

## **Reproduction Research Group Seminar Series**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 12 – 1.30  
Room 4.10 of the Edith Murphy Building.**

**Dr. Petra Nordqvist,  
The Morgan Centre for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life,  
University of Manchester**

### **‘Curious Connections: On the relational and personal life significance of donating egg and sperm’**

As places are limited, please email [rrg@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:rrg@dmu.ac.uk) if you wish to attend to secure your place.

#### ***Abstract***

In a culture that emphasises the importance of genetic connectedness and which holds that vital and enduring family relationships pass through genetic reproduction (Edwards 2000), the decision to give away one's eggs or sperm is radical indeed. The connections that ensue between an egg and sperm donor and the donor conceived child are puzzling and foreign within contemporary family cultures; evidence suggests that they give rise to sensitivities and secrets in family networks. Through recent changes to law and policy, donor conceived offspring can now seek contact, and so donors are likely to deliberate on how to manage this trend towards openness within the context of their own everyday lives and relationships. To date, we know very little about how the practice of donating, and the shift to transparency, impact on donors' experiences. This paper introduces a new ESRC study, starting January 2017 at the University of Manchester, which seeks to understand these experiences better by exploring the impact of donating egg and sperm on donors' personal lives and relationships. In particular, it attends to why it is that personal life is significant to consider in the context of people donating egg and sperm, and how it may be conceptualised and understood.

#### ***Speaker biography***

Petra Nordqvist is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Manchester and a member of the Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives. Her research is in the areas reproductive technologies, kinship, intimacy and sexualities with a particular focus on donor conception and its impact on family relationships.

She is currently running a 30 month ESRC project exploring the impact of donating egg and sperm on donor's everyday life and relationships. This is a sister study to an earlier project (funded by the ESRC 2010-2013) which explored non-genetic kinship in the context of assisted conception on which she was Co-I together with PI Prof Carol Smart. Petra's co-authored book 'Relative Strangers: Family Life, Genes and Donor Conception' (Palgrave Macmillan 2014) with Carol Smart, draws on this project. Previously, she has researched and published extensively on same sex parenthood and lesbian donor conception. Her publications include, "'I've redeemed myself by being a 1950s "housewife": Parent-grandparent relationships in the context of lesbian childbirth', *Journal of Family Issues* (2015), 'Choreographies of sperm donations: Dilemmas of intimacy in lesbian couple donor conception', *Social Science and Medicine*, (2011) and 'Bringing kinship into being: Connectedness, donor conception and lesbian parenthood' *Sociology* (2014). For more information please see:

<https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/Petra.Nordqvist.html>