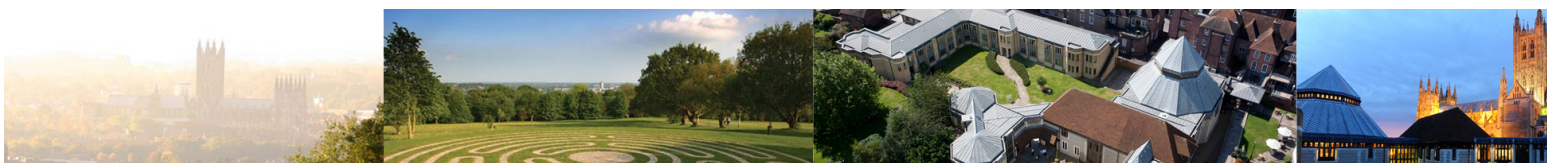


# Panel Abstracts

**Parenting and Personhood:  
Cross-cultural perspectives on expertise,  
family life and risk management**

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
University of Kent  
and  
Canterbury Cathedral Lodge**



## Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, Cathedral Lodge, Canterbury

### Panel 1 Common Room. Managing nations, parents and risks (Martin, McCormack, Edwards, Seghal-Cuthbert, Proctor. Chair: Bristow)

**Claude Martin, CNRS and University of Rennes, France**

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#### **Parenting culture and normativity in the French context**

As in many other European and non-European countries, an explicit parenting support policy made its way onto the French political agenda during the early 1990s. In France, some decision-makers now consider this parenting support policy (*politique de soutien à la parentalité*) as a new, but still financially marginal, 'pillar of French family policy'. It responds to a growing political demand for a solution capable of guaranteeing the success of the parental educational mission, or at the very least of helping avoid its failure. One may well wonder, however, whether this policy represents a real innovation or merely the revival of a longstanding tradition of 'policing families'. In our presentation, we analyse the French case and argue that the slow policy process that led to current French parenting support policy is at once the consequence of a political desire to structure and manage a myriad of grassroots initiatives, and the outcome of an ideological battle. This battle brings into conflict fundamental alternatives pitting universalism against targeting, parental empowering against parental control, offering support to parents via services versus re-educating them through advice and behavioral training, and local and community actions versus national regulatory actions. This battle of ideas around the parenting issue is taking place behind the scenes, mixing old and new ideas, reactivating norms and stereotypes that are deeply rooted in our social history concerning the private and public spheres respectively as well as the respective roles of mothers, fathers and public institutions. While mapping the field of positions and presenting the arguments of a selection of actors, we stress the reactivation of old and deep-rooted oppositions and controversies between left- and right- wing parties as well as between republican and Catholic milieux, concerning family, private life issues and the challenge of secularization.

**Helen Proctor, University of Sydney, Australia**

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#### **Australian education policy and the 'disadvantaged' parent, 1970s to 2010s**

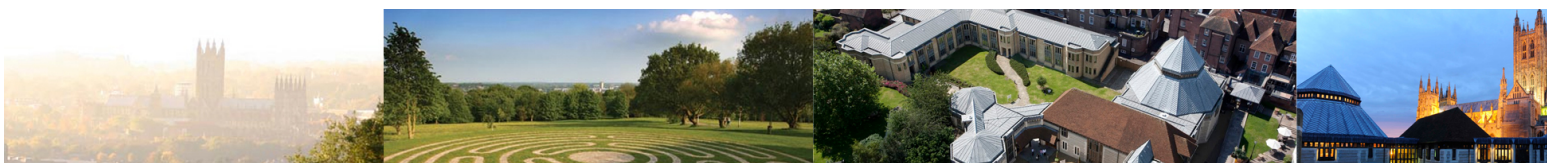
This paper examines the operation of institutionalised schooling in the making of parenting discourses, through an analysis of the representation of educational 'disadvantage' in Australian federal education policy during the 1970s and 2010s. Using history as its explanatory tool, and with a focus on the changing theorisation of parents' educational work and responsibility, the paper compares the representation of parents and parenting in two landmark policy documents, 'Schools in Australia', 1973 (known as the Karmel Report) and the 2011 'Gonski' Report. Both reports were commissioned by Labor governments in response to questions about equity in Australian schooling, and both identified significant problems in contemporary schooling provision—but in rather different domestic and international political-historical contexts. The Karmel Report is generally recognised as a progressive document, part of a contemporary movement for more socially just schooling, and for the mobilisation of schooling in broader reform agendas for both socio-economic disadvantage and cultural-linguistic diversity. The 'Gonski' Report, on the other hand framed 'disadvantage' and 'inequality' in neoliberal terms—the social justice problem it recognised was also a human capital problem affecting national competitive advantage. The paper is part of a larger Australian Research Council project that brings together a history of school-parenting advice with a policy history of parent-school relations from the late twentieth century to the present. It poses the question: what happens, discursively, to parents when educational policy-makers turn their attention to addressing the 'disadvantage' of certain children and young people? What kinds of category and boundary changes get proposed? What are seen as the respective responsibilities of school, family and state and who is accorded authority or expertise? Finally, the paper seeks to shed light on the apparent persistence of the use of deficit discourses to describe those parents whose children do not best manage the demands of modern schooling.

**Tara McCormack, University of Leicester, UK**

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#### **'Every person matters': risk, national security and family surveillance**

This paper draws links between two different disciplinary fields of research, that of government anti-terrorism policies and child protection policies. Both of these areas of government policies are considered in themselves as separate areas of concern, based upon specific problems. The paper will draw on sociological and international relations accounts of risk society and will argue that a single dynamic is at work in both policies fields. In particular, in both areas of policy there has been an expansion of concern from specific individuals deemed to be at risk or a risk to a more generalised concern with all individuals. The paper will suggest that the problem does not lie in the particular policy areas but in a growing sense of incapacity of political elites to maintain a relationship with citizens.



**Alka Sehgal-Cuthbert, University of Cambridge, UK**

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**Education's Contribution to Socialisation: Cultivating a Liberal Sense of Self**

This paper considers in what ways the reorganizing of education's socializing function along lines articulated in the influential 'Every Child Matters' policy published in 2003 represents a significant break, and arguably, a reversal, of education's traditional socializing role. In particular, the move away from teaching of a broad, academic based curriculum in favour of teaching new pseudo-subjects or decontextualized skills, marks a significant change from an indirect to a direct form of socialization. Initiatives such as SEAL, 'critical thinking' or 'dialogic teaching' are presented as extensions of democratic principles. However in their attempt to make education socialise *directly*, they end up undermining principle tenets and ideals necessary for liberal democratic culture. Specifically, the new socialization rides roughshod over the necessary distinction between private home/ family life, and the more public community of the school; and it side lines or rejects important ideals of freedom and autonomy necessary for a liberal democratic society to flourish. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century educating the young in a liberal subject based education was to socialize them. As they encounter a greater plurality of ideas, values and beliefs than in their home life, they also acquire indirectly, the inner resources with which pluralism can be better tolerated. Levinson argues that this pluralism requires that fundamental ideals of freedom and autonomy be sufficiently affirmed and practiced. Today the educating and socializing functions of education are regarded as separate and often as antithetical. When the normative model of the individual is so negative (at risk or posing a risk), the idea of educating children to take their place in a public culture as future autonomous adults is often rejected with all manner of faux progressive apologetics; and an atmosphere of conformism is emerging which is antithetical to autonomy and freedom.

**Val Gillies and Rosalind Edwards, University of Southampton, UK**

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**'What about the children?': (Re)engineering families and parenting over time**

In this paper we will explore the history of morally-infused ideas and policies about intervention in family in order to (re)engineer their upbringing for the sake of the nation's future. Underpinning each of these ideas has been the influential idea that undesirable attitudes and actions, and the propensity for deprivation, are transmitted through the generations via the mind of the child, with parenting and familial experiences profoundly shaping the personality, behaviour and destiny of the children who will become the future of the nation. We will consider the relationship between interventions to address these fears and understandings of the role of parents and families as they link to shifting emphases of the capitalist system across time. Specifically, we will address: Victorian worries about the development of children's moral character and philanthropic interventions focused on re-engineering the circumstances of their upbringing through removing poor children from their debilitating family circumstances. Here the context is classical liberalism with poverty interpreted as a lack of application and the reified notion of a private sphere of family. This was followed by anxieties about children's physical quality in the early 1900s and the start of concerns about their psychological attachment that came to prominence in the post-war period. Interventions in family to engineer children onto normal developmental pathways gained prominence within the context of the 'mixed' capitalist economy of the welfare state and a dismantling of the totem of the private sphere of family. More recent preoccupations have focused on infant neurological architecture, and on deficient parenting as the root cause of deprivation and inequality. Targeted interventions to micro-engineer every thought and action of poor mothers in bringing up their children occur alongside re-engineering through removal in the context of a neoliberal emphasis on social investment and a punitive austerity.

**Panel 2 Clagett Auditorium. State regulation of family life (Macvarish, Sundsbo, Sihvonen, Littmarck, Waiton. Chair: Danielsen)**

**Jan Macvarish, University of Kent, UK**

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**Early intervention and the stripping of parental authority**

This paper will consider the way in which the status of the parent relative to the state has been renegotiated over the past 20 years through the political discourse of 'early intervention', 'brain development' and 'infant mental health'. The rapid development from 1997 onwards of an explicit policy framework to improve the quality of British parenting has placed parents centre-stage while simultaneously demoting them. The degree to which the early years of infant care have been opened up to state monitoring and state interventions is not only unprecedented in the UK but has been met with very little obvious resistance from politicians, commentators, activists or parents. We will explore why the early intervention agenda has been so successful in making its case, what it means in practice, how and why a therapeutic, universalising approach has been pursued and what such developments mean for the continuation of meaningful family life.



**Astrid Ouahyb Sundsbo, University of Bergen, Norway**

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**Initiatives for parental training/empowerment in the Norwegian Welfare State**

This paper provides an overview of current initiatives for parental training/empowerment in the borough of Årstad in Bergen, Norway's second largest city. Årstad, which can be considered as a micro-cosmos of the (increasingly) multicultural Norwegian society, is characterized by a diverse composition of residents with different life styles and different sets of economic, social and cultural resources. Within this area, different initiatives seeking to "strengthen parental competencies" can be found. These are either carried out directly from welfare state institutions such as the local Family Care Health Centers and the Child Welfare Institutions or civic society organizations with financial support from the government. The paper will provide an overview of the different parental guidance programmes and present and discuss the defined goals and target groups. It will also explore the historical background of the different programmes and the processes of their incorporation into the welfare state's field of action. Furthermore, the paper will, based on an analysis of the course/programme materials, provide some insight to how the programmes define a "good parent" respectively "good parenting skills". And finally, there will also be a discussion of particularities and similarities of this case compared to other cases from other countries/contexts.

**Ella Sihvonen, University of Helsinki, Finland**

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**Competence of parenting in Finland: peer support and expertise on parenting issues**

This presentation illustrates parenting support which has been the focus of the Finnish family policy for many years now. In Finland, parenting-related anxiety and public attention on 'proper parenting' increased in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Along with increased political and public attention towards family and parenting, a plethora of developing projects in social policy emerged around family issues. In this presentation parenting support is studied in the context of family policy programmes implemented as 'family support projects' in Finland between 2000 and 2010 (n = 310). The family projects aim to develop new techniques for family support, particularly techniques focused on parenting support, which lies in the centre of the study presented here.

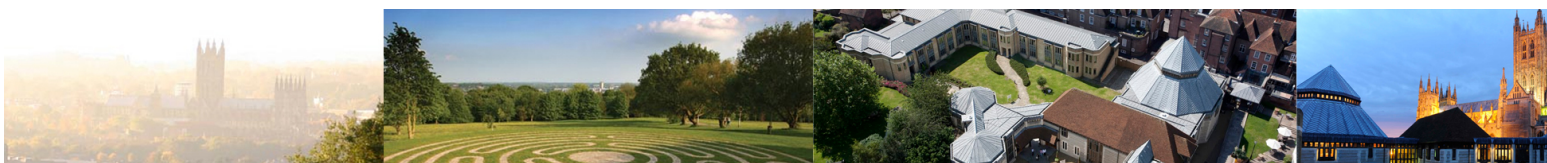
Based on the documentary materials from family projects, document analyses were conducted relying on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Thereafter, the main themes of parenting support were highlighted and also the role of the parenting experts analysed. This presentation focuses on one particular way to support parenting, that is to say, approach based on peer group and community support. As the data analyses show, problems of parenting are related to family relations such as the parent-child relationship. Thus, the parent-child relationship is saddled with heavy burden as the source and solution to a wide range of social ills. Furthermore problems of parenting are related to a lack of family social support networks. Both of these relations – inside the family and between families – are considered complicated and require specific expertise, knowledge and competence. However, in the Finnish context, parents' own expertise is extensively highlighted. Furthermore, the knowledge, experience and support of peers and near community are emphasized. Therefore, competence of parenting relies considerably on horizontal peer relations. These results are interpreted in the context of recent developments of Finnish post welfare state.

**Sofia Littmarck, Linköping University, Sweden**

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**Addressing the parent. Parenting support and the transformation the welfare state**

The aim of this paper is to discuss the notion of 'the good parent' and the change in relations between the state, experts, the parent and the child in policies on parenting support in Sweden since the 1990s. Parenting support builds on a long tradition of welfare investments in the family that also involved demands on parents to match their parenting practices with political ambitions for society. Distrust in parents ability to guarantee children's welfare spurred state involvement in shaping family and gender relations, and child care, through a wide range of support systems. In the 1960s, a state organized and universally offered parent education was introduced as a measure to handle social problems with antisocial behavior and mental ill-health among the youth. Parents', seemingly, lacked vital knowledge in child development and child psychology. In 1980 a parent education directed to all first time parents was implemented. In the 1990s it was extended, renamed to 'parenting support' and offered to parents with children in all ages. This development spans the reorganization of the welfare system in Sweden. At the same time the understanding of children's political position and rights underwent a fundamental transformation, with an emphasis on children's autonomy and agency. The development was characterized by a large scale import of Anglo-Saxon parenting support programs implemented in a welfare system different from their original environments. My paper will address how these complex processes of change have influenced the understanding of 'the good parent' and the relations between the expert and family as well as between children and parents. My paper will be based on public inquiries into parenting support and subsequent parliamentary debates in the 1990s and onwards. How is children's well-being related to the understanding of parenting practices, gender relations and equality and how has the way of addressing parent's needs and shortcomings transformed?



**Stuart Waiton and Lesley Scott, Abertay University, Scotland**

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**Children's Rights and the Named Person' in Scotland: The end of family privacy and autonomy?**

This paper has been developed through the experience of working with the various organisations and individuals who have been part of the 'No To Named Person' campaign. The aim of the paper is to understand the emergence of the Named Person in Scotland and to explain the significant distance between legislators and policy makers and those who have opposed the Named Person initiative. We propose that the key to understanding these divergent views is predicated upon profoundly different views of the family, the collapse of the ideal of family autonomy, and its replacement with what can be described as 'third way parenting'. Here, the meaning of the 'Named Person' as laid out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and the opposing views that have been made against this act are explained. The 'Named Person' provision in the legislation, it is argued, has developed with the rise of micro-managerial politics, the construction of the 'at risk' child and the anxiety expressed about the early years of children, seen most clearly in the significance of early intervention policies. At one level, the Named Person is seen as a logic outcome of the fragmentary construction of 'children's rights': Within this context parenting has become problematised and increasingly understood as a skills-activity requiring training, support and surveillance.

### **Panel 3 Canterbury Room. Transnationalism and cross-cultural parenting (Lim, Lingen-Ali, Peltola, Choluj, Foley. Chair: Bendixsen)**

**Hyun-Joo Lim and Tina Skinner, University of Bournemouth, UK**

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**East Asian mothers and their parenting cultures in Britain**

This paper investigates the mothering cultures and practices of middle-class East Asian (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) mothers in Britain, focusing on the possible impacts of Confucianism and migration. The study was based on in-depth interview data collected from 20 first-generation East Asian mothers living in Britain. East Asian mothers in this study constructed the dichotomised version of parenting between British mothers and themselves, depicting British parenting as contrasting to East Asian parenting styles and beliefs. It also suggests that East Asian mothers in this study appear to share a discernible trace of Confucianism, including a strong emphasis on education, alongside a high value placed on seniority, and children as a mother's possession. These values were described by the interviewees as also contrasting to general British parenting cultures. However, these Confucian principles were depicted as salient in shaping their mothering practices. Simultaneously, however, certain aspects of British culture were also perceived to be significant in their mothering, in that they appeared to provide the interviewees with opportunities to question and modify their parenting cultural values.

**Ulrike Lingen-Ali, University of Oldenburg, Germany**

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**Normalizing Dynamics and Challenging Norms: Parenting Concepts of Migrant Single/Lone Mothers and Fathers in Germany**

Migrant one-parent families in Germany represent a group, which is explicitly considered as population at risk. Statistical data indicates that in particular the risk of poverty is dramatically high: While in the overall German population, the poverty risk is about 15 %, this number rises for migrant one-parent families to nearly every second person. Concurrently, one-parent families in migrant communities are as common as in the general population, and one in five one-parent families in Germany is of migrant background.

The increasing trend of this data claims for recognition and integration of a family form, which is so far largely excluded from research and public's perception. Therefore, a research project on migrant one-parent families in Lower Saxony, Germany (ALMIN) scrutinizes dynamics, complexities and diversities of migrant family relations by applying a mixed methods approach. The biographical interviews with mothers and fathers of various nationalities and backgrounds show a great variety of issues addressed. The interviewees refer to their single/lone parenting as decisive point and crisis, but also as deliberate decision and process within their life course. Moreover, they contextualize their individual family concept within the diverse images of an "ideal family" and thus question, criticize and challenge these perceptions. Which ideas of parenting do they voice? What are their understandings of being a "good mother/father"? How are these perceptions interconnected with collective perceptions and ascriptions? How far are they linked with structural obstacles, i.e. poverty risk or educational background? Is single/lone parenting perceived as a limited period of life or as equal family form? In my paper, I will present results according to these questions and analyze shifts and dynamics of perceptions and images. Do processes of change result mainly from the status of lone/single parenting? Which other influential and effective factors can be worked out? The analysis allows a comprehensive insight into self-perceptions and self-understandings of migrant parents living in a specific family form. It seeks to provide a deeper understanding of their needs but also of their resources and profound expertise. The study is thus a meaningful tool to improve and revise specific approaches of policy and social work.



**Marja Peltola, Institute for Youth Research, Finland**

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**Negotiating sexuality – Discourses on children’s and young people’s romantic relationships among parents with migrant background**

In public discussions in many European societies, there is a tendency to attach assumptions of special problems or risks to families with immigrant or (ethnic) minority backgrounds. Questions of gender, sexuality and (in)equality are central in these assumptions: the images of “suffocated” minority girls and “traditional”, even “backward” minority parents are repeated in worried discourses of the media, implicitly drawing hierarchical lines between “the equal Western families” and “the unequal non-Western families”. In this paper, I examine, in the Finnish context, the ways parents with migrant backgrounds understand and speak about their own role vis-à-vis to their children’s sexuality and romantic relationships. The focus is, on the one hand on the norms, expectations and hopes the parents have concerning the issue, and on the other hand, on the lived realities, practices and negotiations taking place in the parents’ and their children’s everyday lives. Theoretically, I draw from ideas of intersectionality and negotiability of social relations; with the help of these approaches I seek to distance from the culture-related, often othering and racializing examinations of ethnic minority parents. The parents proved to be a heterogeneous group in many ways; further, their ideals did not determine their parenting practices, let alone the lived situations within the families. Children’s sexuality and romantic relationships are a contradictory theme, raising feelings of concern at the same time as the children’s “freedom to choose” is also many times emphasized. At the same time, the parents also (re)construct the norms concerning parenting itself and negotiate their own role and position, not only as parents but as citizens as well. The paper draws from a qualitative interviews with parents with immigrant backgrounds in Finland (N=29), gathered as a part of the project funded by the Academy of Finland, *Generational negotiations, social control and gendered sexualities* or *GENESO* (2012–2016).

**Kasia Choluj, University of Kent, UK**

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**Mediating the Sacred through parenting practices in the new Polish diaspora in Britain**

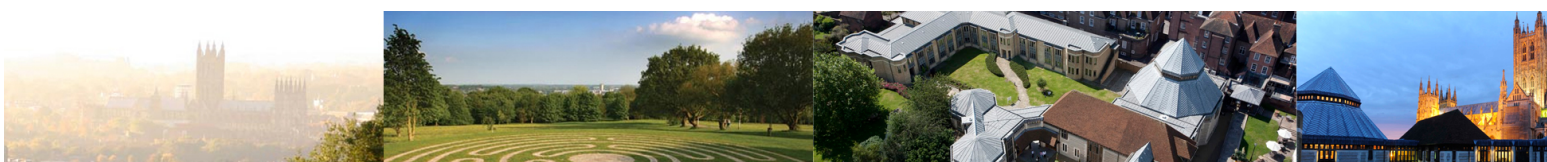
The salient role of religion within ‘transnational social field’ (Levitt 2003) as a distinctive marker of alternative migrants’ belongings is highlighted within recent studies (Tweed 2006, Vasquez 2011, Eade 2004, Eade and Garbin 2007). Religion organizes mundane embodied practices migrant parents’ around care, language use, food or household work. Thus, performed religious rituals of migrant parents in the new Polish diaspora become sites where moral norms, gendered parental roles and generational boundaries are marked and negotiated. Despite the importance of transnational ritualization at household level, religious practices at domestic space remain under-researched. The aim of this paper is to explore heterogeneity of family religious life of in the new Polish diaspora articulated through embodied practices and meanings given to the expressions of parental roles. Taking Bell’s (1992) account on ritualization as a ‘differentiating practice’ I develop it further examining transnational religious rituals performed by Polish migrant parents within public and private spheres. Analyses of the ‘transnational division of ritual space’ (Salih 2000) appears as a new perspective to explore role of significant others in transmitting morality in the new Polish diaspora. Moreover, examination of gendered ritualized practices at different scales aims to shed more light how power relations and generational hierarchies are negotiated within diasporic context. In doing so it also illuminates how global processes shape transmitting morality. This paper draws on findings from participant observations, biographical narratives and interviews conducted with the Polish migrant parents living in South East part of the UK and in London who moved to Britain after 2004. While imagined by Polish migrant parents as traditional, conservative but also authentic, Catholicism similarly to all religious ideologies, is continuously negotiated by everyday practices taking place in the local contexts. Given that religiosity of the new Polish migrant parents emerges as a continuously contested terrain.

**Pam Foley, Rod Earle, Steve Leverett, Martin Robb, Lindsay O’Dell and Andy Rixon, Open University, UK**

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**Parenting and distance**

Using three exploratory exemplars, this paper will consider parenting experience in circumstances where distance is a characteristic feature. Parenting is not exclusively an intimate or proximate practice but little empirical work exists that focusses on the relationship when it encounters unavoidable geographical distancing. Managing the increasing distance between children and their parents is part of assumed normative development which involves balancing independence and risk. In this paper, we examine three examples of where distance is non normative (as constructed within Western developmental models of parenting). We expose unseen perspectives on family life, personhood and parenting looking at parents whose children are in prison, children and parents separated by migration, and parents and children separated by children’s long term residential care. Using secondary analysis of existing literature and empirical observations from our own research, we explore ‘parenting and distance’ through such issues as modes of communication, loss of confidence and a sense of control, diminution of ability to co-parent, bi-directional relationship changes and the ability to cope with separation and feelings of guilt. We examine adjustments to the nature of parenting, both as shaped by individual parental emotional and cognitive characteristics and as a wider, shared, cultural and social activity around what is understood as ‘good parenting’ (Eve et al 2014). Discrepancies and commonalities emerge when parenting is fragmented and altered by distance. We aim to expand knowledge and understanding of parenting at a distance in order to strengthen this element of working with parents, within a comprehensive framework of family support.



## Panel 4 AV Conference Theatre. Parental involvement and education (Holloway, Golden, Antony-Newman, Dannesboe, Bergnehr. Chair: Stefansen)

**Prof. Sarah Holloway, University of Loughborough, UK**

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**Parental involvement in children's learning: Mothers' fourth shift, social class, and the growth of state intervention in family life**

Neoliberalisation in the Global North has been associated with growing parental responsibility for the production of compliant, educated citizen-workers. We focus on educational restructuring in England where there has been a marked shift in the relationship between school and home, with an increasing onus being placed upon parents to involve themselves in their children's education. We explore what mothers with different social class positions think about state attempts to enrol them in the education of their primary-aged children (ages 4-11), and consider their experience of school curriculum events designed to encourage and guide their help for children's learning within the home. Mothers' support for this form of educational restructuring is widespread, but motivations for, and experiences of, involvement vary significantly between higher-, middle- and low-income schools. This matters as parental involvement not only increases mothers' workloads—adding a fourth shift to the existing demands of paid labour, domestic work and their own education/training—but also risks widening social inequality as middle-class children potentially benefit more than their working class counterparts. In conclusion, we emphasise that this professionalization of parenting not only enables the state to enrol individual parents in the work of producing citizen-workers, but also allows them to lay the blame for unequal child outcomes at the door of the family.

**Deborah Golden, Lauren Erdreich and Sveta Roberman, University of Haifa, Israel**

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**Perceptions of the riskiness of schooling among Russian, Palestinian and Jewish middle-class mothers in Israel**

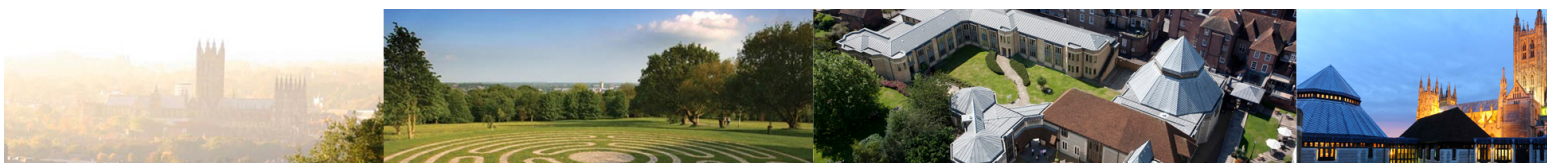
Education plays an increasingly important role in equipping children with knowledge, practical and social skills, as well as in defining social location and potential social mobility. The far-reaching importance of education means that women's work in this regard may be particularly instructive in revealing socially and culturally shaped notions of what is deemed proper mothering. Studies consistently show that it is middle-class mothers who are most adequately equipped to manage and mediate the home/school boundary. In this paper we look at the interplay of class and culture in mothers' modes of engagement in their children's education among middle-class mothers far from the Euro-American context where most such studies were undertaken. The paper is based on a cross-cultural, ethnographically-informed interview study of middle-class mothers from three social-cultural groups in Israel: Russian immigrants, Palestinian Israelis and Jewish native-born Israelis. These three groups participate today in the Israeli middle-class, albeit with different relationships to major social institutions and differential access to educational goods and services. In this paper, on the basis of the mothers' accounts of expectations of schooling, perceptions of the risks inherent in inadequate schooling, as well as responses in the face of these perceived risks, we compare their ideas of childhood, education and proper mothering. The paper shows that the three women share certain ideas about mothering; yet their modes of navigating their children's schooling are also differentially shaped by their endeavors to maintain and secure their position in the middle-class, as well as by distinct cultural models of both mothering and education.

**Max Antony-Newman, University of Toronto, Canada**

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**Critical discourse analysis of parental involvement policies in selected English-speaking countries**

This presentation is based on critical discourse analysis of three framework parental involvement policies from the US, UK and Canada. As a key predictor of students' achievement parental involvement has been in the center of attention of both educational researchers and policymakers. In the current climate of increased pressure on parents to be more responsible for the achievement of their children, which forms an element of neoliberal governance with its shift from public to private, it is necessary to understand the discourses generated by comprehensive parental involvement policies. This analysis showed that existing policies are permeated with discourses of accountability and parental deficiency. They employ a narrow definition of parental involvement, privilege parenting strategies of White middle classes, and represent diverse and immigrant parents as lacking. Although the difference among parents is acknowledged, parents receive no recognition for funds of knowledge they have. Policy documents remain silent on issues of inequality and present parental involvement as a neutral tool rather than a socially-constructed and historically-specific practice with its set of winners and losers. Implications for policymakers include adding parental involvement content in pre-service and in-service teacher education to make parent-school partnerships truly democratic and effective for all.



**Karen Ida Dannesboe, National Centre for Social Research, Denmark**  
kida@edu.au.dk

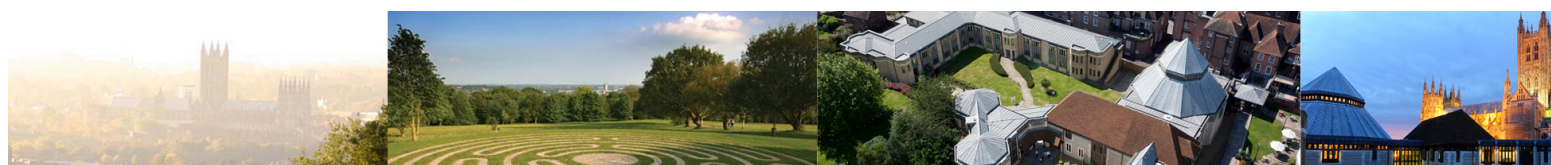
**Good school parents – children’s negotiations of proper parenthood**

The institutionalization of children’s everyday life during the development of the welfare state indicates a changing relation between state and family. Children’s lives have become organized in different institutions (from daycare to school) and professional adults have taken over educational issues from parents. At the same time the state has gained an increased interest in the family regarding e.g. health and education and the family has become an object for state intervention. In Denmark as well as other western countries this tendency is reflected in chances of parental involvement in school. Since the 1950’s role of the parents has changed radically and today parents are expected to act as responsible and active parents supporting the school. As experts on education and children teachers promote norms of being a good school parent as intensively engaged parent constantly ready to make the school part of everyday life in the family. The role of parents and parenting norms are often discussed from an adult perspective, but we know little of children’s experiences with their parents as school parents. How do children negotiate the role of their parents regarding their school life? And what ideals of good parenthood are reflected in these negotiations? Based on ethnographic research in Denmark the aim of this paper is to explore how a normative understanding of good school parenthood is transformed in the family by children’s negotiations of their parents’ involvement in school. On this background, the paper will discuss how ambiguous norms of being a good school parent have implications for parents and their performance as school parents.

**Disa Bergnehr, Jönköping University, Sweden**  
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**Mothering for the future: Immigrant women define and reconstruct good parenting in the process of resettlement**

The present paper explores immigrant women’s discourses on mothering and resettlement strategies. Focus groups and individual interviews were conducted with close to 40 women. Since the 1970s, Sweden has been generous in granting residency to people fleeing war, conflict or persecution, and/or for humanitarian reasons. Many of the immigrants originate from the Middle East. The study participants are of Iraqi origin and had at the time of the interviews resided in Sweden 1-9 years. They, as other forced migrants in Sweden, face great challenges; a large proportion of the immigrant population face long-term unemployment and dependence on social assistance, and children of foreign origin risk school failure. The downward social mobility affects parenting practices and the (re)construction of motherhood. This paper shows that women connect their mothering strategies for promoting discipline and their children’s educational success with living on scarce finances. Dominant arguments in the interviews are that discipline diminishes the risk of school failure and deviant behaviour, and that educational success is imperative for the children’s chances to obtain employment and self-provision as adults. However, the women argue that Swedish society obstructs their mothering through lax discipline in school, a disregard for parental authority, and restrictive welfare stipulations. The women talk despairingly about their own future prospects in terms of regained social and material status. Their hopes are in their children’s future. This paper widens our understandings of immigrant women’s reconstruction of mothering in the process of resettlement in the societal context of Sweden. It informs political decision-makers and professionals in their work to develop social policies and supportive services for migrant families.





## Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June, Grimond Building, University of Kent

### Panel 5 LT2. Upbringing and risk management (Kanieski, Smette, Kozmina, Avdeeva. Chair: Sundsbo)

**Mary Ann Kanieski, Saint Mary's College, Indiana, USA**

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#### **Parenting Cultures in a Time of Economic Re-structuring: How Do Mothers Prepare Children for Success?**

In "Life as a Planning Project", Beck-Gernsheim (1996) argues that "where there is promise of social mobility or threat of downward mobility, the pressure to secure one's own place in the social hierarchy by way of individual planning, effort, and educational endeavors becomes ever more noticeable (pg. 143). The uncertainty of social reproduction impacts parenting culture as the role of parent has become defined as a manager of risks to one's children (Lee et. al 2010). In a context of economic restructuring, previous research suggests that an intensification of childhood and parenting has emerged as parents, especially middle class parents, have sought to enhance their children's educational opportunities through strategies of concerted cultivation or intensified parenting (Lareau 2001; Nelson 2010). However, recent writings on neoliberalism suggest that other qualities of the self may be required such as flexibility, initiative, or entrepreneurialism (Nadesan 2002). This paper seeks to examine the ways in which understandings of parenting have been affected by economic restructuring and discourses of neoliberalism by asking mothers what they do to assure their children's future success. Interviews were conducted with 33 mothers with at least one child below the age of 18 living in their home in a post-industrial middle western American city. The women ranged in age from 25 to 51. This research finds that parents of all backgrounds continued to value educational credentials although some observed that a college education was not a guarantee of economic security. Parents suggested that their children would require traits such as passion, self confidence and religious faith to endure future struggles. The implications for understanding diverse parenting cultures will be considered.

**Ingrid Smette, Kari Stefansen and Åse Strandbu, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences/  
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#### **Stressed girls, underachieving boys: Gendered risks in parenting**

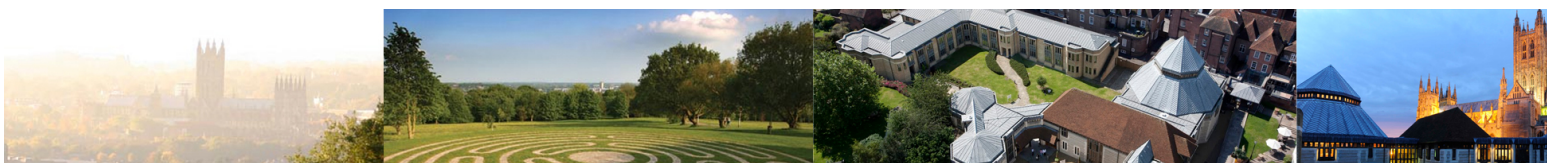
This paper explores how parents articulate gendered notions of risk in narratives about teenage sons and daughters. Existing research analyses changes in parenting ideologies and practices in light of new notions of risk. The British and American literature focuses particularly on a fear of falling as one poignant notion of risk among middle class parents, and Lareau (2003) coined the term 'concerted cultivation' to describe how parents try to foster in children a form of personhood resilient to this notion of risk. In the research building on Lareau, risk is seen as defined by class. Few studies, however, have investigated whether notions of risk within and across class contexts may differ according to the gender of the child. This paper addresses this gap in the research as we analyze and compare parents' stories about raising boys, girls, paying particular attention to the forms of personhood parents hope to foster in teenage children, and the particular notions of risk involved at this stage of their child's development. The paper thereby aims to contribute to existing research by expanding understandings of risk as a classed and gendered phenomenon. The paper draws on interviews with parents of 43 fourteen-year olds in a medium-sized Norwegian town. The sample consists of interviews with the mothers, fathers or both parents of each teenager and included parents from diverse class backgrounds. The analysis shows that parents aim to raise both boys and girls to be self-driven, but that they are more concerned to produce engagement and passion in boys than in girls, and that they praise diligence and self-governance more in girls than in boys. The analysis also shows that these gendered notions of personhood are accompanied by gendered notions of risk: Underachievement for boys, and psychological stress for girls.

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#### **Parental practical reasoning in Russia**

Given the magnitude of changes in various spheres of life (including religion, education, medicine, job market etc) that have occurred over the past few decades in Russia, the parental practices and experiences with their children had also had to undergo serious changes. Our work is dedicated to parental practical reasoning: how do parents conceptualize, construct, and evaluate their actions? What social, interpersonal, and personal factors (e.g., expectations, myths, relationships, and experiences) influence parental practical reasoning? We use several approaches as a theoretical framework of our study, mainly ideas on pedagogical systems in society (Luhmann), parental reasoning (Valsiner), and, as a method, semi-structured interviews and day reconstruction method to analyze parents' description of their everyday experiences with a child (7-10 years old), their perceptions of what should a parent do, what proper parenting is, etc.



**Anna Avdeeva, University of Helsinki, Finland**

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### **Contrasting expert knowledge on kinship and parenting at the margins**

This paper will analyse how one of the most intensive forms of mothering – natural parenting – becomes the instrument of some mothers' for the childcare expertise privatization. Her discussion is based on 32 interviews of Russian self-identifying natural mother's collected in St Petersburg and Moscow in 2015-2016. In the natural parenting sphere, every mother has an innate, instinctive knowledge how to care her child in most appropriate and "natural" way. Therefore, natural mothers are supposed to refer to their own and others' personal experience and awareness on childcare as natural parenting re-evaluates and acquires the significance of mothers' personal expertise. The recognition of a mother as a (potentially) skilled and competent specialist with primary responsibility for child and care becomes the resource of the mothers in the struggle for who could establish nurturing practices and/or define them as appropriate.

## **Panel 6 LT3. Personhood and education (Butler, Gallo, Conlon, Forsey. Chair: Phoenix)**

**Rose Butler, Christina Ho and Megan Watkins, University of New South Wales, Australia**

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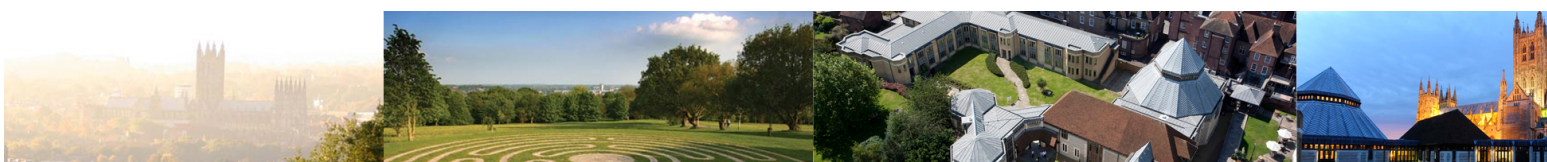
### **Parenting and legitimacy: "Asian" parents, class culture and the lived politics of difference in Australian schools**

Over the last ten years, media interest in Asian-Australian high achievers in schools has increased significantly, as have debates about augmented competition in education and housing markets alongside the practices of 'tiger parenting'. In these discussions, high achieving migrants from East-Asian nations are both admired and resented for their accomplishments, with critiques seeing this success as a negative product of harmful parenting practices. This furor, embodied in public debates about the growth of private tutoring (Sriprakash et al 2015, Pung 2013, Wu & Singh 2004) and the dominance of Asian-Australians in selective schools (Broinowski 2015, Patty & Stevenson 2010), works to 'ethnicise' academic achievement and the forms of parenting behind it (Watkins & Noble 2013). In such arguments, 'Asian' success is explained in cultural terms, a form essentialism which feeds into politics of racial hostility through which migrant cultures are viewed as fundamentally different. This paper examines this furor over educational achievement and 'Asian' parenting practices in Australia for what it can tell us about the lived politics of personhood, class and difference in sites of super diversity amidst global economic, geo-political and social transformation. This pertains to questions of value, in ways theorized by Bourdieu (1986), Skeggs (2004) and others, and provides insight into how cultural privilege works through the misrecognition of certain forms of personhood and parenting seen as constituting the 'wrong' type of educational success. Also evident in such debates is an uneasy co-existence of old and new middle-classes as they intersect with local constructions of ethnicity and identity politics, and the use of moral and racially hidden boundaries in lieu of economic and spatial ones. Examining such anxieties around parenting and legitimacy provides insight into how global-political and economic transformations are lived, negotiated and struggled against in the micro-politics of daily life, processes of social reproduction and constructions of childhood.

**Jacqueline Gallo, University of Cambridge, UK**

Interfaces of Parenting Cultures and Civil Society  
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This paper discusses the teaching of moral values in American Catholic-run missions in East Africa through an evaluation of one Kenyan children's home for orphaned and vulnerable girls. By exploring its pastoral culture and educational programme, the paper discusses how moral values inform the curriculum, social norms, behavioural expectations, and 'moral contracts' within the home. The findings describe how conflicting moral values of caregivers create tensions over approaches to moral education, despite a shared aspiration for the home to be a model of Christian living. The findings reveal that Kenyan caregivers' concerns about the challenges of raising girls in divergent value systems persist. Kenyan and American caregivers espoused stereotypical views of 'other' cultures and expressed resentment. Further, the way American missionaries perceived Kenyan girls isolates the girls from their cultural heritage and constitutes an injustice. Two main issues are highlighted: how American missionaries' own cultural perspectives affected the girls' education; and whether and how a residential institution can ever really serve the needs of the girls for whom it exists against a backdrop of amalgamated cultural and religious perspectives. With the ubiquity of Western NGO and government activity in African social services and increased US government funding of faith-based initiatives abroad, it is necessary to understand how children's values and cultural identities are formulated in missionary settings. This paper implements the Capabilities Approach (Nussbaum and Sen) to review fieldwork (Gallo) with an understanding and application of habitus (Bourdieu), glocalization (Bauman), horizons of significance (Taylor), and values (McLaughlin). This work bridges previous fieldwork to my current doctoral studies by exploring how the findings can facilitate a new values debate. This paper evaluates how neglecting the heritage needs of East African girls in American Catholic missionary environments can mitigate against their development in residential settings and receipt of a 'good education'.



**Dr Catherine Conlon, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland**

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**Parent-Child Communicating About Sexuality: with, to or over?**

Existing literature suggests that key discourses framing parent's approaches to educating their children about sexuality and the body reveal a range of purposes identified by parents and children driving the communication they engage in together. An Irish study, the Research with Parents project generated data capturing 100 Irish parents' accounts of communicating with children through focus group and one-to-one telephone interviews. Grounded Theory methodology and a socio-cultural approach to analysis characterize the inquiry. Findings illuminate novel processes framing Irish parents' approaches to communicating with children. Analysis suggests parents principally engage with anxiety driven discourses about early sexualisation of children and 'stay safe' education when communicating with children. These discourses shape how they hear their children asking for information; how they observe their children's uses of their bodies to 'perform' interest in and curiosities about their bodies, sexuality and relationships and; how they relate either verbally or non-verbally to their children. This paper discusses parent's accounts of hearing, observing and responding (or not) to their children as they recall their child demonstrating an interest in getting some information from them about their bodies, sexuality or relationships. In particular it considers whether parents' accounts portray them as 'communicating *with*' their children (with child(ren) and parent as co-constructors of communication about sexuality); 'communicating *to*' their children (with parents hearing the child's curiosities but taking control of the communication engaged in) or; 'communicating *over*' their children (where parents do not seem to hear the child's curiosities but rather refer to their own concerns in formulating communication directed at their child(ren) regarding sexuality.

**Martin Forsey, The University of Western Australia, Australia**

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**Parenting in a Mobile Modernity**

The main contention of this paper is that education helps frame a modernity in which individual progress and achievement is increasingly linked to the sheer physical act of movement. For the middle classes at least education helps create perceptions (and realities) of movement as progress, extolling the virtues of internationalisation and the importance of not getting stuck in the one place for too long. The drivers for the mobility imperatives of second modernity are linked to a set of cultural practices in "the West" that have moved families and the individuals within them beyond the structuring effects of an industrialised welfare state towards the insecurities of an individualising world of unsecured employment that is often associated with globalisation. In a reflexive present, in which there is no choice but to choose, responsibility for the future welfare of citizens has shifted from the state back to individual families; parents are faced with a constant requirement to make decisions that maximise opportunity and mitigate risk for all who are "contained" within the household. Modernisation has always been associated with mobility of course, emphasising an imperative to disembody people and communities from local institutions and relations. Individual education stories are filled with movement that often reflect a commitment to the mobility imperatives of modernity. Reflecting the different scales of practice evident in this mobile modernity, the empirical focus ranges from rural settings to urban mobilities and then out to transnational mobilities and the educational choices exercised by the global middle classes. Drawing upon various aspects of my own experiences as both social researcher and social actor, coupled with those of various colleagues, the paper uncovers the profound and the mundane ways in which educational structures affect family decision making and individual mobilities.

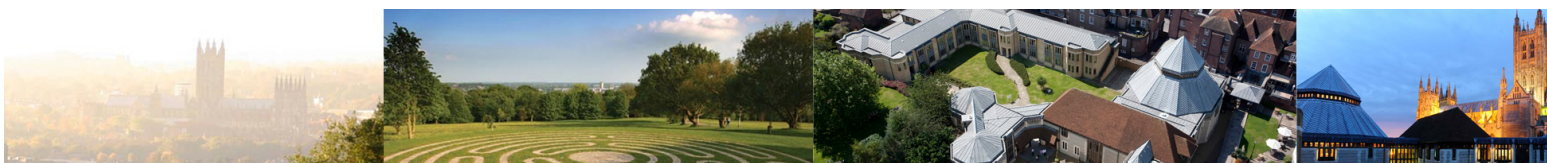
**Panel 7 SR3. Performing parenting online (Lind, Blum-Ross, Sjoberg, DeGraeve. Chair: Macvarish)**

**Judith Lind, Linköping University, Sweden**

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**Displays of 'the good parent' on a Swedish on-line discussion board for parents of teenagers**

Current discourse on parenting, gives the impression that what is regarded as preferable outcomes of parenting is universal and objective. As a result, it has also become more explicit in what are to be considered as preferable parenting practices (Ramaekers & Suissa 2012). The parenting styles that are currently favoured in many parent education programmes require parents to exert control without hemming the child and to strike a balance in order to be not too permissive and not too restrictive. The data for the analysis of this paper are posts made by parents of teenagers to a Swedish on-line discussion board, in which they discuss their parental practices and strategies in relation to teenagers, alcohol and sex. The topics alcohol and sex are chosen because they serve well to address the tension between the teenager's entitlement to autonomy when it comes to decisions concerning her/his own body on one hand and parents' responsibility for ensuring the physical safety and well-being of their child on the other. However, alcohol and sex also



differ slightly regarding the degree of harmfulness that is associated with them. Posters' standpoints with regard to their teenager's sexual behavior tend to be more complex, but overall also more permissive in a manner that may stand out as specific for a Scandinavian context. By examining how posters justify their own parenting practices and strategies, I aim to analyse variations in the manners in which 'the good parent' is defined and displayed (Finch 2007) on the on-line discussion board.

**Alicia Blum-Ross and Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics, UK**

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### **Whose story to share? Blogging and the boundaries of the parental self**

From sharing ultrasound pictures and commiserating about potty training to comparing teenagers' exam results, the internet enables myriad spaces for communicating the experience of parenting. Seeking advice, support and/or a platform for 'performing the self,' parents are among the most avid users of social media, particularly as a new generation of 'digital natives' become parents themselves. As privacy settings change, technologies shift, and the first cohort of babies of early social media users comes of age, the conversation around how much to share, and *whose* story it is to share has become increasingly urgent. In this paper we will explore how parents confront the sense of possibility and risk afforded by sharing their lives, and their children, online. We will draw from our project *Parenting for a Digital Future*, where we interviewed 65 families about how they conceive of 'good digital parenting.' Of these 15 were 'hyper-mediated' parents, exhaustively chronicling their lives through blogs and social networking sites. These parents are at the forefront of debates demarcating where the parental self ends and the child's self begins online. Some said they blogged for their children – an accessible family album – while others addressed a broader public through glossy sponsored posts and advice or raw personal struggles.

In order to understand the processes through which parental identities and childrens' privacy are played out in a digital space, we will draw on the concept of intersubjectivity to demonstrate how parents' and childrens' identities are intimately intertwined. We argue that the vision of personhood imagined by the creators of social networking sites delimits a singular self that is out-of-step with the relational practices of parenting. We will demonstrate the spectrum of ways in which parents construct selfhood online, seeking to understand parental needs for communication and community while acknowledging the unknown future in which these performances may later be viewed.

**Magdalena Sjöberg, Umeå University, Sweden**

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### **Parenting Support on Social Media: Challenging the roles of 'skilled' professionals and 'risky' young parents?**

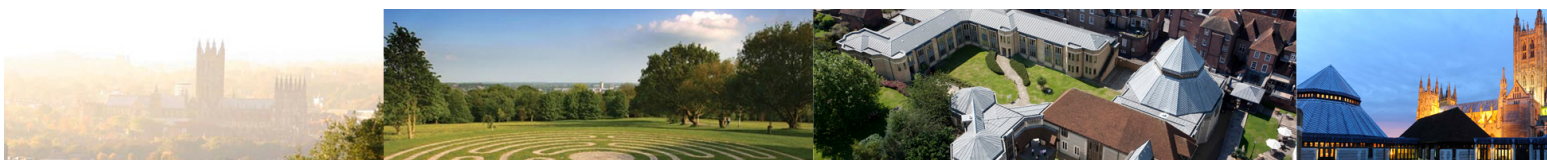
In a world marked by heightened levels of risk-consciousness, parents go online looking for information and social support. The Swedish welfare state provides extensive forms of parenting support by which trained experts work to socialise parents into what is considered good parental practice. Also special support to parents seen as 'risky', such as young parents is offered. However, young parents have a conspicuously low degree of participation in public forms of parenting support, and thus largely remain out of reach of expert socialisation. A large proportion of users of the Facebook groups are in fact young parents searching for parenting support online in groups administrated by peers — i.e. other young parents. This paper looks at how social media such as Facebook, with their potential for peer support, function as alternative platforms for the traditional type of parental support. Through a social network analysis and a cyber ethnographic analysis we aim to study three Swedish parenting groups on Facebook. First group is administrated by a professional, the second group is administrated by parents themselves, and the third group is administrated by a semi-professional, namely a mother of a young mother working as a social worker. One example of interesting questions is: To what extent is Facebook a tool for parents to take control over their own support needs? In conclusion we hope to explore if and how the digital social tools provided by Facebook might contribute to transforming agency among the 'skilled' professionals and the 'risky' young parents. We want to discuss what potential meanings this can have for the experts' way of working and for challenging the linear thinking of parenting determinism where experts set the space and limits of parenting support.

**Katrien DeGraeve, University of Ghent, Belgium**

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### **'I don't want to ruin my family'. Parents and internet dating: negotiating the monogamy-nuclear family nexus**

Feminist theorists have played a leading role in advancing critiques of monogamous heterosexual coupledness, by showing how it contributes—operating through the mechanisms of exclusivity, possessiveness and jealousy, and wrapped in a language of romance—to women accepting their subordination and the gendered divisions of labour. These studies have shown that monogamous heterosexuality is a gender relationship, which defines not only a normative sexual practice, but also normative ways of life, with the biologically-related two-parent family being conceptualised as a 'natural' formation. However, although monogamy and the nuclear family are often considered in tandem, the way in which monogamism and ideologies of the exclusive biological/genetic nuclear family interrelate, both in everyday experiences and theoretically, remains underexplored. Moreover, family studies tend to exclusively focus on parents in their capacity of parents, having little attention for the ways in which they construct themselves as spouses, lovers and/or sexual beings. This paper, however, seeks to provide an empirical description of the way in which men and women negotiate the monogamy-



nuclear family nexus. It will do so by drawing on preliminary internet-ethnographic research, including chat interviews and analyses of online profile texts in an internet dating site for married people (Victoria Milan). It explores how men and women who live in monogamous relationships but have extra-marital sexualized chats, encounters and/or sexual/romantic affairs discursively connect/separate their (secret) non-monogamous actions with/from their imagery of (monogamous) coupledom and being a good parent within a nuclear family constellation and looks at the way in which gendered, sexed, classed and aged expectations and inequalities structure their experiences.

## Panel 8 SR8. Transmission of intergenerational knowledge (Armstrong, Sivak, Bauer, Bristow. Chair: Furedi)

**Jill Armstrong, University of Sussex, UK**

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**High Stakes: Why few daughters of mothers with successful careers are aiming for the top**

This paper uses the concept of tension between biographical and historical time to explore different generational perceptions of the desirability of combining a demanding career with being a 'good parent' displayed by women in their 20s and early 30s and their mothers (Finch 2007; Keily and Thomson 2011). The arguments are drawn from narrative interviews with an unusually large qualitative sample of 60 mothers and daughters. The mothers worked long hours in senior managerial or professional careers and their graduate daughters ranged in life-stage from undergraduates to those who had recently had their own children. One area of intergenerational discontinuity discussed is the way in which women manage their feelings about combining work and motherhood. Many of the mothers who had reached the highest positions in their fields displayed a 'pragmatic' attitude. Their daughters feel they had been well-mothered. Despite this, embracing practices themselves that go against the culture of the 'intensification of responsibility' (Thomson *et al.*, 2011) is perceived to carry a high risk of negative public and self-judgment. Discontinuities in feminisms and views about part-time work are also unpicked. These findings are significant to the achievement of gender equality in positions of influence. This paper shows that having a mother as a role model of career success is far less predictive than one might imagine of their daughters progressing as far or further in their own careers, because of the cultural context in which motherhood is conceived. This paper will be presented on Prezi, using quotes from my research participants, recorded by actors, and extracts from popular parenting manuals contemporary with today's mothers and those who gave birth in the late 1970s - early 1990s.

**Elizaveta Sivak, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia**

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**Managing Intensive Parenting: Mothers' Perception of Grandparents' Interference in Child-Rearing**

In an era of intensive motherhood mothers feel fully responsible for their child's development. They realize that their actions are crucial for the whole life of a child, and that they need to create an environment in which a child will develop optimally. In addition to this idea of "parental determinism" (Furedi, 2001) and full responsibility of parents, ideas about proper methods of child-rearing have also changed over the last 50 years. Many parenting practices, which in contemporary literature and experts' advice for parents are regarded as right (e.g. co-sleeping, full-term breastfeeding, etc.), may seem unconventional not only to other "parenting tribes" but to grandparents as well. In other words, these changes in parenting seem to create a ground for discrepancies in child-rearing ideas between generations. And as long as mothers are concerned with creating the optimal environment for their child, these discrepancies may affect intergenerational relationships. Drawing on a small qualitative study of mothers in Russia (50 interviews with mothers of children under school age), this article describes the phenomenon of "interference" of grandparents in child-rearing, or grandparents' participation in child-rearing that mothers perceive as undesirable. The main forms of interference (criticism, "unwanted help", "wrong" child-rearing practices) and intergenerational differences in child-rearing ideas are analyzed. The article also describes mothers' reactions to interference - negotiations with grandparents over child-rearing practices and ideas, "reformatting" of relations with grandparents, and re-description of interference or changes in mothers' child-rearing ideas to bridge the gap between a mother's perception of the right child-rearing practices and the grandparents' practices. We suggest that ambivalence toward grandparental involvement in child-rearing emerges as mothers are trying to cope with their anxiety over "wrong" and potentially harmful child-rearing ideas and practices.

**Elaine Bauer, London South Bank University, UK**

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**Parenting cultures: change and transmission between generations of African-Caribbean and white British families in London**

Social values such as attitudes to social respectability (including attitudes to religion, sexuality and marriage), education and social mobility, gender divisions of roles and attitude towards different ethnic groups are general attitudes which are often transmitted between generations within families. Social values often find their roots within the culture in which the individual was born and raised. These values are shaped and influenced by parents, grandparents and other members in the extended family networks including fictive kin members, and are further reinforced by the wider social structures.



Factors such as changing political and social climate (for example exposure to global markets and global crises) can play significant roles in the transmission, or change of social values among individuals within families. Migration from one culture to another and mixed sociability are also key factors which alter the ways in which values are transmitted between generations within families. This paper is drawn from a qualitative study of 34 mixed Anglo African-Caribbean and white British extended families in London, across three to four generations from the 1950s to mid-2000s. It is a comparative paper that explores attitudes to social values among the Anglo African-Caribbean and the white British families, and their transmission between generations in each group. It informs of the family value systems from which the individuals in mixed-heritage families came, and shows how these values are adapted and negotiated within the mixed families. In other words, it shows what values the individuals in the mixed-heritage families brought with them from their families of origin and what values they have rejected, in the process of creating their own value systems which work for their unique situations as mixed families.

**Jennie Bristow, Canterbury Christchurch University, UK**

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### **Baby Boomers and the discourse of parental irresponsibility: The turn against the Sixties in the present-day cultural script**

The generation known as the 'Baby Boomers' has in recent years been subject to a large amount of negative claims-making, both with regard to its use of resources (housing, health care, pensions) and the values and behaviours attributed to the 'Sixties generation' (hedonism, narcissism, and an attachment to personal freedom). My study of the cultural script of the 'Baby Boomer problem' finds that claims are often contradictory, revealing an ambivalence about the social and cultural changes brought about by the Sixties and their apparent consequences in the present day. This paper addresses the contradictory claims-making about the practices and values associated with 'Boomer parents', who are simultaneously framed as irresponsible and self-absorbed, and for being overly risk-averse and obsessed with their children. Debates about 'helicopter parenting', the adoption of new technology, reproductive choice, and the extent to which Boomer parents support their children financially and emotionally reveal these contradictions in specific, but related, ways.

## **Panel 9 SR5. Constructing parenting: engaging with expertise (Fowler, Lavelle, Widding, Tumelty. Chair: Edwards)**

**Tim Fowler, University of Bristol, UK**

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### **Against the parity principle: Theorising parental disagreement**

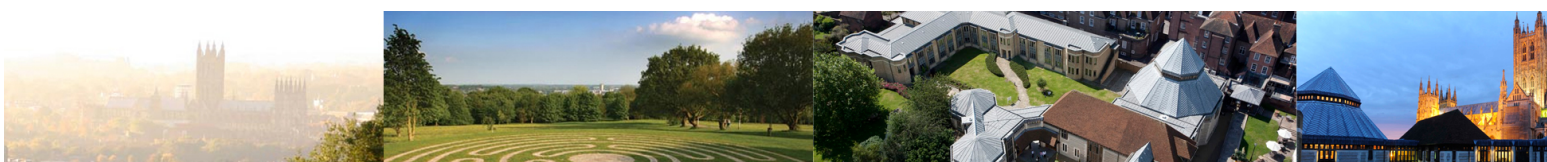
This paper is a conceptual analysis of parental rights. It argues that a recurrent problem in existing I'm debates within family ethics concern is that theorists assess the actions of 'parents' taken as a single actor. For instance, a number of influential accounts deal with the rights of 'parents' and the potential conflict of these rights with the interests of the state or of the child herself. However, the assumption of harmonious parenting is severely out of date (if it was ever realistic at all). Most obviously, many children will witness the divorce of their parents. Further, it is overly simplistic to assume that parents who are cohabiting will always (or even usually) agree on what actions to take when raising the child. This article takes seriously the phenomenon of parental disagreement, both within families still cohabiting and in families post separation. It suggests that adequately dealing with complex modern parenting requires denying what is known as the 'parity principle'. The parity principle holds that each of a child's parents has an equal set of moral rights, claims and duties with respect to that child. In contrast, in this article I specify various conditions which make some parental claims stronger than others. As such, I argue that some parent's claims will trump others, and that their views on how to raise the child should take precedence.

**Marie Lavelle, University of Plymouth, UK**

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### **The thin blue line: parenting and time**

Time is an inescapable influence within cultures of parenting. Even before parents engage on their parenting journeys the questions and issues of time emerge; when is the right time to be a mother or father, how much time to take away from paid employment? Concerns about how much time parents spend with their children and the quality of this time too are never far from the debate. The sacralisation of childhood has made these debates even more explicit; *temporal capital* has emerged as a key investment in children's lives. Dominant ideologies and neo-liberal discourses are never far from the debate as the 'good mother' ensures that she is making an economic contribution and financially stable before investing time in parenting; her time to parent is hard won. This is reflected in the increasing age at which women become mothers. For the first time in the UK the number of children born to women over 35 is now greater than those born to under 25s (ONS, 2015). This reduction in the birth rate to those under 25 is seen as something of a success in terms of government



policy; women under 25 are now categorized as *young* mothers and problematized accordingly. The reasons for these shifting birth demographics are complex: economic, political, social and personal. However, it is women's age at time of birth that continues to be the focus for discussion rather than men's. In this paper I take a critical exploration of this issue to problematize the seemingly emancipatory discourse that has accompanied the public debate. Important voices are often neglected in these discussions, including women who choose to have their children earlier rather than later defying the normalizing discourses of when to have a child.

**Ulrika Widding, Umeå University, Sweden**

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**Negotiating parental responsibilities: Parents to premature children and their relationship to medical staff**

The proposed article investigates how Swedish parents (13 mothers and 10 fathers) of extremely premature children (born before 28 weeks' gestation) describe the process of becoming parents, and specifically, how they narrate their relationship to the medical staff. The data was produced within an interdisciplinary project exploring the need for support among premature children. The parents were interviewed about the pregnancy, the unexpected birth and the period spent at the hospital, and, being discharged and able to go home. The stories were analyzed within the framework of discursive psychology and in relation to the dominating Western discourse that define parents as the most important persons in a child's life, and that especially mothers are overall responsible for the child's good health (see Donzelot 1979; Hays, 1996; Knaak, 2010). Within neonatal intensive care has this responsabilisation been intertwined with ideals of parent-child bonding and attachment, and, expressed as a reformation into a more family-oriented care with the ambition to engage parents as equal partners and to transform the hospital setting to be more homelike (Eyer, 1992; Fegran, Helseth, & Slettebo, 2006). The parents' stories related to ideas about the 'normal' childbirth and the fact that they could not care for their child due to the infants' need of medical treatment and/or the mothers' poor condition and vulnerable situation. This led to power demonstrations between parents and medical staff expressed in terms of trust and mistrust towards one another. Parents also talked about the dilemma of wanting to engage and prove oneself as a responsible parent but also their need to rest from a stressful situation. Another recurring theme was about the strong desire to go home and become a 'real' family, yet feeling insecure without the support of the medical staff.

**Patricia Tumelty, University of Wolverhampton, UK**

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**Performing Motherhood- a Dance of Cultural Compliance**

Background and aims: This study is concerned with how women who are mothers referred for support to a children's centre, interpret their interactions with the range of professionals they encounter. Previous studies have concentrated more on the impact of their attendance on outcomes for children in particular where there is evidence in the home of "toxic trio"; addiction, mental health, and domestic violence impacting on children. At a time when mothers are expected to break cycles of disadvantage and achieve world peace this project aimed to explore the performance of motherhood. Method: For a year 16 mothers attending a children's centre joined in drama based art groups, as part of a performance ethnography study. Data was collected as stories written and recorded as text by the women and performed to a range of audiences. Result: themes including fear, power, wants and wishes were extracted initially by the women as slices of drama for the performance. From these as well as from supplementary correspondence letters and conversations a second analysis identified three dominant narratives; self-fulfilling prophecies, subject positioning, and scarcity. Common to all the women was a preference for interactions which acknowledged their humanity and a dislike and distrust of professionals making statements rather than asking questions. Their words reflected the many gendered roles they are negotiating in a dance of cultural compliance, often with their hands tied behind their backs. All 16 wanted to do their best for their children but felt hopeless when the impact of scarcity on their decision making processes was not addressed. Discussions: These themes are discussed in relation to existing literature on the subject of parental engagement with support services and suggests a need to extend the narrative of 'toxic trio' to become 'fearsome four' taking account of what "short on cash" looks like.

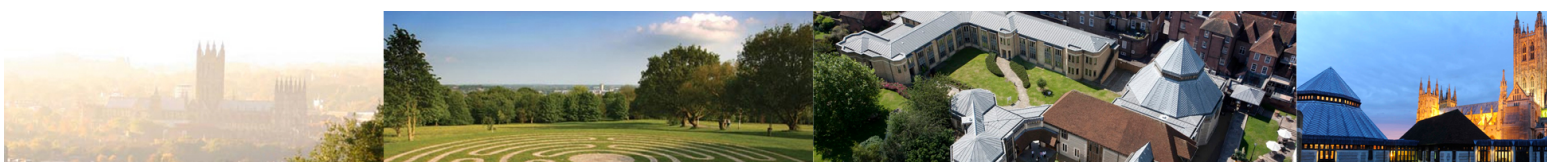
## **Panel 10 LT2. Governing diversity and risky neighbourhoods (de Koning, Vincent, Horvat. Chair: Danielsen)**

**Anouk de Koning, Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands**

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**Governing parenting and the contradictions of postneoliberalism in Amsterdam**

Like other European states, the Dutch state attempts to develop a post or late neoliberal model that combines state retrenchment with an emphasis on neighbourliness, volunteering and citizens' 'own strength'. Such discourses entail the devolution of responsibilities and action to the local level, often the neighbourhood, and a reliance on notions of active citizenship and communal care and solidarity. These new tropes are markedly at odds with concerns about weak social



cohesion at the level of the nation, city and neighbourhood on account of growing ethno-cultural diversity, which have dominated politics and policies in the Netherlands for the last decades. The language of local community and active citizenship sits uncomfortably with images of problematic diversity and the emergence of parallel ethnic life worlds. This paper uses municipal policy related to the governance of parenting in Amsterdam to explore how these tensions play out. Policy engagements with migrant parents in particular can bring out the contradictions of the present post or late neoliberal moment in the 'new Europe'. On the one hand, migrant parents are called upon to take on a more active or 'responsible' role in their children's lives, while, on the other, governmental actors fear that these parents' initiatives and their notions of good parenting may be at odds with the 'Dutch values' and be detrimental to the 'full' integration of people with migrant backgrounds, which would entail a threat to the much desired cohesive society.

**Carol Vincent, Humera Iqbal and Sarah Neal, Institute of Education, London, UK**

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#### **Living in the city: diversity, parenting, and perceptions of risk**

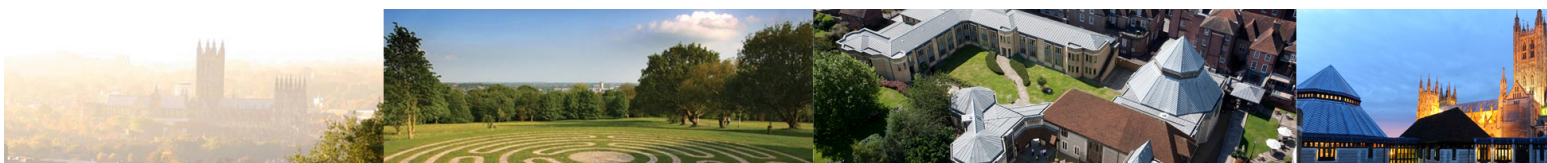
In this paper, we report on an ESRC-funded project that explores adults' and children's friendships across social class and ethnic difference. We draw on a data base of 114 interviews, with children (8/9 years), teachers and parents, collected in three London primary schools with highly diverse populations in terms of class and ethnicity. We focus here on the 46 parents' varied views on their children's friendships, and their attempts to manage their children's out-of-school time. Research suggests that many, particularly middle class, parents consider urban schooling to be a risk – the risk being that their children's potential will not be realised (e.g. Reay et al 2011, Rollock et al 2015). Their concerns focus on two areas: the quality of teaching in school, and the attitudes and behaviours of 'other' children and their families (e.g. Vowden 2012). Picking up, in particular, on this latter concern, *we centre school-based friendships, both between the children and between parents, in order to explore how differently situated parents orientate themselves towards diversity, and perceive and manage risks to their children's well-being.* In order to do this, we develop a continuum of parental responses, from the small number who purposefully facilitate friendships across difference to those who reject diversity. At mid points, are those who are accepting of homophily (having ties to those like oneself), and those who have a reflexive, more open and responsive approach to difference. We argue that parents' class-based resources and also their racialized identities, and, for some their migration histories, affect their positioning on this continuum, and the values and attitudes towards diversity that they pass on to their children. However, these values are not static, and we conclude that attending a diverse primary school and the regular, sustained contact with 'other' families can and often does encourage an increased, though tentative, openness towards difference.

**Erin Horvat, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA**

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#### **Exploring the Practical and Theoretical Implications of Parenting in a High-Risk Neighborhood**

In his inaugural address John Fry, President of Drexel University, articulated a vision for the University, which lies within and adjacent to a high-risk, high poverty neighborhood, to become "the most civically engaged university in the United States." A central part of this effort is supporting families, children and youth. In this paper I explore parenting and in this high risk, persistently high poverty and high crime neighborhood neighborhood in Philadelphia – the largest severely poor city in the US. In particular, I focus on how parenting is framed and supported by the efforts of one anchor institution (Drexel University) to positively impact families, children and youth in this neighborhood especially attending to notions of risk and their implications for the kinds of support that are required in this endeavor. I ask: 1) How is parenting qualitatively different in this high-risk environment? 2) How does an anchor institution, committed to engaging with a persistently high poverty community, frame and approach supporting parents in this high-risk environment? 3) What theoretical approaches inform this work and how do they influence the conceptualization of "the problem" and possible supports or solutions for parents? This investigation will be informed by a review of the myriad efforts currently underway to engage parents including improving access to high quality childcare, additional supports in local schools, after schools activities for children and youth and health and wellness programming. This work is informed by prior investigations into parenting using the theoretical apparatus provided by Pierre Bourdieu and extended by Annette Lareau in *Home Advantage* and *Unequal Childhoods* (2000 and 2011) and the theoretical notions of "scarcity" and abundance as articulated by Mullainathan and Shefir in their book *Scarcity* (2014). I am particularly interested in exploring how notions of scarcity and abundance influence parental decision-making and connections with community actors, especially educators.





## Panel 11 LT3. Practices and norms of fatherhood (Haux, Locke, Moore. Chair: Edwards)

**Dr Tina Haux, University of Kent, UK**

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### **Paternal involvement before and after separation**

The paper will focus on parenting cultures, particularly of fathers, before and after separation. There is both a strong desire as well as increasingly a social expectation of fathers to be more involved in caring for their children both before and after separation. Yet, a substantial minority of fathers are losing contact with their children post separation and contact frequency is generally decreasing over time. This paper will examine continuities and severance of paternal involvement with particular emphasis on the role of specific paternal involvement in the childcare as well as broader issues such as trust, relationship conflict and stability. The paper is based on analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study, a large scale UK survey of about 19,000 children born in 2000 and their families.

**Abigail Locke, University of Bradford, UK**

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### **'Parenting as partnership': Discourses of primary caregiving fathers in a UK context.**

This paper examines parenting cultures within the family putting the focus on fathers who are acting in a primary caregiving position for their children. Despite contemporary societal discourses of 'parenting' that imply gender neutrality, and recent moves towards extended parental leave, caregiving remains a highly gendered practice within the UK with the mother typically taking on the primary caregiving role in most families. UK social policy related to families and caring often reinforces these traditional gendered binary caring roles, however, at an individual level, fathers express wanting to be more 'involved' with the care of their children and 'share' more parenting responsibilities with their partners. Using a critical discursive psychological analysis on a series of unstructured interviews with fathers who were acting in a primary caregiving capacity for their children, there was an overarching egalitarian discourse that emerged of 'parenting as partnership'. This was marked through a number of ways including a 'discourse of we' when it came down to decision making for their children; a desire to be supportive of their partners' careers when narrating their reasons for initially taking on the primary caregiving role; and a labelling of themselves and their caregiving practices in gender neutral terms of 'parenting' instead of fathering. These egalitarian discourses and parenting practices stand in direct contrast with the common societal gendered constructions of caregiving and traditional hegemonic 'fathering' roles. Given the recent changes in parental leave within the UK, it will be interesting to see if these egalitarian discourses become more commonplace within UK parenting cultures.

**Stanford Mahati, Elena Moore and Jeremy Seekings, University of Cape Town, South Africa**

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### **Practices and norms of fathering among Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa**

The paper looks at Nigerian and Ghanaian transnational fathering practices and norms from a sample of documented, married, middle class migrant men in Johannesburg. It explores fathering practices and norms. We find that most fathers are playing the role of economic provider, but this does not preclude their playing a range of other roles in their children's lives. New communication technologies allow them to remain in contact with their wives and children, taking part in everyday activities including prayers, routine discipline, and decision-making. The roles played by migrant fathers were also framed by the kinship webs that supported their wives and children at home in West Africa. Migrant fathers from Nigeria and Ghana were very critical of the South African environment, which they uniformly regarded as bad for child-raising. In almost all cases, they chose to leave their families in West Africa. South African schools were seen as better than West African ones, but this was more than offset by ubiquitous delinquency and disrespect among South African children and adolescents, which the migrants attributed in part to the 'western' culture of children's rights that prevailed in South Africa.

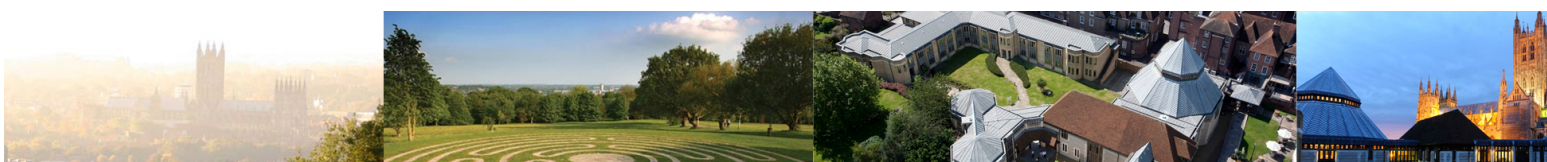
## Panel 12 SR3. Secrecy and disclosure in assisted conception (Gale, Lee, Provost. Chair: Macvarish)

**Liz Gale, University of Greenwich, UK**

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### **Infertile parents and identity**

Fertility problems affect one in seven couples in the UK (HFEA 2013) and as techniques improve in the field of ART, the number of couples becoming parents through this is increasing. Those who have undergone IVF will have faced greater psychological, physical and often financial demands which may alter the culture of parenting and heighten expectation for



this group. In addition it may be that previous experiences of infertility (sense of failure and frustration, cyclical nature of hopes raised and dashed) and the associated interventions (high anxiety, medical intrusion, relinquishing of control) influence the transition to parenthood. For most couples, there is an assumption that once in a committed relationship, financially secure and living independently, having children will follow. Any difficulty with achieving this causes stress and distress. Individuals need to move from a sense of self as 'normal' to an acceptance of fertility issues. Burnett (2009) suggests the term 'struggling with infertility' as it implies an active rather than a passive state. For couples, it may be 'natural' to want a child but they face 'unnatural' ways to achieve this. IVF may provide couples with a child but it does not cure the problem - they remain a couple unable to conceive spontaneously. Jauniaux and Rizk (2011) describe IVF as a 'somatic answer to a subjective problem'. Hjelmstedt (2004) found that negative feelings associated with previous infertility continued to have an effect on some parents - on their sense of self and their parenting. Parenting itself is morally loaded, with parents subjected to societal pressures. This moral pressure may be even greater for those parents of a child conceived by IVF, an assumption that having actively sought parenthood, one should be obliged to be 'good' at it. Miller (2007) highlights how this moral pressure leads to a disjuncture between women's experiences and existing discourses, this may be greater for those whose 'cost' of pregnancy was greater. The paper will expand upon these ideas of identity as individuals move from being a couple to being parents, but via IVF and the implications this may have on them and their parenting.

**Ellie Lee, University of Kent, UK**

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**'A decision for parents to make but.....': disclosure, secrecy and constrained parental autonomy in gamete donation in assisted conception**

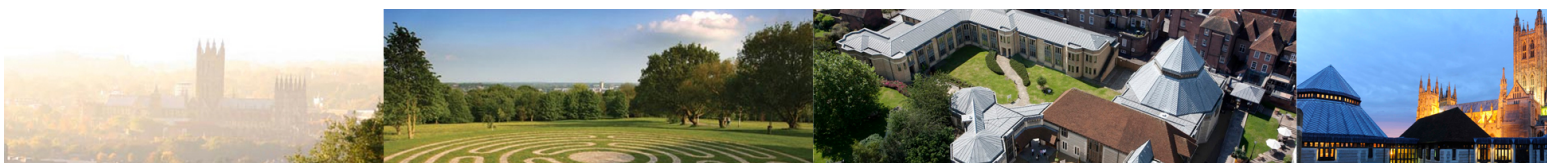
The 'welfare of the child' in assisted conception has been described as a 'slippery concept'. In the UK the law mandates that clinics have to 'take into account' the welfare of any child pre-conception that may be born as a result of treatment. Why the law does so, what this means in practice, and questions about the making of judgements regarding who should be assisted to become a parent, have been the subject of a great deal of debate and scholarship. As part of this, the relation between law, what happens in clinics, and socio-cultural norms about what it means to be a 'good parent' are all at issue. This paper discusses one aspect of this slipperiness, and considers the consequences for thinking about the personhood, specifically the moral autonomy, of the prospective parent. The material presented is taken from a wide-ranging study of practices and procedures in 'welfare of the child' (WOC) assessments, collected through interviews with staff working in assisted conception clinics in the UK. The overall purpose of the study was to explore staff's practices and views about making WOC assessments, in the light of changes to UK law in 2008, and to other aspects of regulation this century. The question of clinics' processes and staff's assumptions where prospective parents needed donated gametes as part of treatment emerged, however, as an important and interesting theme in the interviews. Staff's accounts focussed centrally on questions of disclosure and secrecy regarding parents' discussions with a future child about conception via gamete donation. While nowhere does the UK law explicitly connect 'disclosure' with 'child welfare' it was apparent that respondents nevertheless interpreted disclosure in relation to 'the welfare of the child', and discussed clinic procedures (for example 'implications counselling') and attendant issues accordingly. Through detailing some of what respondents had to say, this paper draws attention first, to the existence of processes that, we suggest, are not required by law, but draw on the language of law to create a type of juridification. Second, we suggest this sort of juridification is based on a presumption of constrained parental choice which while not refuting parental autonomy outright, calls its legitimacy into question. Third we highlight different ways in which staff discussed the merits and demerits of present approaches.

**Veerle Provost, Bioethics Institute Ghent, Belgium**

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**Donor conception families and their search for 'the right way' to disclose**

Starting a family usually is something very private and intimate. Couples who reproduce via donor conception, however, walk a different path. They need to allow a 'third party' (the donor) as well as a 'fourth party' (medical professionals) into this private sphere of reproduction. This paper first describes how parents who conceived using sperm from anonymous donors deal with communication about the donor conception in the context of their family life and how this may be influenced by advice from professionals. Several questions will be discussed: 1) how do these parents view (the role of the) donor; 2) how do they make decisions about disclosure; and 3) how do they handle professional (counsellors') advice about disclosure. Answers to these questions will be based on data stemming from interview studies with parents and their children who were recruited via the Ghent University Hospital (Belgium). Current legislation in Belgium is based on donor anonymity but also allows non-anonymous donation when both donor and recipients give their prior agreement. The interviews are part of an interdisciplinary research project at Ghent University to investigate the meanings of genetic and non-genetic parenthood for families who are (or have been) constructed using gamete donation. The interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In the way the parents discussed their disclosure decisions, it showed that they felt they had to deal with the responsibility of disclosing 'in a correct way'. Their perception of this 'correct way' was based on their views on the best interests of their child as well as on information they received from professionals during their treatment (for instance about the right time to disclose and how to manage the child's questions). Parents did not focus on the best interest of the child as an isolated concept but as depending on the wellbeing of the family as a whole. Their primary motivation for (a type of) disclosure of donor conception was to maintain good family relations. However, in their attempts 'to do it right', the parents also strongly held on to the advice



they were given by the staff at the fertility clinic. In some occasions they displayed a rather rigid approach towards handling the child's questions. On the whole, this meant that they did not answer the child's questions as they would do in relation to other topics and based on their view of what was good for the family. Apart from a description of how the families in the interview studies dealt with donor conception disclosure communication, this paper will discuss moral problems relating to professional advice.

## **Panel 13 SR6. Balancing work and motherhood (Pimlott-Wilson, Taylor, Harman. Chair: Phoenix)**

**Helena Pimlott-Wilson, University of Loughborough, UK**

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*Parenting and gender in young women's work-life balance aspirations*

In recent years, political debates have increasingly focused on young people's aspirations. The coalition's neoliberal agenda posits education and training as key to enabling future citizen-workers to provide for their own needs through paid work, simultaneously reducing welfare spending (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). Second wave feminism has diversified the opportunities that some women have in the workplace and increased the choices available for reconciling paid work and family responsibilities (Crompton, 2006), for young people as they imagine their future. Together, the feminist movement and neoliberal reform have come to mean that the moral agendas surrounding women and motherhood have changed (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Through an analysis of the views of 32 young women aged 15-16 in England, the paper explores their attitudes to parenting and employment. Gender equality permeates their attitudes towards the division of caring and employment when considering a distant other; yet in discussing their own plans for the future, childcare arrangements feature prominently in the employment patterns some young women imagine. This paper explores the moral and political ambiguities of neoliberal government interventions aimed at raising the aspirations of young people and promoting dual-worker households, against an enduring commitment to the ethic of care amongst young women as they plan for their future. This paper takes forward the feminist idea of choice; that choosing to spend time caring for children is a valid life choice at a time when neoliberal discourse deems being a wife and mother an improper aspiration. Concurrently, it also highlights the pervasive nature of gender inequalities which constrain young women's choices, as they feel duty-bound to prioritise family over employment.

**Abigail R Taylor, University of Sheffield, UK**

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## **Out-of-work Partnered Mothers: Contrasting Parenting Cultures in the United Kingdom and France**

Research has already considered the relationship between parenting and parenting policy (e.g. Dermott, 2015; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012). However, how mothers' ideal work-care scenarios differ at micro-level within welfare regimes has been explored to a lesser extent. This paper seeks to respond to this gap by investigating out-of-work partnered mothers' experiences of balancing their work and family ideals. Taking a comparative approach, based on qualitative interviews with out-of-work partnered mothers in Sheffield and Lille, the paper will argue that out-of-work partnered mothers have contrasting ideals of parenting in the United Kingdom and France, reflecting established differing policy environments in the two countries. The paper will discuss what being a 'good' mother means in the UK and France. Building on the work of Duncan & Edwards (1999), Head (2004), Whitworth (2007) and Williams (2004) on what constitutes 'good mothering', the paper will underline differences in maternal norms of work and care between and within the two countries. It will suggest mothers more frequently do not seek to enter/withdraw from the job market/seek short working hours in the UK than France due to normative values that consider 'good' mothering is "spending time with your child". It will highlight differences among the ideals of out-of-work mothers in France according to maternal education level and family size. The paper will then examine how differences in maternal employment goals link to labour market trends in France and the UK. It will be maintained that mothers in the UK face particular difficulties finding employment due to a lack of part-time employment around school hours. Despite growth in low-paid part-time employment in the UK during the recession, jobs around school hours appear scarce. Experiences in France differ since mothers overwhelmingly seek full-time employment.

**Dr Vicki Harman and Dr Benedetta Cappellini, Royal Holloway, London, UK**

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## **Boxed up? Lunchboxes and expansive mothering outside home**

This paper unpacks the experiences of 30 British women making lunchboxes for their children, and their opposition for opting for school dinners. Findings emerging from photo-elicitation interviews and focus group discussions, show how mothers consider themselves the only actor able to make a 'proper lunchbox'. School dinners are considered a risky option for their children and father's interference in preparing lunchboxes is viewed with suspicion. The paper shows how lunchboxes are an expansion of the intensity of mothering: a way of making home away from home, stretching the



intensive domestic care used for toddler to school aged children. These empirical findings have theoretical implications contributing to the current debates on intensive mothering. If the debate on intensive mothering is focussed on domestic practices around toddlers and very young children, this study shows how intensive mothering is expanded in time and space. Such an expansion modifies the intensive mothering, which, we argue, becomes *expansive mothering*. Expansive mothering is characterised by mothers' mediating role which places them between the child and the outside world. This role is mainly performed as a risk management activity aimed at recreating the domestic security outside the home. This role consists of a more cynical attitude toward experts like the school, which undermines the mediating role of mothering, and a more uncritical attitude towards marketplace experts reinforcing the message that feeding children is the mother's domain. Craft consumption - such as the transformation of mass produced items into an individualised set of products and brands satisfying the child's desires- becomes crucial for extending the security of the home. Finally, expansive mothering also has implications for the unequal division of domestic labour. Expansive mothers are not simply victims of an unequal distribution of power and labour, but they appear to be actively implicated in maintaining the *status quo*.

## Panel 14 SR8. Personhood and family ideals (O'Doherty, Cheresheva, Layne. Chair: Fylkesnes)

Colm O'Doherty, Ashling Jackson and Noel Richardson, Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone, Ireland

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### Parenting and personhood in modern Ireland

This paper examines the relationship between the changing social structures and accompanying, cultural shifts which have fashioned a new and evolving Irish family-landscape. Kaleidoscopic patterns of parenting have challenged the cultural hegemony of conservative 'family values' linked to traditional family forms. Drawing on our recent publication *Learning on the Job: Parenting in Modern Ireland* this paper maps out key sites of change in public and private parenting repertoires and discuss the contested terrain of public policy, public representation and identity capital associated with these shifts in behavioural and meaning making values. A central interest of this paper is the cultural and cognitive influences and trends shaping the parenting support, protection and welfare systems in contemporary Ireland. Parenting is no longer solely a private activity. It is increasingly emerging as a public enterprise. As Professor Mary Daly observed in her foreword to *Learning on the Job* -parenting is firmly on the agenda today. Governments are striving to put in place measures oriented to parenting support and parents and parenting practices are popular topics of public discourse and debate. Ireland is no exception to this pattern. The developments are coming both from the ground up – from parents themselves, local organisations and self-help initiatives – and also from the top down – through government policy and the channelling of public and private funding. While the nature of the debate and the actual remedies and programmes put in place vary, at their core they signal an increasing state and societal interest in how people carry out their parenting roles. Parenting has now emerged as one of the most hotly debated issues of the twenty-first century. While parents have primary responsibility for raising children, the state and wider society create the environment in which families live. The state and wider society have now become stakeholders in parenting. Parents, supported by networks of family, friends and well-disposed citizens shoulder the responsibility of raising the next generation, but it is in society's interest to ensure that they have help to do this in a positive wellbeing framework, and to intervene if they are unable to meet their responsibilities.

Irina Cheresheva, University of Leicester, UK

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### On Freudian and "other" slips: exploring the multiple maternal subjectivity

This paper analyzes maternal subjectivity beyond the logic of exposing contradictions between maternal subjects and other, usually perceived as "masculine" subjects, as prominent in feminist theories of motherhood (DiQuinzio 1999, Glenn et al 1994). It is part of my PhD thesis: a comparative study of the everyday childcare practices of middle class new mothers on maternity leave in contemporary Budapest and Sofia. Through exploring how maternal subjectivities are performatively constructed vis-à-vis culturally specific narratives of children's needs, the research contributes to a growing body of literature which problematizes the concept of subjectivity within feminist scholarship. Simultaneously, via a focus on two separate post-socialist locations, it teases out the variations between dominant conceptualizations of (good) motherhood in Eastern Europe. Thus, it opposes a dominant view from the 1990s of a largely homogenous and supposedly "neo-traditionalist" post-socialist femininity. Despite the striking differences in the ways my 37 first-time-mother interviewees construct their stories of motherhood, this paper emphasizes a structural similarity: the troubles new mothers have while trying to narrate their lives from a first person singular position. Once embodying a subjectivity which can hardly contain itself within the illusion of a coherent and bounded "I" (Lawler 2004, DiQuinzio 1999), mothers un/consciously created complicated chainlike selves (Baraitser 2010), which included the people indispensable in their daily existence as carers. Through feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar 2007), this paper tries to illuminate how new mothers struggle with the confines of phallogocentric languages (Cixous 2008). Their frantic, multidirectional I-we's reflect not only the dislocating structures of their subjects in metamorphosis but also the limitations linguistic norms set for the possibility to performatively constitute a "maternal subjectivity otherwise" (Baraitser 2010, Ettinger 2006).

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**'What Kind of a Family Do We Want to Be?': One American Single Mother by Choice Family as a Case Study of Neo-Liberal Self-Regulation and the Cultivation of Entrepreneurial Subjects**

In a recent conversation with Carmen, the American Single Mother by Choice who is the subject of my on-going, in-depth case study, she told me that she had read an article that advised parents to have regular family meetings. At the first meeting she and the three children she conceived using the same sperm donor (Maria, age 8, and the six-year old twins, Nel and Toby), devised a 'mission statement' for their family. At each subsequent meeting, they evaluate how successful they have been in actualizing that shared vision and discuss areas and ways that they can do better. Top on their list, is their aspiration to "be healthy." This quality is followed by "educated" and then "a family that has fun, is affectionate, and helps each other." In this paper, I explore this mode of family making as mode for constructing neo-liberal subjects and understanding the family as yet another form of "enterprise." I focus on the structures and institutional practices, "a mesh of sanctions, incentives, and commitments," she has put in place to cultivate entrepreneurial subjectivity in herself and her children (Dardot and Laval 2014). A major concern of this mother is how to mitigate risks—those she believes haunt all parents, and those she believes are particularly acute for single mothers by choice. I explore the categories of risk that Carmen has identified: financial, nutritional, physical, educational, social and what strategies she uses, including frequent consultation with a wide variety of experts to mitigate these perceived risks and her assessment of how SMC households offer less risk than conventional 2-parent families while at the same time posing new kinds of risks.

**Panel 15 SR5. Beyond normative parenting (Haag, Ryan, Katona. Chair: Song)**

**Christian Haag, University of Frankfurt, Germany**

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**Pathways into parenthood for sexual women and men. Intentions and implications.**

There is a growing amount of literature concerning gay and lesbian parenthood, especially regarding the development of their children. Little, however, is still known about the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. The parenting intentions of a sample of 25-50 year old childless homosexual women and men from Germany (n = 359) have been analysed as part of my PhD thesis. Particularly their intentions about pathways into parenthood are of relevance, because there are specific challenges for homosexuals.

The results of this thesis have shown that some homosexual women and men do have specific ideas about how they would like to achieve parenthood. Among them are collaborative forms of parenthood which involve actors from outside the couple dyad on a long-term basis. Specific preferences for the involvement of those actors are reported by the respondents. The implications of these collaborations are relevant from a legal point of view, but also concerning their recognition as families in the social environment. The ideal of the nuclear family, based on a couple dyad and their children, has also been found as an intended family pattern among homosexual women and men. The paper focuses on idealistic parenting concepts of homosexual women and men. After a description of their preferred ways to realizing parenthood the implications of those intentions concerning the greater social ideal of the family will be discussed.

**Lucy Ryan, University of Lancaster**

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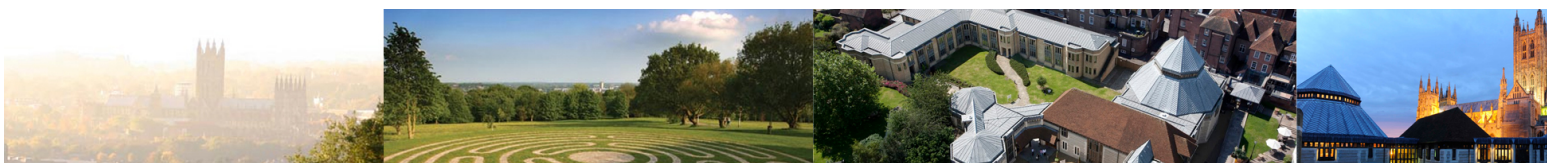
**Risky or at risk? Adoption agency portrayal and assessment of adoptive parenting and the (hypothetical) adopted child**

Invoking the concept of parental determinism, adoptive parenting is designed to provide "good parenting" to children who have previously received "bad parenting", working to undo the damage perceived to have already taken place. Within this context adoptive parents are consumers who are recruited, assessed and trained by commercial adoption agencies. The agencies themselves act as gatekeepers to achieving parenthood, and are required to balance the competing risks of quantity and perceived quality of adoptive parents.

This paper draws on empirical data derived using a number of different qualitative methods: ethnographic work at adoption agency events which recruit and train potential adoptive parents, analysis of materials used in recruiting and assessing adoptive parents, and qualitative interviews with adoption agency social workers. It focuses on how the policies and practices of the adoption agency contribute to the shifting representations of adoptive parenthood, including examining how the agencies compose, and recompose, their discourse around "good" adoptive parenting throughout the process of recruiting and approving adoptive parents. It further analyses the ways in which adoption agencies present and manage the perceived risks of adoptive parenting, including presenting the adoptive child as simultaneously risky and in need of protection from risk. The role of expertise will be considered in relation to both how professional social workers recruit, prepare, train and assess potential adoptive parents and to how adoptive parents are expected to gain expertise (including the mixed messages about the relevance of such expertise). Within this context the notion of personhood of the abstract adoptive child will be scrutinized, in particular the notion of how individual risk to and from a hypothetical child, and the way in which they should be parented, is presented and assessed.

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## Parenting in the life of persons with intellectual disabilities

The questions of childbearing and parenting in the life of persons with intellectual disabilities are very marginal both in research and professional practice. Becoming a parent is not a necessary condition in the transition to adulthood, but these days the experience of parenting is frequently a determinant element in establishing adult identity. The emphasis is on choice and self-determination. Although international guidelines emphasize the total social participation and self-determination of persons with disabilities, the topics of sexuality and parenting are extremely sensitive, especially for persons with intellectual disabilities, and protectiveness is more common at a local level. The question is how to predict who will be a “good parent” or an “adequate parent.” Many studies indicate that there is no correlation between intellectual capacity and successful parenting. More frequently in the professional literature parenting is interpreted as a social activity in which it is not only the intellectual capacity of the mother or father that determines the quality of parenting. Parenting capacity involves the complex interplay between children and their parents, home and community environments, and family and community services. Hence, our intention is to concentrate on these relationships and conduct interactive pair interviews with people with intellectual disabilities and relevant people in their lives. In our research we are curious about the opportunities and obstacles in the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities regarding parenthood in a variety of living conditions, as well as the characteristics of the parenting roles of women and men with intellectual disabilities. In our paper we will present the main aims, theoretical background and questions of our research, as well as the features of our sampling and research methods, and we will review our present results.

## Panel 16 LT2. Defining ‘good parenting’ (Dermott, Waterstradt, Reece, Aarset. Chair: Furedi)

**Esther Dermott, University of Bristol, UK**

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### Defining ‘Good’ Parenthood: Sociology’s Role

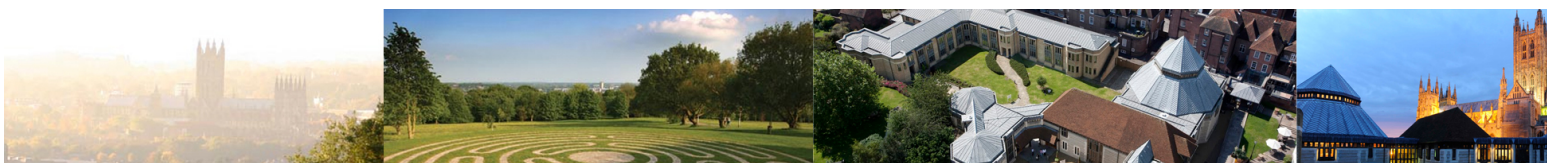
This paper provides a theoretical reflection on the concept of ‘good’ parenthood. It takes the position that while critiques of the term have thus far been important and useful, sociologists should now adopt a more proactive position and actively seek to define the term ourselves. Interest in parents and their parenting practices has been aligned with shifts towards more individualised personal relationships, the large-scale acceptance of neo-liberal views on the role of the welfare state, and the central importance of parent-child relationships both to individuals and society more broadly. This paper will first draw out some of the key aspects of ‘good parenting’ in UK popular and political discourse, highlighting how they are frequently associated with an overly narrow formulation of positive child outcomes that are centred on ensuring future labour market participation in which the children’s quality of life plays only a minor role. However the paper further argues (drawing on the concept of ‘displaying families’) that it is not possible to avoid the need for an audience for parenting practices. While family members are one form of audience, parenting will also be recognised by the state and other significant actors, such as educational establishments. As a consequence of these arguments, the paper suggests that, contrary to some previous social science arguments, there *is* a place for a normative definition of good parenting and caring practices. Embracing this tricky term is necessary both because it reflects a conceptual need to define some forms of parental engagement as problematic and in order to better influence policy debates and that defining the term should be at the forefront of academic focus on parenting. Finally, and more tentatively, it is suggested that ‘good’ parenting may be best addressed through a focus on the absence of the ‘bad’.

**Désirée Waterstradt, Munich, Germany (Independent Researcher)**

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### And what really is parenthood? How conceptual reflections lead into crucial questions of power balances

Besides the high social interest in parents and parenting there can be conceived a surprising gap. Underlying concepts of parenthood seem to be clear and self-explanatory. Even dictionaries and handbooks of sociology, psychology and pedagogics don’t explain consistently their concepts of parenthood but refer to other terms like childhood, family, motherhood or fatherhood. A first glance at the etymological development leads directly to crucial questions of underlying social processes, power structures and power balances. Not every language developed joint terms for father and mother. In Europe the synthesis seems to be a result of a long-term transformation process beginning around 500-300 B.C. slowly attenuating the highly hierarchical social structure. This multifactorial development process led in all European languages to the formation of some kind of a joint term – like in English “elder”, later: “parent” or in German “Eltern”. Among the factors in this process there was the Christian idea of spiritual kinship as well as the needs of the manorial economy. These powerful influences installed parents as a dual leadership of the medieval house and led to a loosening of the ties of decent. With the growing complexity of society the languages began to mirror the insight in its inner structures of organization forming abstract compositions with suffixes like -hood or -ship. As collective terms they stood for a condition, quality, rank or state – not only in kinship or nationhood, but also in childhood, fatherhood, motherhood and parenthood. Already the development of words like parenthood or ‘Elternschaft’ (German) clarify that the social practice of parenting in any society at any time is molded collectively by the basic social power structures and power ratios – reproducing disparities along all types of differences like social class, gender, age, expertise, national or religious identity as well as limiting or fostering personhood.



**Helen Reece, London School of Economics, UK**

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### **A Best Interests Bias for Balance**

In this paper, I analyse what counts as good parenting - and who counts as a good parent - in private law family disputes. My argument is that for the family law judge the good parent is the moderate, balanced parent: almost regardless of the issue or context, family law has a bias against extreme parents, and extreme parenting. I trace the origins of this bias back to the lesbian parenting cases of the 1990s, and I show that, while lesbian parenting is no longer regarded as extreme, the framework established in the lesbian parenting cases still endures. The bias for balance is currently at its most developed in cases concerning religious parents, and I examine this in relation to parents who either belong to extreme religions or engage in extreme religious practices. However, religion is far from the only contemporary manifestation of the family courts' dislike of extremes, which is in evidence in cases concerning such diverse issues as nudity, circumcision and inoculation, all of which I discuss in this paper. This is in the main a descriptive paper - my claim is that judges prefer moderate parents. But this inevitably raises, and I raise, the normative question whether this preference is justified. To begin to answer the normative question, we need to establish whether these parents are extreme or 'extreme': to what extent is extreme parenting a construct?

**Monica Five Aarset and Anja Bredal, NOVA - Norwegian Social Research, Centre for Welfare and Labour, Oslo, Norway**

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### **Minority families and the child welfare service. On child protection across national and other borders**

Migrant and ethnic minority children in the child welfare system are critical issues. The interaction between the Norwegian Child Welfare Service and migrant or minority families has been subject to much public debate over the past years. There is an overrepresentation of children of immigrant background in the Child welfare statistics. Studies show a wide spread mistrust and fear of the child welfare service among migrant and ethnic minority parents. In addition, increasing globalization and transnationalism of family life results in a corresponding increase in transnational family conflict and child maltreatment cases. As a consequence, national authorities and services are faced with situations where the child moves between and belongs to several countries and where cases stretch out across different legal, cultural and other borders. In the later years Norwegian child's welfare authorities has met critics from both ethnic minority groups in Norway, experts as well as from governments and interest groups in other countries for being too little culturally sensitive and too imperialistic and intervening too often. At the same time, the Child Welfare Service is criticized from other sources for being too culturally sensitive and for not intervening enough. In this paper we discuss dilemmas that arise in the interface between different parenting norms, ideologies, practices and legal frameworks, and how both parents and the child welfare service maneuver in this landscape. The paper will be based a study of a selection of Norwegian child protection cases where children might enter into public care. We will how minority cases are handled in comparison to how majority cases, both the Child Welfare Service and the County Board for Child Welfare and Social Affairs.

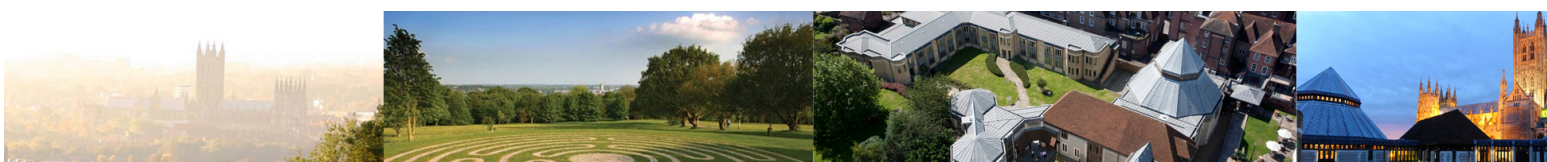
## **Panel 17 LT3. Constructing minority parenting (Dahlstedt, Fylkesnes, Rugkåsa, Song. Chair: Bendixsen)**

**Magnus Dahlstedt, Vanja Lozic and Kenneth Petersson, Linköping University, Sweden**

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### **Governing suburban youth: Discourses on suburbs, parents and other subjects in multi-ethnic Sweden**

The paper focuses on current debates on youth in deprived suburbs in Sweden. In the article, interviews with representatives of different organisations involved in managing the situation of suburban youth are analysed. One recurring theme in the interviews is problem discourses representing the *parent as a problem*. Departing from Foucault's understanding of governmentality, we analyse the construction of problems, problematization, and solutions, as depicted by the interviewees. The main problematizations are the deficiency of urban space, dysfunctional family relations and parents as passive and culturally different. On the basis of such problematizations the interviewees propose solutions in various ways fostering the parents to become responsible and active subjects, who have internalised current norms and values. In the article, these problematizations are set in genealogical perspective, through relating them to other historical discourses: namely the Philanthropic discourse of poor relief and the policing of families during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the discourse of problematic suburban youth in the 1980s. These different historical situations illustrate both similarities and differences in the problematizations of the early 2000s. With adopting this genealogical approach we do not claim that history repeats itself unchanged, but rather we wish to investigate how historical discourses are re-activated and acquire new meanings in new historical epochs. An important conclusion in the article is that the way of developing solutions to the problems of suburban youth in the early 2000s tends to focus on the transformation of individual parents, while structural dimensions get out of focus. What appears is a desire to foster parents and thus to produce a certain kind of subject, namely an active, responsible and cooperative individual, involved in the local community. Such a desire is both similar and different from the desire found in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in the 1980s.



**Marte Knag Fylkesnes, University of Bergen, Norway**

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### **On Child Welfare Services in Norway and “the risky parent” – Refugee Parents’ Perspectives**

The issue of ethnic minority families’ encounter with Child Welfare Services (CWS) in Norway has in recent years been debated in both national and international media. On the one hand CWS is criticized for “doing too much”, for lacking cultural competence and placing children out-of-home on faulty grounds. On the other hand CWS is criticized of “doing too little”, that case workers are hesitant to intervene in ethnic minority families, and that children consequently are not protected. However, across these arguments ‘the ethnic minority parent’ is construed as deficit and particularly “risky”; as culturally divergent, traumatized, lacking knowledge and language proficiency in contact with the welfare system, economically disadvantaged and so forth.

In this paper I will investigate how different ideas concerning ‘risk’ and childcare are negotiated in the CWS context. As an empirical point of departure ten parents with refugee backgrounds have been interviewed about their experiences from contact with CWS. The parents evaluated their encounters in different ways and emphasize different aspects, but all describe meeting specific expectations from case workers as to what they should do for their children in order to reduce risks of negative development. Questions that will be explored are therefore: What parental expectations do refugee parents experience meeting? How are children’s needs talked about? How is the “good” versus the “bad” parent construed? What sources of knowledge about children and child rearing practices can be identified? How do parents negotiate the expectations encountered with other expectations and responsibilities in their everyday lives? The paper thus aims at grasping some of the underlying assumptions concerning “risk” when parents have ethnic minority backgrounds in contact with CWS, and how these come into play with power structures embedded in the child welfare institution. The analysis furthermore has the potential of highlighting more general assumptions about risk, parenting and ethnicity within the borders of the Norwegian welfare state.

**Marianne Rugkåsa and Signe Ylvisaker, Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway**

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### **Discourses of othering minority ethnic families in Norway**

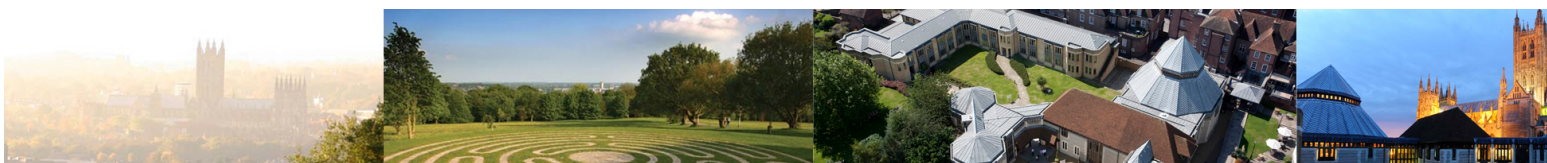
Our research project draws on 160 cases of actual practice with minority ethnic families/parents provided by child protection workers in Norway who were enrolled on the postgraduate course ‘Child welfare in a minority perspective’. This course is part of a programme launched by the Norwegian government aimed at developing knowledge-based child protection practice. We discuss the ways in which social workers construct stories about who their clients are and the reasons for their clienthood. Particular attention is given to parenting and the ways in which race, class and gender serve as overt, subtle or muted stories constructed in and through social work theory and practice.

**Miri Song, University of Kent, UK**

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### **How do multicultural people think about and engage in parenting practices?**

In recent decades, studies of multiracial (or ‘mixed race’) people and families have grown significantly in Western multiethnic societies. Up to now, studies of the US have dominated and these studies have explored the racial identifications of multiracial people (see Spickard 1989; Root 1996; Rockquemore & Brunnsma 2002; DaCosta 2007; Harris & Sim 2002) and the ways in which parents in interracial unions identify or raise their multiracial children (see Roth 2005; Rockquemore & Laszloffy 2005). Studies of ‘mixed race’ people and families in the UK have also grown considerably, reflecting the increasing prominence of such individuals and households in the British media and in public policies (see Aspinall & Song 2013; Ali 2003; Bauer 2010; Edwards & Caballero 2008; Olumide 2002; Tizard & Phoenix 1993, to name only a few). These studies have been important in refuting longstanding beliefs about the problematic nature of interracial relationships, as well as the allegedly troubled and in-between status of their progeny (see Caballero 2012). Nevertheless, we know very little about the experiences of *multiracial people as parents*, and the ways in which they think about and experience parenting. Given that such individuals are ‘mixed’, and not monoracial, what considerations and concerns arise for multiracial parents in their relationships with their children? How do they make sense of and ‘deal with’ ethnic and racial identification and socialization in the raising of their children, and how are such identifications and practices influenced by their own experiences of growing up? As I argue in this paper, many of these parents had very clear ideas about what constituted both good and bad parenting, especially in relation to how they negotiated understandings around ethnic and racial difference.





## Panel 18 SR3. Managing risk (Lowe, Qian Gong, Kiely, Sieben. Chair Bristow)

**Pam Lowe, University of Aston, UK**

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### **Blurring the Boundaries: Shifting understandings of the embodied responsibilities of women**

It has long been argued that the rise of foetal imaging technologies has shifted understandings of pregnancy to the detriment of women. Not only has attention been refocused towards the foetus as the primary patient during pregnancy, but it can also be argued that the images have been used to assign personhood before birth. Alongside this trend, there has been an erosion in the distinctions between the pre-conception, pregnancy and postnatal period for women. Women are increasingly expected to consider themselves as always potentially pregnant, adapting their behaviour in case they should become pregnant. There is also a blurring between the pregnancy and postnatal periods with similar embodied claims made about issues such as maternal stress and bonding. This trend has coalesced into the idea of 1000 critical days; a notion that period from conception to age two is a crucial determinant of all future lives. This paper will use examples from policies such as alcohol consumption during pregnancy and infant feeding to illustrate these trends. It will argue that the shift in distinctions between foetus/child and pre-conception/pregnancy/postnatal periods have specific implications for women and wider parenting policies. They reconfirm that women are the main carers for children, and judge their moral worth as persons in the care work that they perform. This understanding also suggests that the life chances of future generations, and any potential costs to society, are physically and psychologically transmitted through the action of mothers. In other words, the future citizenship status for children seemingly rests on whether or not their mothers conformed to the behaviour currently promoted in parenting policies.

**Sarah Qian Gong, University of Leicester, UK**

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### **Risk, advertising discourse and anxious parenting in China**

This paper analyses the representation and reception of the advertising of children's healthcare products on Chinese television. It draws on theoretical perspectives of 'risk' (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) and takes a socio-cultural approach (Lupton, 1999) to analyse the cultural representation of risk in commercial advertising, as well as the complex and dynamic processes of risk perception and management by new parents in China. Drawing on a discourse of analysis of advertising images and texts as well as a thematic analysis of 24 focus group discussions, this paper demonstrates a commercially-mediated public discourse of 'risk and protection' that has invoked a considerable amount of parental anxiety, uncertainty and ambiguity. It shows that parents positively respond to the discourse but are simultaneously disempowered as they become '(inadequate) risk managers' (Lee, et al., 2010: 295) and 'paranoid parents' (Furedi, 2008) in their everyday practices of childrearing. This paper argues that the representation and reception of the discourse of 'risk and protection' should also be understood in a neoliberal, commodified and medicalised childcare environment in China where limited civic and political rights, little trust of public institutions including the healthcare system and the one-child policy all play a role in reinforcing the risk discourse and undermining parental confidence.

**Elizabeth Kiely, University College Cork, Ireland**

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### **Parents, Children and Irish Consumer Culture – Tales of Moralising and Strategising**

In 2013, funded by the Government Department of Children and Youth Affairs, we conducted an interdisciplinary research project, a major part of which involved individual and couple interviews as well as focus group discussions with 79 parents / guardians on the topic of the 'commercialisation' and 'sexualisation' of children in Irish society. Possibly because of the focus of the study being on children, consumption was predominantly constructed by parents as a corruptive if somewhat inevitable phenomenon in contemporary Irish society. It has been possible to analyse this dataset for the purpose of exploring what parents, parenting and consumption practices were identified as particularly damaging, excessive or lacking taste. Parental strategies to manage family and child consumption, underpinned by a variety of logics and goals were also evident. Drawing on the sociology of moralisation (Le Grand, 2015), austerity parenting discourse (Jensen & Tyler, 2012; Allen et al., 2015) and other conceptual insights from parenting culture studies, parents' moralising and strategising tales will be the focus for analysis in the paper presented.

**Dr. Anna Sieben, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany**

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### **Reframing the parent-child-relationship in light of the governmental initiative to lower the age of kindergarten enrolment in Germany**

In recent years, the German government has created a great many new kindergarten and nursery places for children under the age of three years. Although this initiative still does not meet the needed numbers of places it has started to change the cultural frame of what is seen as the appropriate age of enrolment. For decades, three years used to be the ideal age for starting professional childcare, younger children were expected to be taken care of by their parents. Nowadays, a lot of parents enrol their children at the age of one or two years, some make use of younger enrolment (from four months onwards). The project presented here reconstructs parental ideas of good parent-child-relationships at this



moment of cultural change. How do parents adjust a subjectively right distance or closeness to their children when it comes to professional care arrangements? How do they experience the process of deciding for a time of enrolment? What is it like for them to hand their child over to a kindergarten teacher? Two aspects will be analysed in detail: Firstly, how do parents make use of professional knowledge, especially psychological knowledge and what does this knowledge enable (or disable) them to do? Secondly, how do they relate to other parents who are in a comparable situation and make similar or dissimilar decisions? How much cooperation or competition do they experience with their peers? The talk uses intermediate data of an ongoing research project on the psychologizing of parenting in Germany. In-depth interpretations of eight problem-centred interviews and ten group discussions with parents of young children will be presented.

## **Panel 19 SR6. Managing the female body (Chautems, Simonardottir, Millar, Nalepa. Chair: Lee)**

**Caroline Chautems, University of Lausanne, Switzerland**  
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### **Breastfeeding initiation at home. Between monitoring and negotiating: for a "comprehensive" approach of risk during the postnatal period**

In the current perinatal context, where breastfeeding is identified as the best option for feeding babies, the choice to formula feed is seen as a risky practice. But breastfeeding is also a generator of specific concerns, particularly related to the inability to quantify the amount of milk ingested by babies, and as a result, the perceived lack of control regarding their weight gain. Since May 2014, I have been conducting an ethnography with independent midwives, who I accompany during postnatal home visits in Vaud, Switzerland. These midwives practice "global care", which includes prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care. (These services are intended for women with physiological pregnancies, excluding those with "at risk" pregnancies. In Switzerland, these births usually take place at home or in a birth centre. Some maternity wards also accept independent midwives and their patients in their premises). Supporting mothers in breastfeeding initiation, leads them to create for themselves a "custom made" model of risk management concerning the baby's weight gain, and have to set their own limits of what is "acceptable risk". Free from institutional protocols, independent midwives argue for a qualitative assessment of breastfeeding, primarily perceived as a relational process between mother and child. By shifting the attention from the sensitive issue of weight gain to other evaluation criteria of breastfeeding, midwives recognize parents as the experts in understanding their own baby. They restore their position of full actors in the decision process concerning the appropriate reaction in case of unsatisfactory baby weight. The choice of giving birth at home results from a reflection work led by parents, and generally also includes a breastfeeding "project". Therefore, in situations they identify as risky, midwives have to enter a negotiation with parents, for an intervention such as "supplementing" with formula. However, from their perspective, the first priority remains to maintain breastfeeding. Beyond breastfeeding, parents who give birth at home tend to create their own risk culture, which is reflected in other aspects of care and decisions about their child's health. Supported by their midwife, but often criticized by other health professionals who do not share the same health care culture, a tension sets in between the defense of their practices and the dominant risk culture.

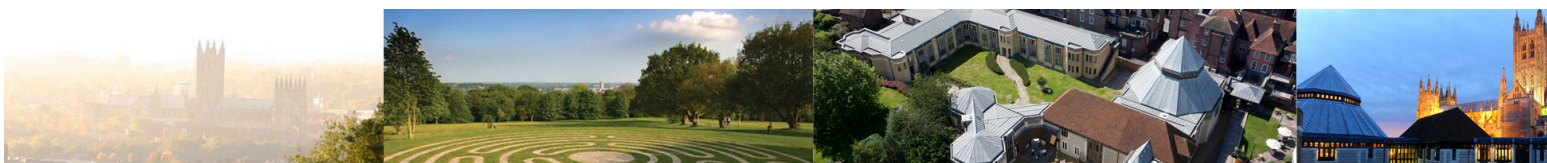
**Sunna Simonardottir, University of Iceland, Iceland**  
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### **When Nature Fails: Struggling to Breastfeed in a Culture of Breastfeeding**

The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond. This policy has been adopted by the Nordic countries, including Iceland, where there has been an upward trend towards higher breastfeeding rates and duration. Breastfeeding rates of Icelandic children demonstrate that 98% were breastfed at one week old with 86% exclusively breastfed at that age. Breastfeeding rates remain at a high level as 86% of three month old children were breastfed and 67% exclusively breastfed. These high rates indicate that the idea that women should breastfeed is culturally very strong in Iceland. Exclusive breastfeeding is constructed as a pillar of successful bonding and attachment and absolutely paramount when it comes to promoting the close primary relationship between mother and child but the experiences of those mothers who are unable to breastfeed or struggle with breastfeeding have not been explored adequately. This study will focus on their narratives as they often view themselves as failed mothers and as a group are often marginalized by certain scientific discourses and excluded from the narrative of "good mothering". The aim of this study was to bring their experiences to the surface. This was achieved by collecting stories from over 80 Icelandic mothers who had encountered serious difficulties breastfeeding and were willing to submit their written stories/narratives. Preliminary findings suggest that when the body of the mother is discursively situated as a "natural" object that is always able to perform as nature has intended, mothers who "fail" to breastfeed feel that their body has let them (and their children) down. Many of them experience negative feedback from health care professionals and society in general and they struggle enormously with guilt and a sense of failure as mothers.

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### **Abortion, Foetal Personhood and Risky Mothers**



There is a long tradition of feminist scholarship arguing that abortion needs to be understood in relation to ideologies of motherhood and, more particularly, 'good motherhood'. This paper considers the relationship of abortion politics to ideas about three sets of 'risky mothers'—mothers seen to be a risk to their children, and those considered risks to the nation through, respectively, their under-fertility and 'excessive fertility'. It examines how the meaning and value of foetal personhood is ascribed differentially across these three maternal bodies as well as the different national contexts of Australia and the UK.

**Elizabeth Nalepa, Case Western Reserve University, USA**

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### **Do Targeted Restriction of Abortion Provider (TRAP) Laws Promote Later Abortions?**

Targeted Restriction of Abortion Providers (TRAP) laws are a growing concern among abortion rights activists in the United States because of their presumed disproportionate impact on economically and socially disadvantaged women. The period during which TRAP have increased most rapidly also saw an overall increase in average gestational age between 2000 and 2008. Most concerning is the fact that abortion rates and raw numbers have declined in recent years across all groups of women--except poor women. Barriers to accessing abortion services are particularly burdensome to poor women. Evidence suggests that poor women face them more frequently and thus wait longer to obtain an abortion. However little research explores the direct impact of state level policies on women seeking abortions. Utilizing a hierarchical linear regression model and data from the 2008 Abortion Patient Survey, this research explores the direct impact of state level policies (TRAP laws) on the timing of and access to abortions as well as the distribution of this impact by individual characteristics of abortion seekers, with a special focus on SES. Put another way, how much of the variance in individuals does state level policy explain? The findings indicate that while the overall gestational age at the time of abortion may have risen, the average gestational age among low SES women was actually lower, suggesting that TRAP laws may first push abortions later into the pregnancy and then prohibit access. This has urgent implications for the health of reproductive age women in the United States.

