

Research Paper

Family members' attitudes towards
their kin's polyamorous relationships

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Abstract

Contemporary mono-normative societies are increasingly confronted with questioning the status quo and the ideals that correspond to it. This can also be said about the binary systems in which we shape our relationships: monogamous and non-monogamous. This research questions the way family dynamics and support systems are shaped by the attitudes of family members who have relatives in a polyamorous relationship.

Through qualitative research, this study examines the attitudes and perspectives of twelve family members from the researchers' social environment. This research gives a unique view of family dynamics, generational position and polyamorous notions through the researcher's lived experience. This contributes to a better understanding of family dynamics and support structures shaped by polyamorous relationships of relatives, in which there was the opportunity to study a largely invisible stigmatised minority group.

While the results show that the variation in discourses among the respondents ranges from optimistic to pessimistic, the denotation of the deviating status of polyamory is expressed among most of the respondents. Irrespective of their feelings, my respondents expressed that the way these attitudes shaped the family dynamics and support structures was limited. Parents seem to be the family members most worried about the feasibility of the polyamorous relationship structure. This seems to be mainly because, as parents, they also want to protect their children from possible setbacks in the future in case of a failed relationship.

Keywords: Attitudes, Family dynamics, Generational Cleavage, Polyamory, Support systems

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1. Introduction

1.1 Description

In Western societies, romantic relationships are often categorised as monogamous or non-monogamous, also known as consensual non-monogamy (CNM) (Gupta et al., 2023; Valadez et al., 2020). This study will focus on polyamory, a non-monogamous relationship, defined as a relationship structure that does not restrict the number of individuals involved in the dynamic, allowing for non-exclusive love and sexual connections (Gupta et al., 2023).

Within the Netherlands, non-monogamy can be considered a minority, who all contest the notion of monogamy. In 2017, approximately 3.3% (350.000) of the Dutch population were in a CNM relationship, whereas 0.7% (75.000) were in a polyamorous relationship (Horsten, 2017). However, we lack census data on the number of people in polyamorous relationships and therefore cannot make any claims about the growth in the prevalence of polyamory; societal and scientific interest in this topic has increased substantially over the years, as the number of published studies about CNM suggest (Gupta et al., 2023).

Even though the binary relationship system exists within the same society, the heteronormative couple has shaped and set up the social institution employing monogamous notions, also called the couple-norm according to Roseneil et al. (2020). Societies where monogamy is the norm can be considered mono-normative (Valadez et al., 2020). However, the mono-normative ideas of the couple and exclusivity cause tensions by the very nature of CNM, as portrayed by Valadez's et al., (2020) following passage: '*CNM is "queering" monogamy by challenging the dominant ideals and providing an alternative dialect for describing relationships that has not previously existed*' (Barker & Langdrige, 2010). This quote emphasises how CNM and polyamory question the ideals of monogamy while troubling the discourse of it (Ritchie & Barker, 2006).

Even though in the Netherlands, individuals have the choice to be in their preferred structure of relationship, those choices may encounter stigma when they disclose their polyamorous relationship status (Doyle & Barreto, 2023). Generally, individuals in non-monogamous relationships are less likely to disclose their relationship in comparison to monogamous couples in fear of getting outed, receiving expressions of discomfort or disapproval, and devaluation of character and relationship (Mahar et al., 2022; Valadez et al., 2020). These consequences can create labels like immoral, indecent, promiscuous and repulsive. At the same time, polyamory obtained the image of a relationship structure that does not focus on meaningful emotional bonding and sex (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). Because of these labels, polyamorous individuals often have to legitimise their relationship with anyone on the outside, including family members, as recent findings suggest

(Dixon, 2016, as cited in Rubinsky, 2018).

Whenever stigma is present within family systems, individuals may need to hide their true selves to avoid potential stigma (Füllgrabe & Smith, 2023; Rubinsky, 2018). For primary kin systems where there are no or partial possibilities for open communication, it is possible that family stresses and other problems could arise (Braithwaite & Suter, 2022). As family bonds are co-constructed through communication, the absence of it could deteriorate them and thus detrimentally shape family dynamics (Foster & Bochner, 2008, as cited in Braithwaite & Suter, 2022). How family members interact with each other and the degree to which they denounce, tolerate, accept or approve is a direct part of the dynamics within these family systems. For this research, the parameters of family dynamics will encompass relationship quality, contact engagement frequency and conflict frequency.

In the best case, a healthy family dynamic includes open communication, (emotional) support, and love, which help to create strong bonds between family members. However, these family dynamics get exponentially more complicated as they entail interactions between and amongst family members and partners. The multiplicity of partners and arrangements within polyamorous relationships creates the possibility of a multitude of interlinking bonds and relationships with family members (Alarie, 2023; Hakulinen et al., 1999).

The additional moving parts within family dynamics can create negative consequences within the family system when they are influenced by cultural and societal norms (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). In the case of family stigma, the consequences for the family system could affect the frequency of contact and possibly cause limited or no invitations to family gatherings, holidays or core family moments like funerals and births (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). Therefore, the question arises of whether the individual can still count on the family as a support structure when disclosing the relationship structure. Families as support structures can be defined according to Wan et al. (1996) as emotional, companionship, informational and tangible support. However, this research will only focus on the first two, as the relevant familial attitudes mainly stem from valuation, acceptance and belongingness within the system (Wan et al., 1996).

Prior research makes it clear that the perspectives of polyamorous individuals about the ways they experience their deviating relationship structure have been extensively documented and studied. However, the perspectives of polyamorous relatives are still unknown (Gupta et al., 2023; Rubinsky, 2018). This research will focus on the underlying attitudes of family members and the connection with family dynamics and support structures. These insights might better explain how familial attitudes cause family acceptance, tolerance or disapproval.

When family members have to perceive their relative as their grandchild, child or sibling while condemning their relationship structure, it can create a role ambivalence within those family members. This ambivalence is characterised by having opposing feelings or emotions about the relative and

relationship structure (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

Rubinsky (2018) described how further research directions should focus on the perspectives of children, parents and grandparents, as these remain unexplored. Within this research, the representation of different generations could encapsulate the ever-changing interaction of family and societal norms in possible generational differences within the research population. Previous literature shows that attitudes towards CNM are shifting to a more positive point of view. With an increase in positive attitudes among younger generations, the effects of this will be more prevalent and more available to be extensively documented as insights on generational cleavages expand upon the topic of polyamory (Duewel, 2022; Rubinsky, 2018).

Current literature mainly describes the negative context and consequences of CNM from a pessimistic bias in which bonds are formed with relatives and the consequences of (family) stigma on (mental) health (Füllgrabe & Smith, 2023; Valadez, 2020). Additionally, research about family stigma is mainly done within the context of mental illness. Thus, this research could expand on the subject in the context of polyamory and family dynamics. The existence of polyamorous relationships has contested the notion of family and could cause friction in family systems as belief systems and frames of reference do not match (Barker & Langdridge, 2010; Ritchie & Barker, 2006). If such a mismatch occurs, disapproval and devaluation could negatively affect relationship quality and contact engagement.

Close or possibly constructed families within different generations will be examined to investigate these attitudes. The responses and attitudes from families with those lived experiences across generations of having relatives who practice non-monogamous relationship structures could provide valuable insights into the complexities of family dynamics and the possibility of being or not being part of this system.

Building on previous studies, this study will expand upon the views on family dynamics and support structures in an attempt to formulate recommendations that could entail tools or family coping methods for polyamorous individuals to navigate through the different perspectives within family systems. The importance of these perspectives is mainly to assess the presence of stigmatising or supportive views on polyamory from family and possibly equip polyamorous individuals with tools to navigate those views within the family context to develop anti-stigma approaches (Moors et al., 2021).

1.2 Research question

In light of the social context mentioned above and the exploratory nature of this research, a research question has emerged to gather and evaluate attitudes towards polyamorous relationships within the framework of family and kinship and their impact on family bonds and norms. The

formulated research question is as follows:

What are the attitudes of family members towards their relatives in polyamorous relationships, and how are they connected to family dynamics and support structures?

2. Theoretical Framework

With the concepts introduced in the previous chapter, the theoretical framework will review the concepts of polyamory, stigma, mono-normativity, kinship, role ambivalence, generational cleavage and their socio-historical background. This will be done through queer-theory, socio sexuality and social constructivism. Applying these theories to the concepts and their interaction could provide a better understanding of the complexities of the issue formulated in the research question.

2.1 Kinship

To purposefully investigate the attitudes within family systems, it is necessary to acknowledge that the variety in the composition of family arrangements has increased in modern Western societies and to what extent this is perceived in the context of polyamory (Dixon, 2017). It is argued that one of the reasons for the rapid growth in variation of the family system in contemporary Western societies is mainly due to the change in marriage and the liberation of women (Goldman, 1998; “Marriage and Domestic Partnership,” 2021). The increase in divorce and remarriage possibly caused the deviation from the nuclear family norm (Valadez et al., 2020).

Within the context of the variations of family and kinship, Roodsaz (2021) argues that the concept of family might not be disrupted, just stretched and diffused, and looks at them as ‘constructions of intimacy’ rather than family structures. The notion of broader possibilities within families is akin to the essence of queer-theory within family science while redefining the parameters of family and sexuality (McGuire, 2022). For queer-theorists, it is to question the norm, what is considered normal, legitimate or dominant. Within the norm-breaking relationship structure of polyamory, the concept of kinship gets a personal definition and practice (Ritchie & Barker, 2016; Shannon & Willis, 2010).

The new ideas and forms of kinship can cause tensions within mono-normative families, especially within the context of polyamory when disclosed to their relatives (Valadez et al., 2020). The notion that mono-normativity is realised within a family comes from the social and cultural idea of the constructs of love and relationships widely portrayed by the mainstream media as the only logical and natural structure available (Ritchie & Barker, 2006). When considering other relationship structures like CNM, the institutionalisation of relationships and the constant depictions of couples or dyads practising monogamy, polyamory can be regarded as a deviation of the family (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). The tensions that arise within mono-normative families could be imposed by societal values when confronted with polyamory, as it could *‘troubles the discourse of monogamy’*, as Ritchie & Barker (2006) explain in their research.

These outings of their relative’s polyamorous relationship structure could be twofold, as

mentioned in the introduction, as there are positive expressions expected from younger generations, as opposed to older generations. According to the suggestions of previous literature, it is likely that the positive attitude of younger generations could transform family attitudes into a sense of community outside of the polyamory community (Benson, 2016; Francis et al., 2012). The positive effects of being part of a community can be considered in line with the emotional and companionship support effects that Wan et al. (1996) described.

Negative expressions could be discomfort, disapproval and devaluation of character and relationship (Mahar et al., 2022; Valadez et al., 2020). The attitudes originating from stigma within mono-normative families could shape the dynamics within these systems that, in the end, can cause family social isolation, make them seek alliances within non-monogamous communities or create their own constructions of intimacy (Park & Park, 2014; Roodsaz, 2021; Rubinsky, 2018; Sheff, 2016). Seeking refuge in other social interactions may cause family abandonment in favour of accepting relations, free from the stigma imposed by family systems (Rubinsky, 2018).

2.2 Family stigma

In the occurrence of mono-normativity and societal stigma embedding into the family dynamics and affecting bonds due to deviating relationship structures like polyamory, the possibility arises that stigmatising views can form from within the family (Mahar et al., 2022; Valadez et al., 2020). Considering the negative physical and mental health consequences due to stigma, it is one of the main concepts within this research.

The description that will be used regarding stigma is that of Goffman (1963), who deemed it to be the most fitting for this issue as it can also be related to relationship structures, identities, and sexualities. His definition focuses on any attribute that is deeply discredited (Goffman, 1963). The contemporary concept of stigma refers to the differentiating attributes of the individual that cause them to deviate from others in a particular group while simultaneously being reduced to an inferior status (Davis, 2016; Goffman, 1963). This undesired differentness affects mainly those who are already marginalised within society. The effects can range from exclusion and discrimination to skewed self-image and internalised self-stigma (Goffman, 1963). When keeping in mind that polyamorous individuals often deviate from social norms, even within most of their social groups, they may experience some of these adverse effects concerning stigma in some forms (Füllgrabe & Smith, 2023; Mahar et al., 2022).

There is a possibility that there is also a mono-normative culture within family systems, given that non-monogamous relationships are still a minority (Valadez et al., 2020). The possible perceived unusualness of these relationship structures within the family context can be accommodated under the concept of family stigma. Applying insights from the work of Park and Park (2014) on family stigma about mental health, we could argue that in the case of this research, it is applicable as it generalised

the depiction of family stigma while also addressing the differentiating societal norms as an antecedent.

Deriving the attributes of the conceptual model of Park & Park (2014), when applied to the context of tensions between mono-normative norms and polyamory, will result in the following effects. When there is a family unusualness as polyamory, it can cause family stigma consisting of negative perceptions and discomfort. For the stigmatised individual, this can evoke emotional, social and interpersonal consequences like anxiety, discrimination and family's social isolation. Finally, this could decrease the family's quality of life, as communication can be considered a tool to maintain and strengthen bonds between family members (Park & Park, 2014; Valadez et al., 2020). These findings correspond with the effects that society could impose negative consequences on the individual when confronted with stigmatised outings, although this might only be the case outside of their stigmatised communities (Corrigan et al., 2013; Mahar et al., 2022; Valadez et al., 2020). These negative prejudices and biases towards polyamory can be expressed through reduced social interactions, judgement and renouncement (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020).

Within the confines of this research, a more extensive examination of the underlying origins of these adverse effects, as this conceptual model mainly exposes. Thus, the main focus of this research will be why these family members respond negatively and how this seeps into family stigma.

Meanwhile, using a generalisation of Park & Park's (2014) conceptual model leads to a potential reason for the negative attitude assumptions within this research as it relates to stigma and its negative emotional, social, and interpersonal consequences. Furthermore, the implications of these negative expressions can create a degree of role ambivalence within individuals who experience conflicts in norms and expectations (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

2.3 Role ambivalence

Connidis & McMullin (2002) discuss how ambivalence can be structurally created through the negotiations of their relationships with others, in this case, family members. As polyamory could cause tensions within family systems when mono-normative norms are present, family members within those systems could experience some form of role ambivalence (Connidis, 2015). An example situation in which such tensions can arise is when parents whose parental ideas tend to support and accept that child, while their mono-normative frame of reference disapproves of multiple partners. These parents are expected to eventually want to make a consideration based on their norms and values as parents and as mono-normative individuals to resolve the ambivalence, as Connidis and McMullin (2002) suggest in their study.

Within these internal negotiations, family members often consider solidarity, as it is a concept that minimises conflicting interests within family systems when faced with opposing mono-normative norms (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). The possible attitudes in role ambivalence-inducing situations can be encouragement, acceptance, tolerance, indifference and resistance (Coyne et al., 2011; Sincoff,

1990). This broad continuum of acceptance of polyamorous relationships indicates that the range of attitudes and responses could be as comprehensive.

Role ambivalence forces the individual to constantly manage norm tensions and decide whether to maintain or transform current situations. This can be done by approaching or avoiding demands and expectations (Connidis, 2015; Connidis & McMullin, 2002). Based on Sincoff's findings (1990), it suggests that individuals tend to avoid ambivalence, which may imply that they are not prone to transform their situation or engage in conflict.

For family members of polyamorous relatives, this could mean they can take no action concerning the experienced ambivalence, bridge the normative gap when there is a need or will for personal growth or willingness for acceptance, or enforce their norms and denounce other beliefs. To cope with role ambivalence, in the cases of maintaining the situation or bridging the gap, individuals have to use their agency to understand the deviating arrangements and/or to tolerate the situation. When individuals intend to transform the situation, this is often done by creating a hostile environment in which not everyone is welcome by denouncing polyamory (Connidis, 2015; Connidis & McMullin, 2002). These situations reveal the tensions that are caused by the expectations from them as a family member versus their own mono-normative belief, as previous literature suggests that there generally is a pessimistic bias towards polyamory (Füllgrabe & Smith, 2023; Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez, 2020).

2.4 Generational cleavage

Attitudes towards polyamory and non-monogamy tend to change over generations (Duewel, 2022). The notion of multiple partners tends to be more favourable within younger generations than older ones, as the younger generations favour self-expression more (Hawkings & Heather, 2019, as cited in Duewel, 2022). Even though values can change over time and the measured opinions of the younger generations could develop during their lifetime, the current differentiation in views about polyamory across generations can indicate a generational cleavage (Duewel, 2022).

The subject of generational cleavage in the context of attitudes towards polyamorous relatives has many factors that can affect it. The norms different generations take in are a product of the social context in which they reside. Norms can differ through the variation in geography, culture, religion, and political landscape during different timeframes, such as the post-war period, the free love era, the rise of feminism or even the COVID-19 pandemic (Pierce, 2015). Furthermore, these interlinking concepts create a frame of reference with views about various values.

When comparing older and younger generations to identify the generational cleavage, the views of polyamorous relevant concepts such as marriage, exclusivity and loyalty should be taken into consideration. The evaluation of marriage differs significantly, as younger generations question its validity (Klein, 2022, as cited in Duewel, 2022). Therefore, the idea of exclusivity and commitment is less prevalent among younger generations, who have a favourable attitude towards multiple partners

than older generations (Arbit, 2020, as cited in Duewel, 2022). The notion of loyalty in the older generation defines it based on sexuality, while the younger generation differentiates it on an emotional basis (Duewel, 2022). The different views on these topics can dictate how they form their opinions on their relative's polyamorous relationship structure and how these are expressed. The implications of this differentiation across generations can shed light on which notions these views are formed in and how this relates to different generations. For this research, it could mean that the younger respondents could approach their family members in polyamorous relationships more favourably, impacting relationship quality, contact engagement frequency and conflict frequency.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and population

Within the data analysis, the process and procedure of collecting and analysing relevant data will be described to answer the research question based on the literature from the previous chapter. To do so, data will be gathered from approximately twelve respondents using semi-structured interviews to retain reliability during the process. Semi-structured interviews are the preferred method to conduct this research mainly due to the ability to gather in-depth and qualitative responses while leaving room for the respondent's personal story (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). The practicalities of this method lie primarily in the way it provides structure throughout the interview while allowing further questions to be asked to enrich the obtained data.

Focus groups were a consideration as they could reveal the family dynamics during these sessions. However, the difficulties in reaching the research group were already an issue for one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Besides that, there were also issues with the willingness to discuss relatively intimate family information. In addition, finding a suitable time when everyone can be present in the same place is challenging, mainly because of the respondents who also live outside the Netherlands. This meant that semi-structured interviews were the most suitable data collection method for feasibility and practicality.

In terms of data collection, there will be a mix of the following strategies: snowball, opportunistic and convenience. As with most minority groups, polyamorous individuals are not the most visible target group and reaching them could prove difficult. This leads to utilising the social networks of the researcher and his partner. Naturally, this approach has advantages and disadvantages, which will be reflected upon within the discussion. The positionality of the researcher will be discussed in detail in this chapter. The possible respondents are already known to the researcher and will be contacted through phone calls and in-person contact to confirm the in-person interviews, as the researcher already knows the majority. The family members that are not known will be contacted through the polyamorous relatives within the social networks utilising text messages or face-to-face contact.

Using the social networks of the researcher and his partner, it is most likely that all respondents will be white. An all-white research population implies that the conclusion and recommendations cannot be generalised in a broader cultural context, as family norms and culture can influence attitudes about polyamory within families and how this is expressed within family dynamics.

The research group will contain twelve Dutch family members with one or more relatives who are in a polyamorous relationship. This research aims to represent different generations, including

grandparents, parents, and siblings, so that the results will encapsulate the everchanging interaction between family and societal norms and possible generational differences. To assess the generational difference fully, efforts will be made to achieve the following distribution: four grandparents, four parents, and four siblings. The selection of respondents is purposefully sampled to encapsulate multiple perspectives about family dynamics and attitudes towards their relatives who are in polyamorous relationships.

3.2 Operationalization

The literature reviewed in the theoretical framework will inform this research, which will examine kinship, family stigma, role ambivalence, and generational cleavage. These topics will be operationalised through the example interview questions below in Table 1.

Within the topic of kinship, the respondents will be questioned about their views on kinship, what it entails for them and who they consider family in the context of their relatives' polyamorous relationship. Therefore, family dynamics will be examined by looking at the possible differences in relationship quality, contact engagement frequency, and conflict frequency. Structural support will be examined by looking at the extent to which family members evaluate and accept their relatives. Family stigma will be reviewed by looking at possible exclusion or discrimination of one or more partners and if there is any difference in how the family system interacts. At the same time, role ambivalence will be examined by questioning internal conflict due to possible normative family roles and the tension with polyamorous relationships. Finally, generational cleavage will be examined by asking for perspectives on polyamorous relationships and contextualising them within the generation of the respondent.

Kinship	<i>Who do you define as family?</i>
	<i>Do you consider (name relatives' partner(s)) part of your family?</i>
Family stigma	<i>What are your views on multiple partners?</i>
	<i>What do you think of the relationship between (relative) and (partner(s) of relative) family?</i>
Role ambivalence	<i>How do you navigate the concept of multiple partners in situations like family gatherings?</i>
	<i>Has the relationship with your family members changed since they are in a relationship with (partner(s))?</i>

Table 1 Main topics with example questions

3.3 Analysis

The procedure will start with the data collection after the approval of the research proposal. The respondents are then contacted to make the appointments for the interviews and will be notified about the procedure and context of this research. After that, the interviews will be transcribed and processed using ATLAS.ti 24.0.0 for Windows. The coding process of the transcripts will be inductive

and follows the steps of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Firstly, broad categories will be created to label the most relevant interview information. After that, these categories will be compared to the concepts of the theoretical framework to reduce the number of codes. Finally, the codes are reduced to the core concepts on which the conclusion recommendations will be based (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The codes and quotes will be translated and used within the results section of this research.

3.4 Privacy and Ethics

All possible respondents will be introduced to the issue and the nature of the research, the way the interviews will be conducted and what will be done with the data afterwards before agreeing to do the interview. The respondents will receive informed consent forms to ensure that the terms of the procedure, data collection and storage are agreed upon during the interviews. The data that will be used, including names and traceable personal details, will be anonymised and exclusively utilised for this research. The data will be stored on the researcher's secured personal computer, which is only accessible to him.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of this research emerges through the way the interviews are structured. The semi-structured interviews have set questions that will be asked to every respondent; the variation lies in the personal details that can emerge from the sub-questions that are asked.

Validity comes from handling the interview questions by operationalising the concepts and considering the theoretical framework. Thus, the interview results should reflect the main topics relevant to this research.

The external validity of this research will be low, as the sample is too homogenous to be generalised to the whole polyamorous community. Geography, culture, and ethnicity can determine how this community experiences its deviating relationship structure. Because of this, this research creates the opportunity for future studies to address the need for replicable research with other samples and/or within different contexts.

3.6 Positionality

It is necessary to disclose the researcher's positionality and social environment to put the data analysis methods into perspective. The main interest in the complexities of polyamory within family dynamics is his own relationship. The limited number of community members in the nearby surroundings meant that the primary source of respondents would come from his family and his partner. There are already existing bonds between the respondents and the researcher, which could impact the answers and results. The implications of this bond for the results could be twofold: the

respondents are familiar enough with the researcher to open up about sensitive and personal topics, which could enrich the results. Simultaneously, the existing bond could prevent openness in anticipation of possible long-lasting effects of revealing such personal views, causing faulty results.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

In this section, the results of the qualitative analysis are presented. The collected data portrays the respondents' views about their relative's polyamorous relationship in the context of their family dynamics and the support structures in place. Accordingly, within the context of the research question, the gathered data are categorised by the most prevalent themes that emerged from the interviews. After that, the data are analysed according to the theoretical foundation previously discussed. Furthermore, the results are examined with possible generational differences in mind.

The respondents who participated in this research were from three families, all with ties to the researcher, as seen in Appendix 1. The numbers correspond with the relative, while the generational positions are shown in Table 2; for example, Respondent C1 is the brother of Relative 1.

Siblings	Parents	Grandparents
Respondent C1 – Brother	Respondent A1 – Mother	Respondent D1 – Grandmother
	Respondent B1 – Stepfather	Respondent E1 – Grandfather
Respondent H2 – Sister	Respondent F2 – Mother	
Respondent I2 – Brother-in-law	Respondent G2 – Father	
Respondent L3 – Sister	Respondent J3 – Mother	
	Respondent K3 – Father	

Table 2 Generational position of the respondents

During the interviews, the respondents were asked about their perspectives and attitudes concerning polyamory, family dynamics and the acceptance of multiple partners within the family, how the family members communicate towards each other about the polyamorous relationship structure of their relative, and the perspectives on the polyamorous relationship of their relative of other family members present within their family dynamic. Within these concepts, how familial connections were established with the relative and their partner(s) and how this was developed was clarified, alongside the role of communication in these familial interactions.

4.2 Summary of main findings

The answers of the respondents have shown some general patterns throughout the interviews. In general, with some exceptions, optimistic attitudes about polyamory of specific family members were the most prevalent pattern. Besides that, there was an unexpected general cleavage: parents were relatively the most worried and sceptical about the feasibility of the relationship. This means that the siblings and grandparents were moderately positive, as their attitudes focused on the beauty and

celebration of love in every form. Subsequently, the results in terms of attitudes were not as black and white, as in general, polyamory is seen as something odd or weird, even by those who are optimistic about the relationship structure. Some other subthemes that emerged that were less prominent will be discussed at the end of the results section. These subthemes consist of the relative's happiness, the acceptance of multiple partners within the family, the willingness to include multiple partners, and the concept of kinship.

Group	Number of sub-codes	Number of quotations per group
General attitudes about polyamory	6	286
Family dynamics	7	329
Support structures	2	71

Table 3 The quantitative content of the code groups

4.3.1 Positive attitudes polyamorous relationship structure

The first and most prevalent concept is the attitudes that family members hold on the polyamorous relationship of their relative. This encapsulates the respondents' perspectives, which will drag over to the other themes. Contrary to the negative bias that is present in the majority of reviewed literature, the attitudes of most respondents have been generally fairly positive, as seen in the following quote:

. . . I love it, that's nice. I'm like: Wow, that's cool! . . . when I now see Relative 1 and understand better Gosh, why would you in your life only be able to share your love with one person, in any way, physically, but also mentally, that you can love multiple people? I think that is incredibly beautiful and I also think why not share your love with other people? (Respondent A1, Mother)

This quote exemplifies the positive attitude present among the respondents towards polyamory and, in the case of Respondent A1, the polyamorous relationship structure of Relative 1. Even though Respondent A1 is not polyamorous herself, this quote emphasises how one can appreciate and accept polyamory (even as a parent) without being polyamorous themselves, as she expresses an appreciation for the expression of love towards multiple people.

In the following quote, Respondent L3 (Sister) explains how she feels that the option to choose the relationship structure that's best suitable for those who are in a relationship is something to admire: *Yes, I think it's a very beautiful thing. . . If that suits someone, then you should just do it, just like monogamy, if that suits you better, then you should go that way. . .*

4.3.2 Polyamorous concepts viewed as odd or weird

While answering the question about her perspective of polyamory, Respondent L3 emphasises how beautiful it is that Relative 3 can pursue her polyamorous relationships. Although the overall

consensus is optimistic, these same respondents found the relationship structure odd or weird, as shown in the following quote:

. . . I like to just leave everyone in its value, so I think the idea is crazy, but ultimately in practice it's not like... I don't feel disturbed by it, I just think that's really nice, that people can just do and feel that that freedom is there, because I wouldn't want to pin anyone down on that, so to speak, or say that, that is right, that is good and that is bad. (Respondent C1, Brother)

Respondent C1 clarifies how, although he perceives polyamory and polyamorous concepts as “crazy”, it does not mean that he attaches a value judgment to his relative or her partners. These expressions of both Respondent L3 and C1 correspond with the expectation of positive attitudes among younger generations, in contrast to the pessimistic bias that has been prevalent within most literature about polyamory (Duewel, 2022; Mahar et al., 2022; Rubinsky, 2018; Valadez et al., 2020).

4.4 Role ambivalence

According to the literature discussed within the theoretical framework, pessimistic attitudes could emphasise the deviating status of polyamory for these relatives as family members fail to conform to mono-normative standards within relationships, possibly causing the relative to be in a position of discomfort (Mahar et al., 2022; Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the current study shows that the expressions of concern within these statements, albeit pessimistic, are uniformly nuanced by the wish for happiness in the lives of their relatives. As for Respondent F2, from her role as a parent, she appraises the possibility that happiness has been found within a relationship structure that does not seem as stable as she would like:

. . . And yes, first of all, I think it is very important that you have found someone you are happy with, and yes, I also find it quite difficult that the other person [Relative 1] also has another relationship. I secretly hope she will choose you. (Respondent F2, Mother)

This first quote underlines the tension between the happiness found within the polyamorous relationship and the relationship structure. Furthermore, the following quote shows how this ambivalence is expressed in an everyday example:

. . . I think it's great that you live like this. And as a parent, I find it difficult that you still live alone, so to speak, and occasionally have someone at home, and you never know when you will be alone. . . And that in itself doesn't matter. But if you get sick, for example, I don't know whether Relative 1 is with you, you see. And those are things that I think: yes, I find it difficult. (Respondent F2, Mother)

For the respondent, the ambivalence between being happy for her relative and the possible instability due to the relationship structure causes tensions through the perception of her norms and

values. These tensions reveal potential internal negotiations between the differentiating norms, as this nuance is a form of resistance in the parents' attitudes (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). This resistance can be examined through the conflict of their wish for their relatives to pursue and experience happiness, even when it is through a deviating relationship structure (Connidis, 2015). In the case of the sceptical respondents, this can be seen as them maintaining the current situation, as they indicate that they do not explicitly conform or denounce the polyamorous relationship structure and the notions it is based on; they understand and tolerate the situation. How these respondents cope with role ambivalence aligns with Sincoff's (1990) findings (Connidis, 2015; Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

4.5 Generational Cleavage

As mentioned in the summary of the main findings, grandparents and siblings were the groups among the respondents who were most accepting of non-monogamous relationships, as shown in the following passage of Respondent D1 (Grandmother): . . . *I think that's [the relationship] very admirable, and yes, I really think it's worth a compliment that it's so harmonious between you all. I have no problem with it at all.* This quote has been said in response to discussing perspectives about polyamory.

The findings are, therefore, partly in contrast with the expectations and the literature, as not only siblings but also grandparents appeared to be most accepting of non-monogamous relationships; grandparents were accepting of their relative's polyamorous relationship structure while still attaching value to exclusivity and commitment (Arbit, 2020, as cited in Duewel, 2022; Duewel, 2022). This acceptance was mainly seen when one of the grandparents was asked what their perspective was on the polyamorous relationship of Relative 1:

Well, no, I accept it, look. I just know. Love relationships are very complicated, that in my case, what I say: lightning struck And yes, that was the bond for life for me. That I would never let it go I thought, and fortunately neither did she. . . , I am convinced that you can also meet other people who appeal to you and who . . . you can have, yes, sympathy, love for. Love is not possessing, isn't it, . . . , it's something you give and hopefully get back and that can be personal from several people, I also have no problem with it at all, . . . (Respondent E1, May 2, 2024)

The differences in attitudes between parents, grandparents, and siblings are based on their perspectives, their type of bond, and how they perceive the rigidity of love bonds. While grandparents and siblings perceive love as beautiful in all its forms, some parents are concerned about stability and prospects. One of the concerned parents expresses his fear of friction within the relationship due to the complexity of multiple partners in the quote below:

. . . . Yes, and if there are four or three of you and one starts chafing, the rest will not go well either. And in that I say yes, if I have one relationship with a woman, then I have more options to make it happen without friction. Because if you have more spindles, you also have to take more things into account, the

solution always becomes more complicated. And that is my fear. Maybe it's fear. (Respondent B1, Stepfather)

The quote of Respondent B1 (Stepfather) shows how he projected his fear onto polyamory and the probable cause of instability. The few sceptical respondents mention instability and other pessimistic views many times when discussing the negative aspects of being in a polyamorous relationship. These pessimistic attitudes were mainly focused on fear of instability, uncertainty of the future and the relationship's seriousness or intentions. This is highlighted in the following quote:

. . . those [other family members] look at it [the polyamorous relationship] with a bit of suspicion. Would things go well? Is there a serious relationship? How does Relative 2 feel about it? Isn't he going to run off again tomorrow with another girlfriend? (Respondent G2, Father)

The instability in the quote above is reflected in the idea that loyalty is probably less prevalent or present within the confines of polyamory and the multiplicity of partners than within monogamy (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). The importance of instability in respondents' accounts of their worries and pessimistic attitudes is also recognised in earlier research. Ritchie and Barker (2016) discuss how perceived instability could create uncertainties within the relationship when considering monogamous principles. This phenomenon could tie in directly to the specific theme of role ambivalence that has been portrayed in the previous section, as the parents indicate that they want to accept and love their child unconditionally, but at the same time want to wish "the best" for them. The idea of what is considered "the best" for their children might be influenced by these monogamous principles (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

4.6 Family dynamics and the acceptance of multiple partners within the family

The family members' views on the polyamorous relationship are expressed through operationalised behaviours. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, it is possible that these optimistic attitudes and open-mindedness of the family members can contribute to a sense of community wherein the polyamorous relative can experience the family system as a support structure in an emotional and companionship way (Wan et al., 1996). For this to happen, acceptance of the polyamorous relationship structure is needed, as it can provide opportunities for strong bonds between both the polyamorous family member and the partners. The attitude regarding the partners is generally optimistic, and no actual distinction is made between inviting one or multiple partners, as seen in the following quote of Respondent I2: *Because they are with you and we accept you in the way you are. So even if you come alone, you take two with you. . . , then that's up to you. . . . I am not negative about that. . .* (Brother-in-law). There is an unambiguous conception among the respondents that the partner(s) of the relative, in whatever amount that may be, is welcome within the family and family gatherings such as the holidays. Even though not all partners might not be seen as part of the family

right away by all the respondents, the number of partners does not account for the acceptance of the relative or the bond that exists between the polyamorous relative and the family members; this is demonstrated in the following quote:

. . . the relationship is not based on whether Relative 3 has one partner or two partners or five, . . . Our relationship is not based on that [the number of partners], so in principle yes, of course, does that have no influence on me. (Respondent L3, Sister)

4.7 Bonding through the notion of kinship

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked about their bonds with their relative's partners, they all were willing to get to know them better. One of the respondents demonstrates this when she underlines the importance of a bond with the partner as a person, next to being the partner of their relative:

. . . if Relative 3 comes home with partners and a connection is created with that partner of hers or with those partners of hers with me, then I would like to close someone in my heart, then he or she belongs to that inner family, certainly, certainly, that has also already happened. (Respondent J3, Mother)

In the quote above, Respondent J3 explains how she is willing to accept and enclose the partners of her polyamorous relative in her life. When asked what was needed to accept these partners as part of the family, they responded with: *A bond, a connection, not only a connection with my daughter, but also a connection with me* (Mother). This need for a connection has been shared among multiple respondents, as a pattern shows that she would like to spend more time with the partners of their relatives to get to know them better to eventually include them in the family, as Respondent C1 (Brother) emphasises:

Ultimately, yes, so you have a phase when the relationship starts, and at the beginning, it is "the boyfriend of," and then again, years pass. Mainly that you see the growth of the two [within the relationship] . . . visiting the family events, so you ultimately become part of the family . . . That's how you are seen, because it is one of us who accepts you and ultimately. That already indicates that you are already a good person and from there you eventually build up, everyone gets to know each other better and ultimately you are seen as just family.

Although not explicitly mentioned within this quote, through the context of the interview with Respondent C1 (Brother), it became apparent that this process of acceptance and the need to spend more time with his relative's partners made no distinction based on the relationship structure, as previously discussed in 4.6.

Spending more time on itself seems to be a necessity to be considered to develop a bond and be considered part of the family, as multiple respondents indicated that there is no automatic acceptance and that being part of the family takes interaction, as mentioned in the following quote:

No, not completely automatically, no, you have to know someone for a longer time and have interactions with them and share things with them and then it starts to feel like family. But with you, for example, I don't have that yet. No, I know you're there, I know that, but I don't see you much. (Respondent A1, Mother)

Respondent A1 explains how the bond between Relative 2 and them is not fully realised, as the relationship with Relative 1 is relatively short. In the specific case of the respondents with the numbers 1 and 2, the duration of the relationship was a deciding factor in consideration of whether they were considered family or not, as the following quote demonstrates: *So that's not because you have anything against it, but simply because the click is less, or, in your case, the bond has not yet grown* (Respondent B1, Stepfather). The willingness to connect and bond emphasises how each respondent negated the relationship structure and was open to including any number of partners present, as bonds need time in any relationship structure. This willingness to include multiple partners in the composition of the family system connects to the findings of the study of Roodsaz (2021), in which he argues that the concept of family and kinship has been stretched and diffused, and thus can be said that the ways the bonds that are created with the family members and the partner(s) of the relatives add to the notion of this stretched concept of family. The family systems studied in this research define their own composition of the family.

5. Discussion

This research has provided insights into the context of polyamorous relationships and their place within family dynamics. The most prominent insight is that the majority of the respondents were optimistic about their relatives' polyamorous relationships, although this has been more prevalent among grandparents and siblings than parents. The difference in attitudes was mainly a byproduct of worries about the feasibility, seriousness, and stability of polyamory as a relationship structure.

Besides this dichotomy in attitudes, amongst both groups, the idea of polyamory and its consequences were deemed odd or weird because of its norm deviation, for example, having multiple partners at family gatherings or trying to empathise with the idea of "sharing" partners. Although this finding stood out among the respondents, it is a matter of time before they get used to it.

5.1 Positionality as Researcher

The implications of the researcher's positionality during this research are noteworthy, as they relate to one of the themes within this research: family dynamics. After every interview, there was a moment to debrief the personal and essential themes discussed and address any potential questions or concerns that might surface because of the interview. Each respondent used this opportunity to ask the researcher about his perspectives and feelings on the discussed themes.

The evaluative nature of the interview questions meant that the researcher discussed the bonds between himself and his family members, as well as his partner's family. The impact of conducting the interviews was felt several days after, as it was also a moment of introspection for him. During the interviews, staying in the researcher role was challenging while being part of the subject matter. This was experienced as confrontational and heartwarming, as it forced the researcher to confront his not fully realised bonds to date and hear the words of acceptance from the family members towards the relatives.

5.2 Interviews as Intervention

The debriefing was not limited to the interviews; afterwards, family members reported having multiple conversations with other family members among themselves, as well as with the relatives. The interviews sparked many conversations about the perspectives of the respondents. Besides that, they even said that they saw the process of this research as a means to talk openly about polyamory and their relatives' relationship structure. For the researcher, this resulted in the idea that it may have deepened the bond with his family members and those of his partner.

5.3 Implications

Due to the rebuttal of the expectations about the generational cleavage in attitudes towards the

polyamorous relationship structure of the relatives, some insight could be added to the literature concerning the study of Duewel (2022). Within Duewel's (2022) study, a pattern was found that stated that younger generations would uphold more positive attitudes than older generations, which has been nuanced by the findings that older generations, in the case of this research, the grandparents, would be just as optimistic as the siblings. These findings imply that the current idea about the expected positioning and attitudes of the different generations may be more nuanced than expected. The pessimistic or sceptical views are mainly based on the closeness and type of relationship with the relative rather than the generational position. This nuance could imply that the knowledge and literature about polyamorous relationships and related attitudes can still be expanded upon, as the role ambivalence present among the respondents indicates that the type of relationship and closeness towards the relative are more prevalent and thus makes potential subjects for this expanse.

Considering the notion of mono-normativity, the attitudes among the respondents were expressed in unexpected ways. For example, the multiplicity of partners was welcomed into the family or family gatherings, even though they were not immediately considered part of the family. In the case of the consulted sample, the idea of inclusion within the family was based on creating bonds over time through communication and closeness without a specific partner receiving preferential treatment.

In the case of the respondents related to Relative 1 and 2, time was a possible reason why the bond between the family and a relative's partner was not fully established. That said, the willingness to include and explore the possibility of developing a familiar bond was present among all the respondents. The willingness to include and accept a partner in the family meant that the relative still could rely on their family members for emotional and companionship support regardless of relationship structure (Wan et al., 1996).

At the same time, it could be said that the deviation of the family due to the notion of polyamory present within the family system did cause some tensions within the family as the relationship structure challenged the ideals of monogamy by sparking conversations among the respondents (Barker & Langdrige, 2010; Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). This implies that the polyamorous relationship structure on its own is present in multiple facets of the family dynamics, as it is welcomed into the family systems while simultaneously questioning the normative ideals that may be present within it.

5.4.1 Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

5.4.2 Sample acquisition

As discussed in the methods section, the acquisition of interviews was mainly opportunistic, which meant that in order to gather enough respondents, it was necessary to conduct this research within the researcher's social circle, even if that may deteriorate the data quality due to the inability to

generalise the findings onto the whole polyamorous community. Eventually, there were no apparent signs that the collecting data within the researcher's social circle had weakened data quality, as all the respondents were willing to openly answer all the questions without any possible biases towards the researcher. For example, the respondents were willing to discuss their worries and doubts about the polyamorous relationship structure and the relationship itself.

There were expectations about how difficult it would be to get in touch with enough family members of polyamorous relatives. Direct contact with these family members proved to be very difficult, as polyamorous individuals are considered a minority, and not everyone discloses these details about their relatives to strangers.

Subsequently, there was the obstacle of reaching out to relatives who were open about their relationship structure towards their family, who in turn had to be willing to contact their family members who had to be inclined to participate and be open about personal family information. If those criteria were met, they had to be available within a small timeframe of approximately one month to do face-to-face interviews or through video calls. Due to time constraints, the decision was made to recruit respondents from within the researcher's social circle. This limited the opportunity to gather a generalisable research population consisting of random family members with no relation to the researcher to further the general knowledge about polyamory instead of the confined scope of the current sample. To prevent biases towards the researcher and an overrepresentation of respondents from within the same social environment, follow-up research could focus on a more generalisable sample composition and size while having fewer familial ties to the researcher. The added value of a more random and generalisable sample is to expand the knowledge about polyamory, polyamorous relationships and those in this type of relationship.

5.4.3 Social Environment of the Researcher

Regarding the implications of the results based on the social environment of the researcher, there seems to be a pattern in which non-monogamous notions are more widely accepted or tolerated than in the average social environment. Individuals are probably more likely to develop or act on the notions of polyamory within a social environment or "social bubbles" in which people are viewed and label themselves as "open-minded", which could be an exciting follow-up research.

When further research is done outside of the social environment, it is possible that the collected data could differ. This could be positive or negative, as in this research, the closeness to the respondents has been deemed a positive aspect, considering the rich and expansive data collected through this sample. That said, as will be discussed in depth further on in the discussion, there might be an overrepresentation of positive attitudes displayed within this research, as strong negative perspectives were more likely to decline the invitation to partake in this research. A more nuanced sample, which also manages to include strong negative perspectives, could result in more reliable results.

5.4.4 Composition of the Research Population

In this research, the acquisition of respondents within the researcher's social environment indirectly resulted in the composition of the current research population being predominantly white, which has implications for cultural generalisation. Family norms and culture outside the dominant white views may influence attitudes in other ways that can be reflected in family dynamics and support systems, which can be considered when developing follow-up research. To this day, the possible implications of including the concepts of white and non-white cultures within studies about polyamory have not been done. Therefore, it cannot be said with certainty that there are possible differences, but culture can influence family norms and attitudes about polyamory within families and how this may be expressed within family dynamics (Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Valadez et al., 2020). Thus, it is likely that a variation in culture may yield different results, whether these are homogeneous or heterogeneous cultural samples. In part, this means that the results of this research may only be obtained due to the composition.

5.4.5 Conduction of the Interviews

The interviews turned out rich in data considering the number of useable quotes, even though the interviews were each on the short end, with an average of 30 minutes per interview. Considering the richness of the gathered data, it can be said that the duration of the interviews had no implications on the quality of data, as every theme was discussed regardless. The conduct of the interviews posed a challenge as not all the respondents could do a face-to-face interview, as the distance was too great for some. Those interviews were done through a Teams video call, which could still display non-verbal communication like body language. This had no detectable implications for the data quality as there were no perceived differences between the data collection methods.

5.4.6 Positive bias

Furthermore, there was a case in which a family member was asked to participate in this research. Unfortunately, he refused because he was so against the idea of polyamory that he did not want anything to do with it or the research. Even after indicating that his disapproval was insightful for this research, he rejected the request. This case could indicate that there might be an overestimation and overrepresentation of positive findings within this research, as those who reject the concept of polyamory to such a degree are more likely to decline the invitation for an interview. If this is true, this will limit the implications of the results, as the attitudes and the connections to family dynamics and support structures might be more nuanced in a sample that includes family members like the one mentioned above. Those with strong negative feelings about polyamory might offer perspectives on the subject matter that were not included in this research. If future endeavours manage to compile a research sample in which even the most disapproving family members are included, that could offer

new insights and other outcomes based on the expectations made according to the literature. Depending on the underlying reasoning of the respondents, the family dynamics and support structures could be shaped in unforeseen ways.

6. Conclusion

The results produced during this research have contributed invaluable insights into family members' attitudes towards their relatives in polyamorous relationships and how these attitudes are connected to family dynamics and support structures. Contrary to the literature, these insights show that attitudes are generally optimistic, with some pessimistic exceptions, and that family systems are willing to negate the deviating status of polyamorous relationship structures to connect and bond with their relative's partner(s) and include them in this new family composition by stretching the concept of family.

This research shows that the attitude dichotomy was essentially based on the closeness and type of relation with the polyamorous relative rather than the generational position. Furthermore, the dichotomy within these attitudes portrays a pattern of role ambivalence within the generational cleavage among parents that indicates worries and fears about their relatives' polyamorous relationship structure. These worries are mainly based on monogamous principles and were coped through understanding or tolerating the situation.

This research examines support structures expressed within the interviews through the operationalisation of communication, invitations and family connectedness, as opposed to the abstract concepts of Wan et al.'s (1996) emotional and companionship support. In the case of polyamorous relationships, the families were willing to include and accept multiple partners while also expressing the tensions due to the deviating status of polyamory that questions the normative ideals present within these families.

The key takeaways are that the attitudes of family members about their relatives' polyamorous relationship shape the family dynamics and support systems in a generally optimistic manner, as the family systems would like to include multiple partners despite opposing mono-normative principles. However, due to the limitations of the research, the researcher's social environment possibly shapes the concepts of family dynamics and support structures, and further endeavours should consider cultural influences. Ultimately, the families in this research are relatively open to the idea of non-normative relationships among their relatives, and the goal is always for everyone to find happiness, in whatever form that may be.

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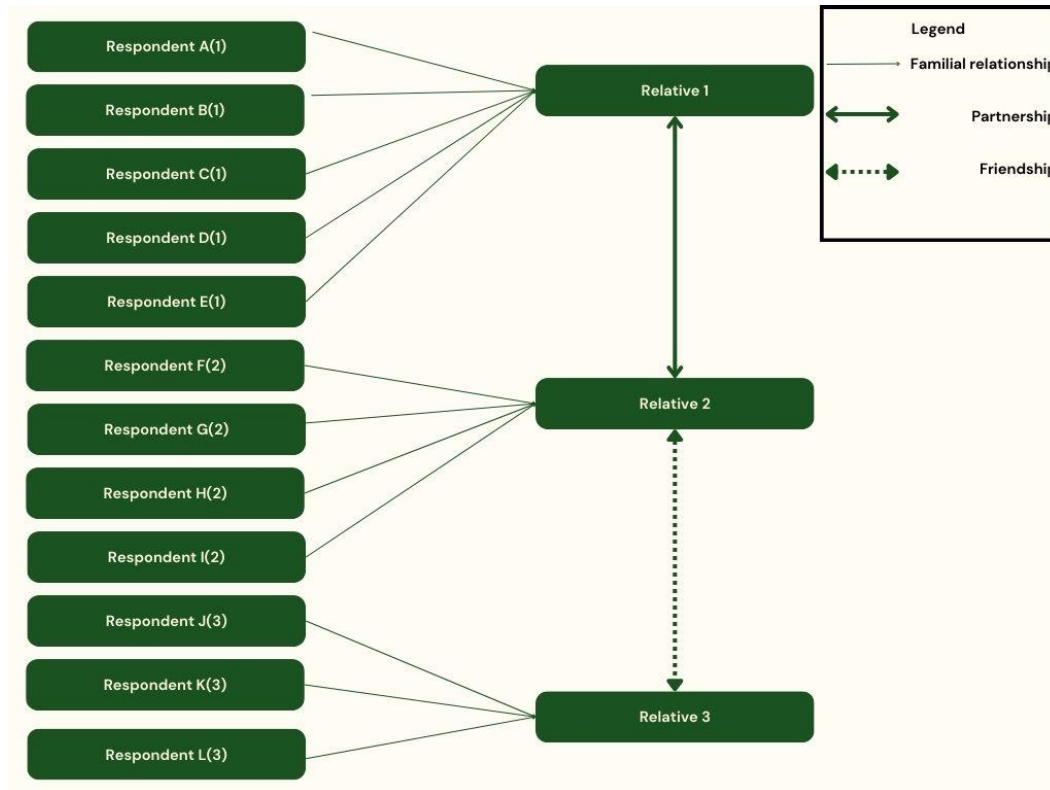
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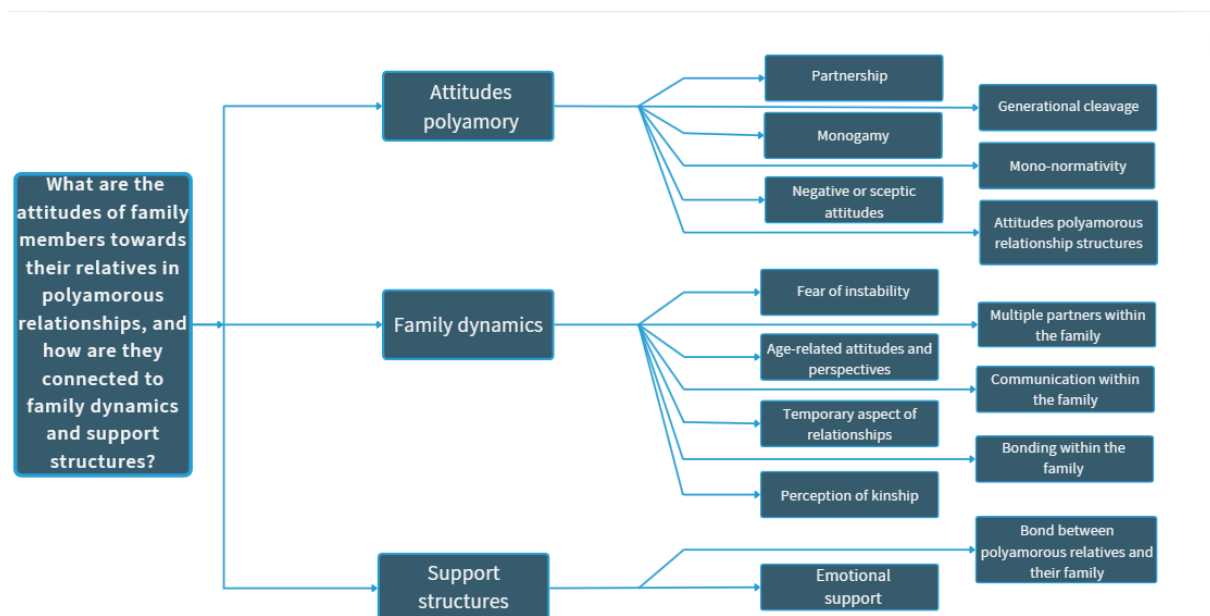
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7. Appendix

Appendix 1: Relationship Diagram



Appendix 2: Code tree



Appendix 3: Interview Questions

- Kunt u uzelf voorstellen?

- Op welke manier bent u verwant aan (naam familielid)?
 - Hoe zou u uw relatie met diegene beoordelen/beschrijven?

- Wie beschouwt u als familie?
 - Wie wel, wie niet? (Focus op de partner(s) van familielid)
 - (-Hoe definieert u relaties/partnerschap?)
 - (-Welke rol speelt monogamie hierin?)
 - (-Wat weet u over polyamorie en hoe kijkt u hiernaar?)

- Wat betekent "familie" voor u en hoe voelt u zich verbonden tot je familieleden?
 - Op welke manieren geldt dit ook voor de partner(s) van (naam familielid)?

- Is de relatie met uw gezinsleden veranderd sinds hij/zij een relatie heeft met (partner(s))?
 - Zo ja, waarom (niet)? Op welke manier?

- Hoe ziet de communicatie er binnen de familie eruit en welke rol speelt dit onder de familieleden?
 - Is dit in de loop van de tijd veranderd, na de introductie van de partner(s)?
 - Heeft u contact met de partner(s)? Hoe ziet dit eruit?

- Worden alle partners van (naam familielid) uitgenodigd op familiebijeenkomsten?
 - Waarom wel/niet?
 - Wat betekent dit voor u? / Wat vond u hiervan?

- Zijn er verschillen in opvattingen en gedrag richting de polyamoureuze relatie van (naam familielid) tussen verschillende familieleden?
 - Zo ja, op wat voor manier?

Appendix 4: Ethics and Privacy Checklist



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Family members' attitudes towards their kin's polyamorous relationships

Name, email of student: Yoeri de Bruin, 585153yb@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Renske Keizer, keizer@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 15-1-2024, 6 months

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

-The participants will not be informed beforehand of the interview questions that will be asked during the interviews.

-Besides that, there might be a risk for negative emotions as it is possible that during the interviews possible conflicts will be discussed.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

-After the interviews the respondents will get an extensive explanation about the nature of the research and how the interviews will be processed.

-The respondents will be reminded again that they have no obligations of answering any questions and that they are free to stop the interview at any time. In case of negative emotions, there is the option for the respondents for a moment to discuss this.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

-The respondents could experience negative emotions due to the nature of the questions, in case of negative family relations or previous conflicts.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Within families in which there are relatives who are in a polyamorous relationship.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

12

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The population contains families in the Netherlands that have a relative who is in a polyamorous relationship.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The audio files of the recorded interviews and the transcripts will be stored on the secured personal computer and on an encrypted hard drive disk as back-up.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

The researcher: Yoeri de Bruin

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

The back-up of the data will be made each week for the duration of the research.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

The data will be anonymized by changing the names and other personal data that could be linked to one of the respondents

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Yoeri de Bruin

Name (EUR) supervisor: Renske Keizer

Date: 24-3-2024

Date: 22-04-2024