

**‘In September, they will start to ask: “So you’re all coming here for Christmas?”’. Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship**

*Luca Guizzardi*

**How to cite**

Guizzardi, L. (2017). ‘In September, they will start to ask: “So you’re all coming here for Christmas?”’. Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship. [Italian Sociological Review, 7 (3), 325-350]

Retrieved from [<http://dx.doi.org/10.13136/isr.v7i3.194>]

[DOI: 10.13136/isr.v7i3.194]

**1. Author information**

*Luca Guizzardi*

Department for Life Quality Studies, University of Bologna, Italy

**2. Contact authors’**

E-mail: [luca.guizzardi@unibo.it](mailto:luca.guizzardi@unibo.it)

**3. Article accepted for publication**

Date: May 2017

**Additional information about  
Italian Sociological Review  
can be found at:**

**[About ISR-Editorial Board-Manuscript submission](#)**



*In September, they will start to ask: “So you’re all coming here for Christmas?”*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

Luca Guizzardi\*

Corresponding author:  
Luca Guizzardi  
E-mail: luca.guizzardi@unibo.it

**Abstract**

The article explores the social processes of kinship formation in lesbian and gay families. Analysing the stories of twenty-three rainbow families, the article pinpoints the reason why both mothers and fathers want to develop kinship networks and kinship connections. Through kinship bonds, all members are asked to agree to be publicly recognised as close relatives of the new-born. Feeling joy or shame about that, the members can accept or refuse this gift.

Keywords: rainbow families, kinship, gift.

**1. Introduction: the banality of the gay and lesbian family**

‘We love each other for the same things, and squabble over the same things, we are the same as any other family in our banality and normality’, Sara uses these few words to explain what she, her partner and their daughter Rebecca are, *together*, a family just like any other. Sara and Marta met through a friend, and have been together for twelve years. Living apart for a couple of years, in different regions, Sara and Marta split their time between the two cities until they decided to live together in Marta’s city, where she already worked as a vet. Both Sara and Marta had always wanted to become mothers, and never thought that their sexual orientation could be an impediment to this. As soon as Sara and Marta began the process of pregnancy, ‘instantly, my family was involved, with the travel, they helped us out financially, my family was great, my brother said, “stay at the nicest hotel, uncle Willy will pay”, we

---

\* Department for Life Quality Studies, University of Bologna, Italy.

had incredible support', Sara tells. On her side, Marta reveals that, even though there were no direct discussions, there was some '*silence*' with her father who, even though he considered his daughter's partner like his own daughter, 'doesn't want the fact that we love each other and are a couple to be said out loud... he hears Rebecca call me mum, we have spent the last twelve Christmases with them, the nieces and nephews call me aunt, so it's not that they don't know that we are a couple and have a daughter, but it's something which is not spoken, not said out loud'. Marta, not Sara, is the biological mother, so Marta's father is Rebecca's biological grandfather. And yet, despite the natural link between him and his granddaughter, 'he is a little embarrassed, he's rather old style, for someone like him going for insemination in Denmark makes you a mutant,' Sara explains. Let's listen to another story, a story of two dads, Giacomo and Matteo. Giacomo recalls that:

our entry into family life was rather turbulent. First I spoke to my mother and my brother, I spoke to my father later but he put on an act: he said, 'I'm having a heart attack! Oh God, I'm dying!' I said, 'Dad this is my life', and he went through a rough period, putting me and us through a lot of pain. Then the years went by and I began to stop caring, I said, 'That's enough, if you want to feel bad, ok, but I'm your son, it's this or nothing'.

Unfortunately Matteo's parents didn't accept their son's homosexuality either, 'my mother was convinced that Giacomo had corrupted me' (*Matteo*). 'Then,' Matteo explains, 'What happened with the kids was a complete revolution'. *Everyone went mad over the twins*, Pietro and Enrico:

Referring to his partner, Giacomo tells that 'his mum is crazy about these kids, every Wednesday she comes to visit, her grandchildren are the best thing in the world, she is rejuvenated, she would jump through hoops for them, she picks up both of them'.

However, before she went crazy over the grandchildren, Matteo adds that

My mother was very afraid of the opinion of her own brothers and sisters, when she had the courage to talk to them and what came out, her brothers and sisters showed themselves to be far more open than what she had thought. And when the children were born, it was Christmas, we were in America and they all phoned us together, it was a lovely call, all the aunts and uncles wanted to hear about our children who had just been born.

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

The other grandmother, on the other hand, lives a long way away (Giacomo's parents live on an island), and only came to see her grandchildren once, in December last year. Giacomo, however, confesses one of his fears:

We will go to ... in July with the kids and will be staying with their grandparents, we have to go to a friend's wedding, that will be tough, I'm afraid of what might happen, they will see us in church with the children, and my father will feel very bad ... they'll be talking about us for months. His mother, on the other hand, has had no more qualms about it since the children arrived, and always says to people: 'My son Matteo has a partner called Giacomo and they have two children'.

But who is the biological father? In fact, only the two dads know, and keep it a secret. Each one is the natural father of one of the two twins, as Giacomo explains, 'We said: "Let's plant your and my seeds, make the little embryos, implant both of them and see what happens"... so that's what happened, and we got both of them'. But the grandmother, *crazy in love*, is crazy about both grandchildren, just like other relatives are crazy about both twins –without knowing and without wanting to know which twin is a blood relative.

The silence wanted by the *natural* grandfather about how his granddaughter was born and the natural grandparents' worry about 'what others might say' about the family made of their son, his partner and the two twins pinpoint the issue I would like to tackle in these pages. In *heterosexual* families, we may have 'knife brothers', 'snake relatives', 'assassin cousins', that cruel Italian nomenclature of kinship; we may not like our brother-in-law, our cousin's wife; we may disapprove of our daughter's marriage, and we may even disown and disinherit a son or grandson, but we cannot question the *goodness* of the natural event of their birth. On the other hand, for families composed of two parents of the same sex, it appears that we may coin the phrase 'homosexual parents, unnatural parents'. The problem lies not in the nature of the person but in the bond; the problem is not in the gender of the person but that of the family. This is the challenge of gay and lesbian families: the *gift* or the *shame* of being part of it. Through the stories of twenty three families composed of two mothers or two fathers, I will attempt to demonstrate some of the methods by which this challenge is *launched* and *accepted* (so it is a gift) or *refused* (so it is a shame).

## 2. Problems of recognition of the gay or lesbian family

A question. Where there is no public – juridical or legal – recognition of gay and lesbian families, does this make them illegitimate? Are they a wholly private matter? Or, as Bourdieu (1996) would say, are they *familles sans nom*? If, on one hand, legal recognition is not a sufficient condition for the full acceptance by society, on the other hand, the recognition of gay and lesbian families is a fundamental factor for their well-being (Prati, Pietrantonio, 2008; D'Amore, 2010). On their part, the children of same-sex couples who are not legally recognised demonstrate greater resources and resilience, they build their family relations as highly significant, and at the same time, recognise the *power*, i.e. the importance, of the *law* (Goldberg, Kuvalanka, 2012). While the lack of legal and social institutionalisation of same-sex couples could induce them to perceive the bond that unites them lightly, and therefore break it to seek new *partners*, in reality this does not happen (Lau, 2012). As Lau reports in his work, the high percentage of separation of homosexual couples is due to the *type* of person: individuals who, themselves, demonstrate more liberal attitudes and are more inclined to frequently change *partner*, record higher percentages of ending the relationship. And if married same-sex couples, compared to registered partners, record a greater inclination to divorce, this is because, where both solutions are provided for, regularly married couples, with a much broader and stronger social support network compared to non-married couples, know that they can activate ties and assistance to mitigate the negative effects deriving from the break-up (Badgett, 2009; Wiik, Seierstad, Noack, 2014). Once again, therefore, it is not the sexual orientation itself that is the 'cause' but the form of bond between the two individuals.

However, tackling the problem of recognition in specifically institutional and legal terms, as underlined by Gross and Federico (2014: 24), leads us to forget 'systématiquement le fait que les familles homoparentales, les enfants élevés par des couples de même sexe, qu'ils aient un, deux, trois ou quatre parents sont, comme les autres, insérés dans des familles plus larges'. In fact, in the process of formation of the homosexual couple, support from the families of origin plays a fundamental role (Donaldson, 2000; Rault, 2014) as the acceptance of the son or daughter's partner *means the acceptance of their homosexuality*. Moreover, the more *public* the coming out, i.e. the more couples declare to others inside and outside of the family networks, the stronger the cohesion inside the couple (van Eeden-Moorefield, Pasley, Crosbie-Burnett, King, 2012). Here we must add that if the homosexual couple manages to create solid and inclusive bonds with their respective families of origin, they will have more support in the transition towards parenthood (D'Amore, Baiocco, 2014) and, in this way, the negative effects of stigmatisation for the

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

child of having two mothers or two fathers are neutralised (Short, 2007; Bos, Gartrell, 2010). Unfortunately, the other side of the coin shows that gay and lesbian families receive much less in terms of help, support and assistance from their families of origin compared to heterosexual families (Kurdek, 2004, 2006; Gross, 2009).

All this leads us to the underlying problem, the dilemma. From the families of origin of the two parents, we have grandfathers and grandmothers, aunts and uncles, cousins who, however, find themselves linked to a new type of family. For this reason, gay and lesbian families are a 'mini-laboratoire sociale où pourrait s'étudier les décompositions de la filiation en ces différents aspects: biologique, légal, social' (Gross, 2006: 73). Gay and lesbian families demand the deconstruction and reconstruction of the figures and roles of father and mother (Herbrand, 2012; Swennen, Croce, 2015) but also of other relatives, and at the same time establish new connections and disconnections (Guizzardi, 2016).

In contrast to heterosexual parent families, gay and lesbian families *offer* new and undoubtedly original ways of family connection and which may be judged as *contra naturam*. In the following paragraph I will present some considerations on this specific issue.

### 3. Gay/straight parent families: a question of gender and value

*Queerness* – Edelman provokes – names the side of those *not* "fighting for the children", the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism' (Edelman, 2004: 3). Lee Edelman is one of the strongest and most important voices of the Queer theory, that fundamentalist Queer current which – in a nutshell – sees homosexuals' desire for parenthood as a clear *death drive*. For Queer fundamentalism, homosexuality – in the words of another authoritative and radical figure, Michael Bronski – 'represents sex incarnate' (Bronski, 1984: 191), the purest sex and anything else as it is 'not engendering new life' (Bronski, 1984: 191). It therefore seems that the most radical form of the Queer theory defends homosexuality from its self-destroying tendency, that of subjugation to the dominant structures of the heterosexual society, leveraging on the fact that a family cannot derive naturally from a homosexual couple. We must always remember – a third authoritative voice, Michael Warner, teaches us – that 'gay social life is not as ritualized and institutionalized as straight life' (Warner, 1996: 115) and if we really want to believe that 'there is such thing as a gay way of life' then 'it consists in these relations, a welter of intimacies outside the framework of professions and institutions and ordinary social obligations'

(Warner, 1996: 116). So, in the gay or lesbian couple, there is no room for children. Never mind these voices of the Queer theory, however: *some gays and lesbians may want to have a family and children ... like everyone else*. And that desire, mixed with the nostalgia that afflicted rainbow families in the Eighties and Nineties (Pollack, Vaughn, 1987; Weston, 1991; Lewin, 1993), is no longer felt today as unrealisable, but rather as a *thinkable option* (Fouroni, Coyle, 2002). On one hand, while homosexual couples wanting a child are in conflict with the normative ideal of (hetero)sexual reproductive relations, on the other hand, ‘when same-sex couples become parents [...], they embrace a fundamentally heteronormative and heterosexist institution that has traditionally defined what kinds of sexual relationships, gender roles, and families are legitimate’ (Hopkins, Sorensen, Taylor, 2013: 106). In this reproduction of heteronormativity (Kurdek, 2004), there is *an original element of the gay and lesbian parent family*. And it is on this that I would like to briefly reflect.

In rainbow families, the story of the *natural event* of conception is very important (Scaramozza, 2009; Trappolin, Tiano, 2015) as it implies a different *narration* of the origins of the child which must not be hidden or denied for the child’s well-being and serenity (Ferrari, 2005; Lelleri, Prati, Pietrantonio, 2008; Cavina, Danna, 2009). For this reason, and in relation to the other type of family (heterosexual parents) who make recourse to artificial procreation techniques, right from birth the homosexual family starts to tell the child his or her story and the story of his or her family, without hiding the involvement of the *Tiers donneur* or *donor* (of sperm, ova or gestation capacity). If the *symbolic strategy* (Lewin, 1993, 2009) by which the natural dimension is re-introduced into the gay and lesbian family, in the *narration*, it varies according to whether the parents are two mothers or two fathers, the mothers and fathers share the same problem: children are not born under a cabbage leaf (Di Nicola, 2016) – and nor are they brought by storks! It is the problem of the value of the child, of who wants to be a parent, father with another father or mother with another mother (Guizzardi, 2017). *Who can give or not give life to the child, this is the ‘problem’, where ‘who’ does not indicate a single person but a relationship as a couple and a family*. Let’s go back a few years in time and remember: ‘child of sin’, ‘child of N.N.’ (on identity cards in Italy until 1975, ‘bastard’, ‘natural or illegitimate child’ and ‘legitimate child’ (the latter two suppressed in our legal system only a couple of years ago) are categories defining the *value* not only of the child but the bond from which he or she was born, a value within a very precise and defined hierarchical scale. Being a *single mum*, was a scandal for many years, establishing a condition of *contempt* from society for undermining the social order that wanted women to ‘stay at home and look after the children’. The child, the fruit of sin, was treated very differently from the *other* children and held a stigma that they would carry forever. Now let’s go back to last year, and



Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

the epithets launched by members of parliament and public figures during the debate on the need to introduce the institution of *step-child adoption* into the law on same-sex civil unions – the so-called Cirinnà law – for children of two fathers: stolen children, unnatural trading of wombs and women, slave trade, unnatural children ... These are all *attributions of value on the capacity no longer of the individual but of a union between two persons to give life, to have a child*. If for example the suppression of the difference between natural and legitimate child promotes the principle according to which all children have the *same value independently of the type and presence or otherwise of a bond between the father and the mother because all parents have the same value*, then how can we extend this principle also to children born into same-sex families, and not limit it only to those of heterosexual families? Families like others... families who, like others, with equal value to other families, have children who are just like the others. Every person who is born *imposes* a new order of kinship, they impose new roles, new bonds and new relations between people who, involuntarily, find themselves involved in this new social reality which, in the case of same-sex families, *is born* from an act which, itself, poses a problem of the gift of mutual recognition: *Do I want to be the grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt... of a child born from a homosexual couple or not?* This is the *dilemma*.

In the following paragraphs, I will investigate this aspect of the recognition of the same-sex family within the kinship structure through the stories of lesbian and gay families.

#### 4. The research sample

Tables 1 and 2 describe the main characteristics for the families constituting the non-representative sample of the research – sixteen families composed of two mothers and seven families composed of two fathers. The twenty three stories analysed here are part of a research project still in progress, the purpose of which is to investigate the gay and lesbian family in its being a *new family form* and, therefore, what are the processes, symbolic, cultural and social representations it adopts in its relations with the family and with relatives. The interviews were conducted in the past two years with intentional families (Moore, Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, 2013) or planned families (Biblarz, Savci, 2010), i.e. families in which the child is not the product of previous unions but a child desired by the two parents. Four couples married abroad, only one joined in a civil union in Italy – the majority of meetings with the families were held prior to the approval of the law on civil unions which came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> May last year. All our parents made recourse to some form of donor-assisted reproduction.

*TABLE 1. Characteristics of the sample (lesbian families)*

<b>Mothers' names</b>	<b>Mothers' ages</b>	<b>Names and ages' of children</b>	<b>Civil status</b>	<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Parental status</b>	<b>Method of conception</b>
Veronica	40	Paolo (a few days after the interview)	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Advertising agent	None	Closed donor (Spain)
Stefania	39			Higher diploma	Assistant director	Biological mother	
Rachele	49	Melania 8 years	Married in Spain	Degree	Office worker	None	Closed donor (Belgium)
Lucia	38	Andrea 2 years		Degree	Office worker	Biological mother	
Claudia	30	Ambra 6 months	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Office worker	None	Closed donor (Belgium)
Patrizia	34			Degree	Office worker	Biological mother	
Consuelo	40	Mattia 7 months	Married in Spain	Degree	TV production	Biological mother	Closed donor (Spain)
Marzia	48			Higher diploma	Cinematographic organiser	None	
Silvia	40	Allegra 4 years	Not married	Degree	Lawyer	Biological mother	Closed donor (Denmark)
Cecilia	46			Higher diploma	Designer	None	
Greta	42	Francesco, Flavio 1 year	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Both employed in the same public company	Biological mother	Closed donor (Spain)
Bianca	48			Degree		None	
Giovanna	35	Tommaso 3 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Nurse	None	Known donor
Carla	42			Degree	Structure manager	Biological mother	Self-insemination
Asia	39	Anna Luce 2 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Municipal police worker	Biological mother	Closed donor (Spain)
Lisa	32			Beautician diploma	Freelance professional	None	
Bruna	45	Elia 4 years	Not married, no civil union	Higher diploma	Journalist	None	Closed donor (Belgium)
Giorgia	41			Degree	Interpreter	Biological mother	
Margherita	40	Alessia 4 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Architect	Biological mother	Closed donor (Belgium)
Dora	39			Higher diploma	Warehouse worker	None	
Cristina	39	Eva, Ginevra 10 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Freelance professional	None	Closed donor (Spain)
Raffaella	47			Degree	Teacher and entrepreneur	Biological mother	

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

Rosa	53	Federico 5	Civil union	Higher diploma	Teacher	Request for special adoption	Known donor
Anna	39	Paolo 2		Higher diploma	Representative	Biological mother	Self-insemination
Sara	39	Rebecca 1 year and a half	Not married, no civil union	Specialisation school	Agent	None	Closed donor (Denmark)
Marta	38		Degree	Vet	Biological mother		
Franca	39	Ada	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Social worker	Biological mother	Open donor
Beatrice	39	3 years		Higher diploma	Warehouse worker	None	Self-insemination
Amanda	34	Giacomo 2 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Both work in radio-television production	Biological mother	Anonymous closed donor (Denmark)
Agnese	49			Degree		None	
Melania	37	Ottavia 1 year	Not married, no civil union	Higher diploma	Office worker	Biological mother	Closed donor (Denmark)
Gloria	43			Degree	Freelance professional	None	

TABLE 2. *Characteristics of the sample (gay families)*

Fathers' names	Fathers' age	Name and age of children	Civil status	Level of education	Occupation	Parental status	Method of conception
Giacomo	42	Pietro, Enrico 2 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Dentist	Biological father	Surrogacy (California)
Matteo	43			Degree	Freelance professional and researcher	Biological father	
Antonio	38	Expecting	Not married, no civil union	Degree	Sales director	Biological father	Surrogacy (Canada)
Ettore	39			Degree	Architect	None	
Mattia	55	Expecting	Married in the United States	Degree	Lawyer	Pending	Surrogacy (California)
Simone	40			Diploma	Hairdresser		
Filippo	46	Paolo, 2 years	Married in the United States	Degree	Advertising agency partner	None	Surrogacy (California)
Aldo	45			Degree	Lawyer	Biological father	
Gabriele	33	Gaia, Eugenio 2 years	Not married, no civil union	Higher diploma	Employee in private company	None	Surrogacy (New York)
Corrado	37			Degree	Lawyer	Biological father	
Francesco	52	Chiara, 10 years	Married in the United States	PhD in literature	PhD	Biological father	Surrogacy (California), same surrogate mother for both children
Ugo	50	Davide, 7 years		Degree in humanities	PhD	Biological father	
Taddeo	48	Gioacchino, 2 years	Not married, no civil union	Degree in computer engineering	Middle manager in motorcycle company	Biological father	Surrogacy (California)
Alfredo	34			Degree in foreign languages	Secondary school teacher	None	

Eleven lesbian couples chose anonymous sperm donors (only one chose Embryo transfer procedure for in vitro fertilization, IVF) while five preferred an open sperm donor. Among these, the donor is a friend of the mothers. All fathers made recourse to surrogacy – six couples in the United States and only one in Canada. All the families belong to the ‘Famiglie Arcobaleno’ association, which I contacted in order to develop the universe of reference for this research work.

**5. ‘You cannot hide the pregnancy. It’s really showed off. They all see our family’**

Consuelo is talking. She and Marzia married in Spain in 2015, ten years after their first meeting. In Marzia’s family of origin, as Marzia herself tells,

Since the beginning, Consuelo has been absorbed totally by my mum, her husband, my aunt, my cousins. Once, I said to them ‘I’m coming to see you’, my family lives in Caserta. But they asked immediately, ‘And Consuelo? Isn’t she coming with you?’ But...I was astonished! What does it mean? I wonder, if Consuelo doesn’t come too, I can’t go to see my family?! They always want to see Consuelo! That’s incredible.

And the ties between Consuelo and Marzia’s family became even stronger when Consuelo became pregnant with their child. She adds, ‘since my pregnancy, they continually ask, “When are you coming?” and now, with Mattia, our son, they have got worse!’ For Marzia and Consuelo, Marzia’s family has accepted Consuelo totally and unconditionally. However, while Marzia had never hidden her homosexuality from her family, her parents, brothers and sisters and other relatives, Consuelo had ‘not yet tackled the issue of homosexuality at home. My brother knew but my parents knew nothing. At work and with friends, here in Rome, they knew, but my family back in [...] no. It was something I kept putting off, also because I didn’t see them often’ (*Consuelo*). Playing with the distance between her home city where all her family live and that where she moved to, firstly to study, and later, to work, Consuelo has always postponed her coming out until it could be put off no more for a very simple reason: ‘You can’t hide the pregnancy! It’s really showed off. They can all see’ (*Consuelo*). As long as the homosexual couple does not wish to follow that mortal impulse of having children – to paraphrase the voices of Queer fundamentalism – and do not wish to come out to their families and other relatives, it is easy to hide the type and nature

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?"*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

of the relationship with the person they live with – more often than not, living together becomes cohabitation.

The partner is the flatmate, a friend they share a flat with or who rents a room. Or they can choose the strategy used by Veronica: 'I lived alone, she lived alone, we just had to decide when, it was not a decision we had to share with someone else'.

Once the homosexuality of the child is accepted, the news of the future gay or lesbian family is a source of joy. That's how it was for Silvia. When she told her parents she was a lesbian, and that she had been with Cecilia for some time, Silvia tells that:

Clearly it was not a piece of news that they jumped for joy at, but they have always been very accepting. The same day, my mother said to me, 'Give me time, I need to understand'.

Cecilia's father needed more time than her mother to accept his daughter's homosexuality:

My father needed time to talk to me directly, but what he said to my mother the following evening was, 'Listen, the important thing is that she is ok. If she's ok with it, that's fine'. Then, for a long time he wasn't able to talk about it. He had difficulty talking about it with other people.

Having serenely accepted homosexuality as the daughter's true nature, the news of a child on the way brings happiness. Cecilia recalls that 'my father told us, "I am worried about this and that, but if you want, I'll be here for you. What are you going to call it?"' And the evening we told them, my mother told me, 'He's been singing since you told him.'

The (explicit or otherwise) acceptance of homosexuality does not always mean the acceptance of the homosexual family. Giorgia and Bruna had no problems with their family while they were *just a couple*. A little at a time, the parents of both of them accepted the homosexuality of their daughters and their relationship. Cristina and Raffaella also had no problems with their families of origin as the couple had never come out despite the fact that they lived together. When the time came to communicate their choice of becoming mothers, the parents, above all those of the biological mothers, did not react well to the news:

*Giorgia*: 'At first, icy! They didn't take it well, they weren't expecting it, our choice fell on top of them without them having had a chance to think about it. The first two months were filled with very stormy phone calls, then they

realised that a baby was on the way and that this could only be a good thing.’

*Cristina*: ‘My father was really happy, then when he found out we were having two girls, he always wanted lots of girls, he adores them. My mother took it badly at first, she said things to me that I still have trouble accepting today.’

The dilemma is explained clearly by the daughters:

*Giorgia*: ‘I think it was really because they weren’t expecting it, they had never imagined it and it was a question of having to publicly cope with my homosexuality. First I lived in ..., and they lived in ..., and we went there together every now and then, and in that small town there was always an air of “know and don’t know”; everyone knew but nobody said anything. But when you’re pregnant you can’t hide it any more. For my father and my mother that meant having to share their intimacy, their private life, their family, with other people.’

*Cristina*: ‘My mother is the product of her time. The problem was always what other people thought.’

Those grandparents had to share the fact that they were the grandparents of a child born from two women.

That’s the problem! Not only the pregnancy cannot be hidden; *the family cannot be hidden*. As Matteo told us at the start, *the whole town will see them in church, they will see it (Matteo and Giacomo’s family and their twins) in church*. The family of these mothers and these fathers is not only their family-and-nobody-else but the mothers and fathers and also daughters and sons, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, cousins. It is the family to which others also belong, grandparents, aunts and uncles, the child’s cousins... it is a node in the broader kinship network. Having a child establishes a set of relations, connections of completely original roles and, above all, transcending the individual will of those who find themselves included in this new *society*. By transcending I mean that it goes beyond the natural connections and, above all, beyond the intentions of those who find themselves – *nolens volens* – belonging to it:

*Consuelo*: ‘When I told them I was pregnant, I said to my parents, “This child will have two parents, who are two women, two mothers. Call them whatever you like, but this must be clear and it must be clear right from the start to the child and those close to him or her.”’

*Bruna*: ‘I have to tell you something, we’re having a baby’...and my mother’s first reaction was, “I thought I was never going to be a grandmother.”’

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?"*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

*Margherita*: 'I wanted to be certain, this was an absolute objective, of the fact that they would accept my homosexuality before telling them I was going to be a mother, because this would have been confusing for them and would have complicated matters which really needed to be tackled in order. This means wanting to have them very close. My parents were afraid of their relatives and friends, the biggest monster was what their relatives and friends would think of them.'

*Bianca*: 'My father didn't know anything about it, he found himself with Greta four months' pregnant and had to accept the whole thing totally and immediately.'

Becoming grandparents or uncles, or relatives generally, means accepting the role of grandfather, grandmother, great uncle, great aunt...when the way of being a family is really against all that I *believe* the family to be. By role I do not only refer to the nomenclature function of kinship, the lexical category. I simply refer to the fact that the social role is the expression of the social identity which, in turn, is a sub-set of personal identities (Archer, 2003): we seek to cover the role so that it represents our own personal identity, what we really want to be, in the best possible way. Therefore, in this perspective, the social role offered requires the acceptance of the partial or total transformation of that personal identity, the acceptance of that social reality, i.e. those relationships and bonds, it emerges from and which have determined it. But the acceptance future fathers and future mothers ask of their parents and other relatives must be *public* (the other face of display work) (Finch, 2007; Almack, 2008). And this is what *can create* problems.

I will explain this aspect by reading some stories of how the future grandparents, aunts and uncles, great aunts and uncles *took* the news of the *sweet expecting*.

Corrado is an only child. Although he always spent time with his parents, he had

Always had a conflictual relationship with my father which worsened when I made my life choice. They were never the type of parents to throw me out, that no! But my father never accepted either my homosexuality or when we decided to have a child. (*Corrado*).

Corrado was not bothered that his father publicly accepted his son's homosexuality. Instead, Corrado adds,

My father had finally accepted my homosexuality, but had never wanted to let the world know. I let him do it because I had my own life and so he never had to tell his friends, "My son is gay and has a partner".

When he became a father himself, Corrado left no other choice for his father, 'I put him in a corner,' (*Corrado*) and challenged him to accept that

'The children,' that's what I said to my father, 'may or may not be the children of shame, but they will be mine and Gabriele's children and so you will have to accept that the world knows that we are gay, that we live together and that we have children?'

What effect did this challenge have? For the time being, I give you Corrado's words: 'My father didn't want to know anything about the whole process...'. Then, what happened when the twins, Matilde and Marco, were born, when Corrado's father became a grandfather? Did he accept this transformation of his identity? Readers, please bear with me until the next paragraph.

Taddeo's mother had accepted Alfredo, her son's partner, 'like her own son' right from the start (*Taddeo*) and was thrilled at the news that she was going to be a grandmother – 'my mother had by then accepted, sadly, the idea that she was never going to be a grandmother to a child of mine and Alfredo' –, she tried only once, at the beginning of the 'sweet expecting', to pass over the original nature of her son's family as a more traditional, (heterosexual) family: 'She asked me for a photo of the surrogate mother so that she could show it to her friends and say, "this is the mother"' (*Taddeo*). The grandmother never received the photo because, as Taddeo explains, 'I said, "Mum, we will tell her the truth, that we are her two dads and remember that you must never be *ashamed* of your son'.' While at the start the grandmother was rather reluctant to tell the truth, afterwards, 'the fact of having made her face her own personal "coming out" with other people' (*Taddeo*), made her a *declared* and happy grandmother!

One grandfather supported two future fathers who had begun to have doubts. Filippo tells of when

One morning I called my father, he was 80, and I said, 'Listen Dad, I don't know if this is the right thing, I don't know if I will be a good father...'. And he said to me: 'Filippo, don't ask me to understand because this thing is light years away from who I am, but if you and Aldo are convinced, go ahead, don't give a damn about anyone else. I know that you will be good parents'.

Filippo is the social father of Paolo. Despite this, Filippo's father refers to his son and his son's partner as equal parents, and, *even if this thing is light years away from him*, he recognises Filippo's future family.



Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

Finally, a story with a sad ending. Carla tells us that

My mother met Giovanna before she knew we were a couple. She loved Giovanna, she said 'She is a good person, unselfish and intelligent'. But when I said her 'I'm with her, and we live together. You pretend not to understand but we are a couple'...Oh, my god! Terrifying! Now, Giovanna is the devil and my mum doesn't want to see her anymore. She went to war with me.

That grandmother never wanted to meet the other mother of her own grandchild, even though she had met her and *bad* liked her.

As shown by the stories told here, there were many different reactions concerning very different emotions: happiness or indifference, amazement or perplexity, encouragement or anger or repulsion. *Joyful boast or shame*: being *happy* because in nine months' time they would become the grandparents or uncles or aunts of a child or being *ashamed* because their son or daughter, brother or sister, niece or nephew, was starting a family *contra Naturam*?

Another two stories, that of Veronica and Stefania and Asia and Lisa, about some conceptions of this *Naturam*.

'She said: "So I will be a grandmother too". This thing is so sweet, for me,' Veronica talks about the consciousness of her mother about becoming a grandmother. But Veronica is not the child's natural mother; therefore, her own mother cannot be a natural grandmother. Despite this, the mother recognises that she will *all the same* be a grandmother. For the other grandmother, the natural grandmother, there is no problem, as the two girls received every encouragement from Stefania's mother: 'right away, my mother, and before we had thought about it, told us "Why don't you have a baby?"' (*Stefania*).

Asia's brother 'didn't agree at all, he was really against it, he put up a wall', tells Asia about when she told him she was expecting a baby. On the contrary, Lisa reveals that 'my mother was always on my side and, when Asia did the test and I told my father, he said: "Oh, if people have something to say, look the other way".'

The blood ties between the child being born and the other relatives is not sufficient for accepting the event of the birth, just as the lack of a blood (or genetic) bond is enough to reject it. It is not the nature of the *blood* ties and the *genetics* of nature to which Simone and Mattia owe the *unforeseeable reaction* of Mattia's mother when, hearing the news that she would 'become a grandmother for the second time, my brother has a daughter, she said, "And how am I supposed to help you, locked in this wheelchair?"' (*Mattia*). What nature made it so that 'the first thing she thought of, as a grandmother, was

how she would be able to be a grandmother' (*Mattia*)? It is the same nature that made Antonio's *non-biological* grandfather feel 'huge love for the grandson who is more than his grandson' (*Agnese*)?

**6. 'From that moment on, I saw a really relaxed, reborn person. And he wants to be called grandfather'**

These are the words of Carla who, still rather emotionally, recalls the day that Tommaso was born, when

There were thirty of us in hospital, it still gives me goose bumps to think about it. Everybody wanted to hold him - this on midday on the day after he was born. We were all so happy, it was a great celebration, my father and my mother were there. Two days later my father wrote me a letter, telling me that at that moment he understood that everything that Giovanna and I had built was love, because everything that we had given to everyone else was coming back to us and he was so surprised by the experience that from then on he let everything go. It's funny... he's waiting for Tommaso to learn to talk, because, my mother said, he can't wait to talk to Tommaso.

Carla's parents never ostracised their daughter for her homosexuality, and welcomed her partner right from the start. The fear felt by Carla's father over the birth of his grandson was due to the *novelty* of the event more than the usual worries linked to the fact that only one of the two parents – Giovanna – had a 'proper job' while the other – Carla – still had no permanent work. The future grandfather could still not imagine himself, *represent himself*, in that reality which was unfolding and which he would belong to. Then, faced with reality, before the family that had just been 'born', that was when the grandfather understood, accepted and recognised. And the other relatives? For example, how did it go with Carla's uncle, 'who had always been a mega-engineer, ultra-methodological, Catholic, living in a villa out of town' (*Carla*)? Those relatives, the ones who during her youth Carla always tried to keep a distance from, believing she was not understood, afraid of being excluded if the *truth* was told, 'they didn't say anything, or rather, they said: "At last! Finally you have shared your life with us, because all your life you have been unaccompanied in the family portrait, and at last you feel good in your life!"' – Carla admits, happily. And Giovanna adds: 'they treat us like an equal family. So "Mamma Carla" this and "Mamma Giovanna" that, at the table, and Tommaso in the middle'. With the other relatives, on the contrary, there were never any problems: they had known about Carla's homosexuality for a long time, even before she met Giovanna and had a child. Then, after Tommaso was born, the

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?"*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

relations got even stronger, with the dinners and parties spent together. Also for the other grandparents, the birth dissipates all worries about being seen in public. Consuelo is still surprised at how her parents changed when they became grandparents:

My parents have become exhibitionists these days! I said: 'Calm down! You don't have to tell everybody!'. Now, my father has got in touch with all his work colleagues, he's been retired for years, and he says to me: 'Do you remember the engineer S...?', and me: 'No', my father: 'He says hello, he heard the news'.

So from pregnancy or from birth, ideas and personal beliefs can change. In the families interviewed, the hesitation shown by other relatives when learning of what would happen nine months later, their anger or mere perplexity, faced with the idea of a new life which *revolutionises* every *previous order*, in most cases, then made way for happy acceptance and, only rarely, became radicalised in shame. Often, however, blood ties are not sufficient for expecting that at least the grandparents or 'blood relatives' accept the new birth. Anna Luce, Asia's (natural) and Lisa's (social) daughter, had to win over her grandparents and uncle (Asia's parents and brother):

Anna Luce won over all three of them...they were bowled over by her, she won them over slowly, my father was the last one to give in, after a year, he would say she was too small to hold, he didn't feel up to it... then Anna Luce was fantastic, she started to seek him out, give him a kiss. (*Asia*)

But let's go back to the grandfather of the twins Matilde and Marco, as promised in the previous paragraph. Corrado tells that his father 'didn't want anything to do with it over the whole process, and then completely changed when they were born. There are children, and because there are children they adore them, our children' (*Corrado*). 'Now,' Corrado concludes, 'he is a very happy grandfather and has no difficulty talking about it because on several occasions he has said, "they are the children of Corrado and his partner"'. Right from the start, the grandparents helped the two new fathers in looking after the babies – the other two grandparents who, unfortunately for them, Gabriele explains, live in another region and only rarely get to see them, but they too say

Woe to anyone who touches them! My parents have melted! My mother and her second husband, who is a father to me even though he's not my biological father, have gone mad! Particularly my dad! I can see the joy in his eyes for these children. He absolutely adores them.

In fact, Gabriele's mother is not a natural grandmother either, because the twin's natural father is the other dad, Corrado. And Corrado explains the mechanism by which the two natural grandparents accepted their new role: 'Putting myself in my father's shoes, I think: "We don't talk of surrogate motherhood any more, we don't talk about this woman on the other side of the world, there are these two children and there's no need". She has been forgotten.' This mechanism of removal, 'pretending nothing has happened', about how the grandchildren arrived, is transversal to several other stories, both when the grandchildren are 'natural' and when they are not, and when the parents are two fathers or two mothers. *There is a grandchild, it doesn't matter how he got here, we are just glad he did* – is the powerful mechanism that allows them to live their 'grandparenthood' happily.

If the relatives don't want to completely and totally declare themselves in public, there are another two fairly similar mechanisms.

The first allows Gioacchino's grandmother to *be, here, a happy grandmother*. Let me explain. As soon as she found out that her son was homosexual and was a couple with the person who – she believed – was simply a friend he had rented a room to, in the house where they both lived, 'she said all the most terrible things possible to me, she swore at me, offended me', this is the sad story told by her son Alfredo. For Alfredo there was nothing more to say and, thanks also to the great distance between him and his mother – 'my father has always been rather in the shadows, irrelevant', adds Alfredo, for almost a year he had no contact with his parents. Then, two months after the birth of the child, helped by his brother, his wife and his partner, Taddeo, one cold Boxing Day morning Alfredo met his parents and told them he had a son: 'And I asked: "If you want to see him, I have a photo". I show them the photo and my mother starts crying. I asked: "Would you like to see him?" and they said, "Yes, yes"'. As the trap had been set with the pretext of visiting a city, the other father was at home with Gioacchino and

The next day Taddeo took Gioacchino, put him in the car. And we met half way. As soon as we met, my mother and my father started crying and took the baby in their arms, and wouldn't let him go.

Alfredo tells, laughing. Then, the next day, the grandparents went to Alfredo and his family's house, and they all celebrated Christmas together with their new grandchild. The grandmother did not ask who he was the child of, the grandchild has the surname of both fathers: for her, the child is as much of one as of the other, and he is *her* grandchild. As the grandchild has two fathers, the grandmother still has not told any of her relatives or friends.



Finally, there is a fourth mechanism – perhaps the most simple. It requires no removal, like the first, nor a careful management of a secret to prevent it from being revealed where nobody wants to declare it, like the second, nor the loss of any opportunities for joy and celebration so as not to be seen as donors of recognition, like the third. This fourth mechanism refers to the *ultimatum* which is the essence of the gift itself: either you accept it or you refuse it. This is the sad case of Ugo and Francesco. Ugo and Francesco, who married in California in 1998, are the fathers of Chiara and Davide. Ugo continues to have contact only with his mother in his family of origin, he father died many years before Ugo met Francesco. With the other relatives, on the other hand, and above all his two brothers, the relations ended when ‘I came out. I wanted Francesco to be present at all family occasions, and the relations stopped’. When he became a father, even though one of the two children is his natural child, his two brothers let him know that they didn’t want their own children ‘to see them’ (*Ugo*). Now, this niece and nephew are grown up, they are over thirty, but even if ‘they are absolutely at ease with the question of same-sex parenting’, they have never spent time with them and have no interest in re-establishing ties which are long forgotten. There is no interest in demarcating the ‘here’ or, on the other hand, including in that space filled by the sisters of the other father Francesco, with their children, where there are Sunday dinners and Christmas and birthdays, those other relations who don’t recognise – in a nutshell – Francesco and Ugo’s family.

There is one last question. I shall introduce it with the story of Rosa and Anna. Rosa and Anna have two children, Federico, aged five, and Paolo, two. Anna is the biological mother, while, for the biological grandmother, the other mother was, for several years, ‘that woman’, as Rosa herself tells. The grandmother never wanted to meet Rosa, even when her daughter was pregnant with their first child. Anna explains that ‘in her head, my mother didn’t see us as a family, she saw me as her daughter and Federico as her grandson, she was the grandmother’ – the other mother did not even exist. The relations between mother and daughter had always been tempestuous until, after a huge row during a short holiday which – driven by her partner and her sister – Anna had accepted to spend in the company of her mother, the ties were completely broken and for almost two years, mother and daughter had no contact, ‘not even for Christmas or birthdays’ (*Anna*). During those two years, however, Anna and Rosa had another child but ‘my mother didn’t see me when I was pregnant with Paolo and I never told her I was pregnant,’ Anna admits. During those two years, in any case, the two mothers never prevented the grandson from spending time with his grandmother. Every time Anna and Rosa took Filippo to visit Anna’s sister, they sent their

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?"*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

son to visit his grandmother because 'he was happy to go'. When the second grandchild was born, 'things changed little at a time', until:

We went on holiday the following year, me and the children with her, and as if it was the most burdensome thing in her life, she asked: 'What time will Rosa arrive tomorrow?' Rosa was supposed to join us but we were to stay in a different house. I said she was going to arrive at around 10.30. And she said to me: 'OK...if you want to have lunch here, then you can leave me with the children while they sleep and go and get the other house ready. And from then on we saw her more or less every day, on the beach, for a swim, for a coffee'. (*Lucia*)

Rosa adds: 'This year at Christmas we spent Christmas eve with my family and Christmas day with hers. When we got to her mother's house, she said, "isn't it about time we were on first-name terms?"'. Anna concludes the story: 'Yes, after ten years, two weddings, one abroad and one here in Italy, two children, we did it!' *Why, therefore, do we seek at all costs to maintain these ties? Why struggle and fight for ten years?* – this is the question I ask.

## **7. Reclaiming kinship and the pursuit of 'being like the other families'**

Mattia, Consuelo and Marzia's son, was to be born at the start of the new year, and his two mothers had decided to spend the Christmas holidays by themselves, at home. On Boxing Day, all the future grandparents, aunts and uncles, great aunts and great uncles, cousins and second cousins, 'invited themselves round, without saying a word', Marzia tells. They were Consuelo's relatives – Marzia's were to arrive for New Year and for the birth – and they were all relatives which – Consuelo herself confesses – 'I hadn't seen for a long time'. Although they lived in the same town, for years Consuelo had not seen 'all those cousins and their families, but they reappeared in our lives when Mattia was born. Suddenly I got back a part of the family' (*Consuelo*). That day was the first meeting after a long time, but 'I was put to one side. She was the novelty: Marzia,' Consuelo explains. Then, when the child was born, all the cousins and aunts and uncles came back, and our relations were restored. Consuelo admits that she never took much care over her relations with the relatives, 'I was much more detached, my brother went to all the weddings, met the cousins and aunts and uncles.' Consuelo continues:

But all this vision, from when I was pregnant with Mattia has changed. Suddenly I realised this issue of kinship... but when the pregnancy began, the fact that suddenly all these relatives appeared, to be able to tell Mattia and to introduce him to the people who belong to his family history has

taken on a different meaning. I want to spend time with them, choose them. I can't stand some of my first cousins, it's a question of incompatibility, there is no dialogue. But with others, I felt their warmth, some kind of... nostalgia because I had excluded them, because they were people I spent time with when I was young, I spent Christmas and New Year with them, and I enjoyed it. That feeling, those smells, came back to me, and I was sorry. I regretted a little all those years that I didn't see them. And I want to get them back. Because I think it's important and I like to share my family with these other families, my cousins' families.

Or, as another mother, Claudia, tells, after years when the various members of her family had stopped calling or spending Christmas together, and a sense of harmony was lost, now, thanks to Beatrice, *the family has been reunited like before*.

Moreover, our lesbian and gay families have other stories to tell about the normal 'everydayness' of the grandparents who look after their grandchildren when our mothers and fathers are at work; nieces and nephews looked after by our mothers and fathers playing with their cousins; holidays spent in the ancestral homes with all the other cousins and their children; the usual, unresolvable dilemma of ubiquitousness every Christmas and every Easter; old traditions which, stressed and angry, our mothers and fathers manage to respect every year or new ones taking the place of old traditions because births totally upturn all *order* of kinship. These are all normal (or *banal*) stories of everyday life, of bonds and relations sought or rediscovered after years of lethargy, of people who *want* to be relatives as they feel they belong to the same, larger family, to a *lineage*, families that get together *around a big table* (*Bianca*) simply to spend time together. It is the desire for ties, the pleasure of spending time with others.

Where relations were already good and strong, the birth of the child helped to reinforce them; where, when younger, the mother or father deliberately sought to loosen these ties, with the birth of the child they discovered the joy of mutual belonging to a *family*; where over time these relations had weakened and become more distant, the event of a *birth* immediately tightened and reactivated them. Through this exchange, therefore, *'alliances' are made between families belonging to the same kinship*. What is important is keeping the *bond, staying together, identifying and recognising oneself as part of a whole, of a lineage*. Identifying oneself as a member of a family, recognising kinship, *and* requesting the recognition of one's own family are all profoundly linked to each other.

The structure of relationship acts as a background and a context in which blood ties and affinities are clearly defined and precise, just like the members of that family. Then there is the kinship that is truly experienced and lived,



Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?". Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

made of bonds that are sought out, built and created, stories that want to be handed down and remembered, people we want to belong to, and which, at the same time, we want to have: it is this reality which is intentionally created and kept clearly separate from the other. Its *origin* lies in the act of mutual recognition or exchange, to change ourselves: becoming a mother or father, our parents offer the possibility to other relatives to change their role, their place within the kinship order. Accepting this possibility for transformation, they recognise their new role in the broader structure, and at the same time recognise the family unit the couple has transformed into.

With those who accept it, we share, above all, *time* and *space*. It is the joyful time of lunches and dinners at Christmas and Easter, or any Sunday; it is the time of holidays spent together with other cousins; it is coming home, to our parents, for the holidays, with our own families. It is the space of the intimacy of our own homes to which we welcome those relatives who want to spend time with us to celebrate festivities or moments of relaxation and enjoyment. This time and this space demarcate the tangible and intangible reality, made of symbols, intentions and collective beliefs on what the family is or is not, which is the kinship deliberately recognised as such and to which we feel we belong, towards which the different members look and *care for*.

This point must be clear, because it is only in this way that it is possible to understand a particularly significant element which emerged from the research: there is no difference between relatives of *biological* parents and those of the other parent, in the sense that the strictly natural *fact* of having children, and therefore the new configuration of the kinship network that follows, *in itself*, it not a sufficient reason for establishing this symbolic exchange of recognition. In the same way, the lack of this is not a sufficient reason for not doing so. Indeed, what is requested is not the recognition of a new member of the family who is born, but the bond in which filiation is built: the object of recognition is not the individual (the child, the other parent) but the family relationship that links the two mothers or two fathers and their child. The seeking of recognition can only take place under the auspices of the mutual equality of the ability to build one's own family, *just like the others*. The nature which makes us accept, or not accept, our nephew, niece, cousin... does not seem to be the genetic bond or blood tie, but rather the *collective intentionality* of the couple (a *mental* element) in having a child.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank 'Associazione Famiglie Arcobaleno' for the precious help and all the families who made me welcome and gave their stories.

## References

- Almack, K. (2008), 'Display work: lesbian parent couples and their families of origin negotiating new kin relationships', *Sociology*, 42 (6), 1183-1199.
- Archer, M. (2003), *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Badgett, M. V. L. (2009), *When gay people get married: what happens when societies legalize same-sex marriage*, New York, New York University Press.
- Biblarz, T. J., Savci, E. (2010), 'Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender families', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 480-497.
- Bos, H. M. W., Gartrell, N. (2010), 'Adolescents of the usa national longitudinal lesbian family study: Can family characteristics counteract the negative effects of stigmatization?', *Family Process*, 49, 559-572.
- Bronski, M. (1984), *Culture clash: The Making off gay sensibility*, Boston, South End Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996), 'Des familles sans nom', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 113, juine, 3-5.
- Cavina, C., Danna, D. (Eds.) (2009), *Crescere in famiglie omogenitoriali*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.
- D'Amore, S. (2010), 'Chapitre 1. Univers ou multivers familial? Les nouvelles familles entre continuité et changement', in D'Amore, S. (ed.), *Les nouvelles familles*, Bruxelles, De Boeck Supérieur: Carrefour des psychothérapies, 33-51.
- D'Amore, S., Baiocco, R. (2014), 'La transition vers la parentalité des familles homoparentales: recherche et implications cliniques', *Cahiers critiques de thérapie familiale et de pratiques de réseaux*, 1, 52, 41-56
- Di Nicola, P. (2016), 'Babies are not born under a cabbage leaf', *Italian Sociological Review*, 6 (2), 293-308.
- Donaldson, C. (2000), 'Midlife lesbian parenting', *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 11, 119-138.
- Edelman, L. (2004), *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*, Durham, Duke University Press.
- van Eeden-Moorefield, B., Pasley, K., Crosbie-Burnett, M., King, E. (2012), 'Explaining couple cohesion for different types of gay families', *Journal of Family Issue*, 33, 182-201.
- Ferrari, F. (2005), 'Crescere in famiglie omogenitoriali: risultati scientifici e altri piani del dibattito', *Terapia familiare*, 95, 73-85.
- Ferrari, F. (2015), *La famiglia inattesa. I genitori omosessuali e i loro figli*, Milano, Mimesis.
- Finch, J. (2007), 'Displaying families', *Sociology*, 41 (1), 65-81.

Luca Guizzardi

*In September, they will start to ask: "So you're all coming here for Christmas?"*. *Rainbow Families and the Gift of Kinship*

- Goldberg, A. E., Kuvalanka, K. A. (2012), 'Marriage (in)equality: The perspectives of adolescents and emerging adults with lesbian, gay, and bisexual parents', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74, February, 34-52.
- Gross, M. (2006), 'Homoparentalités: compositions familiales, décompositions de la filiation?', *Cités*, 28 (4), 73-81.
- Gross, M. (2009), 'Grand-parentalité en contexte homoparental', *Revue de sciences sociales*, 41, 120-129.
- Gross, M., de Federico, A. (2014), 'Le recours à l'AMP dans les familles homoparentales: état des lieux. Résultats d'une enquête menée en 2012', *Socio-logos*, 9.
- Guizzardi, L. (2016) "Moi aussi, alors, je serai grand-mère". La construction de la parenté dans les familles homosexuelles', *International Review of Sociology*, 26 (2), 295-321.
- Guizzardi, L. (2017), 'Al di là di vecchie e nuove distinzioni di genere: la famiglia (r)esiste', in Guizzardi, L. (ed.), *Irène Théry. Il genere del dono: origini e alleanze dell'essere-persona*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Herbrand, C. (2012), 'La filiation à l'épreuve de la présomption de 'paternité' pour les couples de même sexe: questionnements et perspectives à partir du cas belge', *Droit et société*, 3, 82, 689-712.
- Hopkins, J. J., Sorensen, A., Taylor, V. (2013), 'Same-sex couples, families, and marriage: embracing and resisting heteronormativity', *Sociology Compass*, 7 (2), 97-110.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2004), 'Are gay and lesbian cohabiting couples really different from heterosexual married couples?', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 880-900.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2006), 'Differences between partners from heterosexual, gay, and lesbian cohabiting couples', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 509-528.
- Lau, C. Q. (2012), 'The stability of same-sex cohabitation, different-sex cohabitation, and marriage', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74, 973-988.
- Lelleri, R., Prati, G., Pietrantoni, L. (2008), 'Omogenitorialità: i risultati di una ricerca italiana', *Difesa sociale*, 4, 71-84.
- Lewin, E. (1993), *Lesbian mothers. Accounts of gender in American culture*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press.
- Lewin, E. (2009), *Gay fatherhood. Narratives of family and citizenship in America*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Moore, M. R., Strambolis-Ruhstorfer, M. (2013), 'LGBT sexuality and families at the start of the Twenty-first century', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 491-507.
- Pollack, S., Vaughn, J. (1987) (Eds.), *Politics of heart: A lesbian parenting ontology*, Ithaca, N.Y., Firebrand Books.

- Prati, G., Pietrantoni, L. (2008), 'Sviluppo e omogenitorialità: una rassegna di studi che hanno confrontato famiglie omolesbiche ed eterosessuali', *Rivista sperimentale di freniatria*, 2, 71-88.
- Rault, W. (2014), 'Des relations familiales à l'épreuve du pacs', in Courduriès, J., Fine, A. (Eds.), *Homosexualité et parenté*, Paris, Armand Collin, 121-136
- Scaramozza V. (2009), 'Crescere in famiglie omogenitoriali: differenza non implica deficit', *Rivista di sessuologia*, 33, 3, 172-182.
- Short, L. (2007), "It makes the world of difference": benefits for children of lesbian parents of having their parents recognised as their parents', *Gay and lesbian issues and psychological review*, 3 (1), 5-15.
- Swennen, F., Croce, M. (2015), "The symbolic power of legal kinship terminology. An analysis of 'co-motherhood' and 'duo-motherhood' in Belgium and Netherlands", *Social & Legal Studies*, 9, 1-23.
- Touroni, E., Coyle, A. (2002), 'Decision-making in planned lesbian parenting: an interpretative phenomenological analysis', *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 12, 194-209.
- Trappolin, L., Tiano, A. (2015), 'Same-sex families e genitorialità omosessuale. Controversie internazionali e spazi di riconoscimento in Italia', *Cambio*, 9, 47-62.
- Warner, M. (1999), *The trouble with normal: sex, politics, and the ethics of Queer life*, New York, Free Press.
- Weston, K. (1991), *Families we choose. Lesbians, gays, kinship*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Wiik Aarskaug, K., Seierstad, A., Noac100 T. (2014), 'Divorce in Norwegian same-sex marriages and registered partnerships: The role of the children', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76, 919-929.