

Alternative Family Life in Canada

The lived Experiences of Polyamorous Families in the Fringes of Legality

An Abstract of the Thesis By
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This thesis represents the first qualitative study of polyamorous life in Canada, focusing on the lived experiences of five polyamorous families. The results showcase how diverse family structures in polyamory can be, with one family comprised of a long-term, stable triad in which two children were raised, a co-parenting family with numerous adults raising three children, and three additional families without children who maintain their own unique structures. Research indicates these families are well-equipped to support the development of their children and by offering multiple adults who can provide care have positive impacts on the participants who reported suffering from mental health issues as well. Concerning legality, participants cited being unable to share medical and social benefits with multiple partners as being their points of greatest concern. The participants largely rejected the idea of advocating for plural marriage, instead favouring the development of entirely new ways of proving legal kinship.