CFP
Close Relations: a multi- and interdisciplinary conference on critical family and kinship studies
Uppsala 24-26 October 2018

What is a family, and who is related to whom in an age of (seemingly) increasing family re-formation? Who is a mother, a father, and what does parenting or grand-parenting mean? What does it mean to be somebody’s child? To be orphaned? How and why are lines drawn between kin and non-kin?

Few questions raise more heated debate than those of family and kinship, and indeed, few areas demonstrate more clearly the interconnectedness of the private and the public. Recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on “family values” in the EU, with ongoing debates about marriage, migration, reproductive practices, parental leave and gendered divisions of (care) labour. In a time marked both by neoliberalism and the rise of nationalism in Europe and the US, an increasing recognition of non-conventional families and kin constellations has run parallel with re-affirmations of the nuclear family form. There is growing anxiety around the (welfare) state’s (future) ability to care for its citizens, from birth to death, which refocuses the family’s caretaking and wealth extending function. While having children is understood as a fundamental, universal and natural desire among humans, not all family forms and procreation practices are accepted or seen as normal.

The conference Close Relations offers a platform for problematizing these and other urgent issues for critical family and kinship studies, a field of research that has developed across disciplines in the past few decades. We wish to explore how changes in family and kin formation materialize in everyday lives, in stories, in fiction and art; how they are facilitated, contested, or hindered in cultural, political, legal, and medical contexts; how, in other words, close relations play out, become closer or closed off, in specific contexts and situations.

We seek contributions for 15-minute presentations. Contributions may address areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assisted reproductive technologies
- The child, the parent, the state
- Conceptualizing family and kinship
- Family/Kinship and sex/intimacy
- Migration/Transnational family and kinship
- Motherhood, fatherhood, parenthood
- Kin/NonKin, care, and responsibility
- Kinship beyond the human
- One-parent families
- Orphanhood
- Queer kinship
- Researching family and kinship: critical methodologies
- Time and place – the wheres and whens of families and kin
- Trans* kinship

Submit abstract (max 300 words) and a brief bio (max 50 words) to helena.henriksson@gender.uu.se no later than January 31, 2018.

The Swedish Network for Family and Kinship Studies is a multi-disciplinary network for scholars with an interest in exploring the meanings, boundaries, shifts and continuities in family and kinship, and the ways that family and kinship are linked to power relations, and maintained or disrupted by cultural values, social practices, or symbolic representations. We are interested in exploring and developing critical perspectives on family and kinship, historically as well as in the present. The Network is funded by FORTE 2016-2018 and based at Uppsala University.