MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SOCIOLOGY

Research Associate (Curious Connections: The Impact of Donating Egg and Sperm on Donors' Everyday Life and Relationships)

Vacancy ref: HUM-08734

Salary:	Grade 6 (Point 1 to Point 3) £30,738 to £32,600
Hours:	Full Time
Duration:	Fixed Term – 01 January 2017 to 30 June 2019
Location:	Oxford Road, Manchester
Responsible to:	Dr Petra Nordqvist

MORGAN CENTRE FOR RESEARCH INTO EVERYDAY LIVES

Established in 2005, and named after Professor David Morgan who continues to be actively involved, the Morgan Centre currently has 15 members of academic and research staff plus three emeritus professors and associated graduate students. We conduct research on contemporary relationships and the area of personal life, a concept which covers many potential issues within the field of intimacy, family, and relationships. Our focus is on aspects of everyday life across the lifecourse, including sexuality, gender, living arrangements and intergenerational relationships, and our methodological approaches and perspectives draw upon anthropology, history, cultural studies and socio-legal studies as well as sociology. We are committed to developing new theoretical perspectives on personal life and intimacy, as well as pursuing new directions in empirical research. The Centre is co-directed by Professors Sue Heath and Brian Heaphy.

For more details, see www.manchester.ac.uk/morgancentre.

SOCIOLOGY IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sociology at Manchester is one of the biggest and most successful units in the UK with over forty members of academic and research staff, and has a strong and distinctive record of world class research underpinned by methodological innovation. Colleagues at Manchester have a diverse range of research interests. That diversity is underpinned by a shared commitment to theoretically-informed empirical research. That is to say, we engage with theories about how the world is changing and enjoy speculating with big ideas. We are totally committed, however, to

subjecting such theories to empirical research drawing on a wide range of methods and techniques to collect evidence, in support or otherwise, of these ideas. Moreover, we cast a critical eye over the methods we employ and the substantive results we produce. We are sociologists engaged in critical social science.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School of Social Sciences (SoSS) brings together six distinct groups: Economics, Politics, Philosophy, Social Anthropology, Social Statistics and Sociology. SoSS is a large School with over 200 academic and research staff. The School has a highly developed research culture and REF2014 show that Social Science research at Manchester is ranked 3rd in the UK, based on research power times number of staff submitted or by 4*/3* times number of staff submitted), with 78% of our research activity judged as 'world leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*). Sociology (including Social Statistics) is 1st in the UK, based on the percentage of overall research activity that is world leading (4*), and 2nd based on research power. The School's international and national reputations in its constituent disciplines are reflected in the substantial external research income that it generates, its involvement in ESRC Centres, ESRC recognition for training PhD students, and success in securing ESRC studentships for research postgraduates.

SoSS is committed to research-led teaching. It has an extensive portfolio of undergraduate teaching programmes: single and joint honours programmes in its constituent disciplines; joint programmes with other Schools in the Faculty of Humanities; and large interdisciplinary programmes, including the BA(Econ) and the new BA in Social Sciences. The School also offers a full range of MA and MSc programmes, and over 250 research students are registered in the School.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY

The University's main campus is located only a short distance from the city centre. The University Library is the major library in the North West and the third largest in the country. The University's estate also includes the Manchester Museum, the Whitworth Art Gallery, and the John Rylands Library.

Manchester is a vibrant and dynamic city, based on grand Victorian architecture. The modern city has a highly cosmopolitan atmosphere and its cultural and sporting life is internationally renowned. Within fifteen minutes' walk of the campus, for instance, are three outstanding professional theatre companies, the Bridgewater Hall (home to the Halle Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Manchester Camerata), the newly opened Home theatre, cinema and art gallery, and Europe's fastest-growing Chinatown. Ten minutes in the opposite direction is perhaps the best stretch of road in the entire country for Indian and Pakistani food. Salford Quays is also a short journey from the city centre, the home of the Lowry Centre, Imperial War Museum North, MediaCityUK, and a stones' throw from Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United. The Peak District National Park is a short train journey from the city centre, while the Lake District and Snowdonia are also within easy reach. Fast trains connect Manchester with London, and Manchester International Airport is 20 minutes from the city centre.

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PROJECT SUMMARY: 'Curious Connections: The Impact of Donating Egg and Sperm on Donors' Everyday Life and Relationships'

This study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council for 30 months. It will start on January 2nd 2017 (or as soon as possible thereafter). The study is directed by Doctor Petra Nordqvist (Principal Investigator). It is located in the Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives, Sociology, University of Manchester. The project will also employ a dedicated project support officer.

The study explores the experience of egg and sperm donors in England and Wales, and considers how donating genetic material impacts on donors' own everyday lives and relationships. It explores the policy setting in which reproductive donation occurs and in which donors operate, and the legal meaning assigned to genetic links within the current regulatory context of openness and donations being traceable. It investigates specifically the personal experience of donating and the impact of doing so within the context of such donations being traceable, on relationships with partners and close kin.

The study aims to:

- research the policy on donation and the rights and obligations of donors
- attend to how egg and sperm donors negotiate donating within the context of their everyday lives and relationships, and also if and how they share information with close kin
- Explore the impact of donating on family networks and their ways of relating
- Research how close kin react to and experience the existence of donor offspring
- Investigate the similarities and difference between male and female donors' experiences
- Illuminate what the practice of sperm/egg donation can tell us about contemporary kinship and family cultures

Approach and methods

This study takes the donor as a starting point, but in order to better understand the process and family dynamics that underscore donors' experiences, it looks beyond the donor and situates donating within the context of their close relationships. It utilises a qualitative approach and will analyse existing policy on donors alongside 90 qualitative semi-structured interviews with 50 donors (25 with egg donors and 25 with sperm donors), 20 close kin (partners and parents) and 20 infertility counsellors.

Background to the Project

In a culture that emphasises the importance of genetic connectedness and which holds that vital and enduring family relationships pass through genetic reproduction, the decision to give away one's eggs or sperm is a radical one. It is however something that is becoming increasingly common as more people struggle with issues of infertility, and the fertility industry is growing. Questions arise about how donors experience the process of donating and how that process impacts on their own everyday lives and relationships. We know very little about this, and the lack of knowledge is becoming problematic given recent developments in law and policy. Whereas in the past, donors were anonymous and so could choose to keep their donation a secret from close kin, recent legal changes mean that donors are now identifiable. In 2023, the first children born through 'identity release' egg or sperm donors will be able to seek contact. Donors nowadays are therefore likely to deliberate on how to manage such openness and contact within the context of their own relationships with partners, parents and their own children. Being open may not be a straightforward task; evidence to suggest that donors may

prefer to keep the information secret, and that sensitivities therefore can grow in family networks. This is a sister project to the previous study Relative Strangers (funded by the ESRC 2010-2013, with PI Professor Carol Smart and Co-I Dr Petra Nordqvist) which explored family life after receiving donor egg and sperm. This showed that donor conception impacted on family relationships and the study raised unforeseen questions about donors, suggesting that giving away (as opposed to receiving) egg and sperm may impact on family relationships in significant ways.

Shortlisted candidates will be provided with a more detailed account of the project.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- To contribute to the development of the project, including its research design and securing ethical approval from the University of Manchester Ethics Committee;
- To carry out a review of literature relevant to the project;
- To contribute to the identification and analysis of relevant policy documents relevant for donors and donation;
- To organise and maintain project data, systems and materials for the project;
- To contribute to the development of sampling strategies for the project, and to construct the relevant samples;
- To make contact with the potential samples, and to negotiate access and informed consent;
- To take the primary role in conducting the research and fieldwork;
- To take the primary role in coding the project data, with the assistance of NVivo software or similar, and with assistance from other project members;
- To contribute to the analysis of research data generated by the project;
- To present project findings at conferences and meetings;
- To be involved in co-authoring publications from the project as part of an overall publications strategy;
- To publicise the study and disseminate findings to both academic and non-academic users/networks;
- To network with researchers working in related areas;
- To contribute to the project website, with assistance from the project support staff;
- To help in the planning and organisation of project dissemination events;
- To contribute to the development of the project's impact and user engagement strategies and activities;
- To liaise and network with Advisory Board members and other stakeholders;
- To participate in relevant training and career development activities;
- To oversee and contribute to anonymising and preparing the project data for archiving purposes;
- To provide appropriate material for ESRC annual and final reports and RCUK Researchfish website;
- To play an active part in the Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives
- To carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade and purpose of the post.

This job description reflects the present requirements of the post and, as duties and responsibilities change/develop, the job description will be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with you.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION
We expect that you will meet all of the essential criteria and have one or more of the desirable attributes.

ESSENTIAL

- A PhD or equivalent in a social science discipline area;
- Knowledge and understanding of theory and research relating to the sociology of intimacy and personal life;
- A strong grounding in qualitative research methodologies;
- Extensive experience of qualitative interviewing and analysis of qualitative interview data;
- Ability to negotiate access to diverse samples;
- Appreciation of ethical issues in research;
- Ability to work independently in the field;
- Ability to work both on own initiative and collaboratively as part of a team;
- Ability to maintain and organise project data, materials and records;
- Experience of organising and managing workload efficiently, whilst working to deadlines;
- Ability to communicate effectively and to present research findings to a range of audiences;
- Experience of writing social science articles and papers of publishable quality;
- Good IT skills;
- Willingness to travel away from Manchester, including overnight stays;
- Willingness to undertake further training and to expand own sociological research repertoire, as appropriate.

DESIRABLE

- Knowledge and understanding of theory and research relating to reproductive donation and new reproductive technologies;
- Knowledge and understanding of theory and research relating to kinship and relatedness;
- Experience of using a CAQDAS package (eg NVivo, ATLAS.ti) for analysing interview data;
- Experience of liaison with practitioners and stakeholders;
- Experience of planning and organising research dissemination events and other forms of research impact; communicating with user groups and stakeholders
- Publications in the area of the research project and/or in qualitative research methodology.