

Queering Coupledness?

Consensual Non-Monogamies in
Finnish Online News 2017–2021

ABSTRACT

In recent years, popular interest in consensual non-monogamy (CNM) – including swinging, open relationships, and polyamory – has grown steadily in Finland. Finnish online media has started to explore intimate practices in which individuals agree to engage in sexual and/or loving relationships with multiple partners. In this article, we analyze fifty-six human-interest stories on CNM from the five largest online news platforms in Finland, published between 2017 and 2021, to build an understanding of how media representations of CNM contribute to constructing or deconstructing mononormativity and couple-normativity in Finland. The study locates in the field of critical social psychology, draws from queer and feminist theories of non-normative intimacies and employs reflexive thematic analysis to examine how mono- and couple-normativities are regulated in institutional contexts and the ways online news shapes public knowledge, understanding, and attitudes. Our findings indicate that while media representations construct CNM as a valid and beneficial relationship option for some, underlying assumptions of mononormativity and couple-normativity remain strong.

Keywords: consensual non-monogamy, mononormativity, couple-normativity, critical social psychology, reflexive thematic analysis

POPULAR INTEREST IN consensual non-monogamy (CNM) – practices such as polyamory, swinging, open relationships, and relationship anarchy, in which individuals openly agree to engage in multiple simultaneous sexual and/or romantic relationships (Barker & Langdridge

2010a; Sheff & Tesene 2015) – has been growing in Finland over the past decade. As we will show in this article, Finnish media coverage of CNM has significantly increased since 2017. This growing interest in CNM is also evident in the abundance of books, podcasts, and TV shows challenging normative assumptions related to coupledness. For example, the international bestseller self-help book *More Than Two: A Practical Guide to Ethical Polyamory* was translated into Finnish in 2019 (Veaux & Rickert 2019), followed by the publication of two non-fiction books and a novel in 2020, that address and question the normative assumptions of emotional and sexual exclusivity often linked to monogamy (Hämäläinen 2020; Tiessalo & Karhumäki 2020; Suominen 2020). There has also been a rise in Finnish social media content discussing non-conventional forms of intimate relating, particularly on Instagram and within various Facebook groups (Taivaloja 2022).

The current Finnish discussion on CNM has not developed in a vacuum. It is part of the wider trajectory of the development of sexual rights in Finland, influenced by debates on sexual rights across the Western world. Finland offers an interesting socio-cultural context for studying representations of CNM due to its unique position: while it belongs to the Nordic countries, known for their sexual permissiveness (e.g., Andersson 2022), Finland has often lagged behind its Nordic neighbors in advancing sexual rights legislation. For instance, although the Nordic countries have been pioneers in legalizing same-sex marriage, Finland was the last among them to enact such a law; it came into effect only in 2017. In the years leading up to and following this legal change, representations of queer sexualities became increasingly visible in Finnish media. LGBTQ individuals have long shared their life stories with journalists to educate the broader public about non-normative sexualities, as documented in Finnish queer (media) studies (e.g., Juvonen 2004; Kuosmanen 2007; Moring 2013). We suggest that the current public discussion on CNM in Finnish media is a continuation of this mediatized history of sexual politics.

Similarly to the case of same-sex marriage, the CNM debate has been influenced by international discussions and examples, but with

a delay. As argued by Ritchie (2010, 46), in the UK, media representations of CNM moved toward “everyday” sexual stories describing non-monogamous people’s lives already in 2010. Yet, as Cardoso and Klesse (2022) argue in their study conducted in the UK and Portugal, stereotypical media representations are a continued problem for CNM communities even today. Thus, wider media coverage of CNM does not always equate to wider understanding or acceptance. In Finland, the public discussion on CNM has started to proliferate more recently, as reflected by the increased media coverage. In other Nordic countries, the recently increased media exposure of CNM has also been noted, but there is limited research exploring this further (Andersson & Carlström 2019; Carlström & Andersson 2019; Træen & Thuen 2022).

The current CNM relationship arrangements can be considered culturally indebted to the queer critique of marriage and the norm-critical relationship practices and ideals developed in queer communities before registered partnership or marriage was even an option (e.g., Munson & Stelboun 1999; Hekanaho 2007). Moreover, CNM can be argued to build on the foundation of the free love movement of the 1960s and the open marriages of the 1970s, which were widespread among the heterosexual population as well (e.g., Noël 2006). CNM is, therefore, not ahistorical nor something typical only to contemporary times.

Although we are witnessing a cultural shift in challenging dominant assumptions surrounding coupledness, the hegemonic ideal of a sexually and emotionally exclusive union between two people runs deep within Finnish society (see e.g., Taivaloja & Harviainen 2019; Alasuutari & Heinonen 2021) and the Western world. Lahti (2018) states that the normative western understandings of love and romance are strongly tied to “the ideal of finding ‘the one’ who meets all our romantic and sexual needs.” Pieper and Bauer (2005) have coined the term *mononormativity* to highlight these “dominant assumptions of the normalcy and naturalness of monogamy, similar to such assumptions around heterosexuality inherent in the term heteronormativity.” It is a belief system supported by political, psychological, and cultural discourses that present monogamy as natural and morally correct (Barker & Langdridge 2010b), while

non-monogamous alternatives are often stigmatized as unnatural, dysfunctional, or perverse (Ferrer 2018; see also Rambukkana 2015; Schippers 2016). In addition, Roseneil et al. (2020, 4) have written about the tenacity of the couple-norm and how *couple-normativity* is “at the heart of how intimate life is organized, regulated and recognized by regimes of intimate citizenship.” Thus, monogamy as a norm is complexly upheld by everyday understandings of intimate and loving relationships, but also by different institutional agents and practices.

Despite popular interest in alternative relationship styles, there has been little academic research conducted on the topic of CNM in Finland. To build an understanding of current discussions of CNM in the Finnish context, we analyze Finnish online news articles on CNM between 2017–2021 with two research questions in mind: 1) how are non-monogamous relationships represented in Finnish online news, and 2) how do these representations take part in supporting or challenging mononormativity and couple normativity?

Drawing theoretically and methodologically from the fields of critical social psychology and gender studies, we aim to point out how the discursive and disciplinary power of media influences public knowledge, understanding and attitudes (cf. Burr & Dick 2017; see also Ritchie 2010; Andersson & Carlström 2019). We have chosen online news as our data source because it effectively demonstrates how normativities can be regulated from a macro-level power position (Burr & Dick 2017, 62–63). Although our data is derived from the media, it is important to note that we are not conducting media studies per se. Our focus is on analyzing the power of media representations to construct and deconstruct relationship norms, rather than on a detailed analysis of journalistic styles. Following Ritchie (2010), we argue that studying media representations of CNM has political importance for understanding how relationship norms are both challenged and conformed to in public discourse. We approach media as a social institution with authority and view online news as practices that contribute to constructing and deconstructing normativities – thereby fostering a greater understanding of CNM but also perpetuating prejudice and stigma.

Feminist and queer theoretical framework

Theoretically, we combine queer and feminist studies on non-normative intimacies, which often intersect and interact in innovative and productive ways. Following the “queer paradigm to study relationship diversity” introduced by Hammack et al., we focus on exploring intimacy occurring “in multiple relationships simultaneously with consent” (2019, 556). In this context, our use of queer is less about marginalized sexualities and more about a norm-critical perspective (see e.g., Riggs & Treharne 2017) that allows us to challenge the normative standards and ideals of intimacy and examine non-normative forms of intimate relating that remain marginalized. Thus, we do not approach CNM as a “queer identity,” but as a set of practices that may queer relationship norms (see e.g., Wilkinson 2010). As argued by Michael Warner (1993, xxvi), “queer’ gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual.” While acknowledging the importance of employing queer theory to specifically examine the lives of sexual and gender minorities (e.g., Halperin 2004), we adhere to a tradition of queer theory that goes beyond viewing queer as an umbrella term for non-heterosexuality. Instead, we draw upon the contingency, indefinability, and boundless potential of queer theory to interrogate norms and normativity (e.g., Butler 1993; Giffney 2004; Riggs & Treharne 2017). On this basis we argue that queer theory is useful for critically analyzing various forms of non-monogamy within normative regimes of intimacy.

It is also important to note that, in terms of sexual identities, CNM exists within both LGBTQ and heterosexual populations, although research has predominantly focused on its manifestations among heterosexuals (e.g., Matsick et al. 2013; De Graeve 2019). However, CNM has a long history within the relational practices of gay men and it is not uncommon within the broader LGBTQ community either (Munson & Stelboum 1999; Moors et al. 2014; Klesse 2014).

As noted by Lauren Berlant (1998), the dyadic matrimonial, heterosexual couple has traditionally served as the canon of intimate relationships in Western societies. It directs our life narratives and governs which forms of intimacy are rendered conceivable and intelligible. Like-

wise, as argued by Roseneil et al. (2020), it is what intimate citizenship and adult lives are (allegedly) made of. Intimacies that do not fit into this narrative have no canon, no “alternative plots” (Berlant 1998, 285), and, until recently, received little attention on media platforms. However, the normative ideologies of intimate relating and the normative standards defining intimate citizenship have started to crack, creating space for alternative ways of doing and representing intimacy.

According to Roseneil et al. (2020, 23–26), canonical or normative intimacy is governed by “the four core norms of intimate citizenship”: the gender norm (the binary categorization of male and female), the hetero norm, the procreative norm, and the couple norm. Although norms are powerful in maintaining the status quo, they are not entirely unchangeable. As Judith Butler (e.g., 2004, 41–42, 52) famously argued, norms not only shape and regulate social reality but also rely on repetition, making them susceptible to resistance and, thus, fundamentally contingent. We examine this resistance to the norms of intimate citizenship, with a particular focus on the couple-norm (Roseneil et al. 2020, 28) and the mononormativity (Pieper & Bauer 2005) entangled in it. In addressing various aspects of the couple-norm, we use the term mononormativity when referring specifically to the norm of sexual and romantic exclusivity associated with monogamy. However, as we argue later in this article based on our analysis, certain elements of the couple-norm may persist even when mononormativity is challenged. Therefore, we also use the term couple-normativity to discuss normative aspects of romantic relating that extend beyond mononormativity. This dual focus on the broader couple-normativity and the narrower mononormativity enables us to point out what is not particularly queer nor counter-normative in CNM representations, allowing for a more nuanced reading of our data.

Methodology

Our methodological framework is grounded in critical social psychology (Gough 2017) and its feminist perspectives (e.g., Magnusson & Marecek 2017) that seek to challenge taken-for-granted views and prac-

tices, particularly those associated with coupleddom. Within a constructionist paradigm (e.g., Burr & Dick 2017), where reality and knowledge are understood as situated and socially produced, we understand media representations as instruments of power that contribute to the public understanding of CNM. To explore our research topic, we employed the reflexive thematic analysis outlined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006, 2014, 2021). This six-phase critical method is used for “identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in qualitative data” with a focus on researchers’ reflexivity throughout the analytical process (ibid 2014, 1948).

Our data consisted of fifty-six online human-interest stories featuring CNM, published between 2017 and 2021 across Finland’s five biggest online news sites (estimated by FIAM 2021): *Helsingin Sanomat* (hs.fi, N=7), Finland’s largest subscription-based newspaper; the tabloid *Iltalehti* (iltalehti.fi, N=15); the tabloid *Iltasanomat* (iltasanomat.fi, N=22); the news site of the Finnish commercial television station *Mtv* (mtv.fi, N=3); and Finland’s national public broadcasting company *Yle* (yle.fi, N=11).¹ We manually collected the data in 2021 from each news site using Finnish CNM-specific search terms, including *monogamia* (monogamy), *polyamoria* (polyamory), *avoim subde* (open relationship), *parinvaihto* (swinging), and *subdeanarkia* (relationship anarchy). These represent the emic terms used in the data. We use the umbrella term CNM as an etic term to describe and analyze multiple forms of non-monogamous relationships. In Finnish, a similar umbrella term would be *monisubteisuus* (roughly translated as multi-relatedness). While we analyze CNM as a cluster of non-normative relationships, we also use specific terms for particular types of CNM to highlight details and distinctions within our analysis.

We selected the study’s timeframe based on observations made during data collection. Initially, we gathered online news on CNM dating from 2000 onward, finding only a few news items from 2000 to 2009, and a handful per year from 2010 to 2016. From 2017 onward, however, we observed a significant increase in coverage. Additionally, we noted a shift in focus toward human-interest stories: CNM was no longer presented

as a theoretical or abstract concept, but rather as a topic involving real people interviewed in the media. In total, we found 11 human-interest stories on CNM in 2017, 15 in 2018, 11 in 2019, 14 in 2020 and 5 in 2021. To acknowledge the growing visibility of CNM and the increase in human-interest stories – and to manage the volume of data for this article – we chose to focus on the years 2017–2021 and limit our analysis to human-interest stories. Although one might expect stylistic differences between journalistic approaches (e.g., tabloids typically adopting a more sensational style than newspapers), we found that CNM human-interest stories across all publications followed relatively similar styles and patterns. Therefore, we did not distinguish between tabloids and newspapers in our analysis. Examined together, these sources paint a broader picture of how CNM is represented in Finnish online media – a perspective we believe essential as a foundation for analysis, given the lack of existing research of CNM in the Finnish media context.

In the first phase of our analysis, we familiarized ourselves with the data and identified recurring meanings and patterns. Both of us had followed CNM reporting for several years, and before beginning the coding process, we discussed our preliminary observations and made notes on both expected and unexpected issues within the data. We also reflected on our academic and personal positions. We come from different academic fields – Taivaloja from social psychology and Alasuutari from gender studies – and this interdisciplinary background allowed for a productive exchange of theoretical and methodological insights throughout the research process. Our researcher positions are informed not only by our academic disciplines but also by our different relationship histories and a shared, open-minded understanding of intimate relationships as fluid and open to queer possibilities.

We proceeded to manually code the entire dataset using the highlighting and commenting tools in Google Docs, our chosen platform for analysis. In the second phase, we searched for recurring patterns across the data that could be relevant to our research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006, 87, 2014, 1950). Given that CNM is an under-researched topic in Finland, we aimed to develop a rich thematic description of

the data, offering an overview of the predominant meanings ascribed to CNM in Finnish online news. We therefore used a data-driven, inductive approach (ibid. 2006, 83), avoiding any “pre-existing coding frame” and instead intuitively noting keywords and observations about the text. However, as we progressed in generating codes and deepening our understanding of the data, our research questions evolved from a broader version to their current form, and the later stages of analysis consequently became more theoretically driven, particularly in relation to our second research question.

We employed both semantic and latent reading in generating our codes (ibid. 2006, 84). Using a semantic approach, we focused on identifying codes based on the explicit “surface meanings of the data,” aiming to present the content descriptively without going beyond what was written. This reading was conducted especially with our first research question in mind. For the second research question, we applied latent reading, moving beyond the descriptive level with the aim of “identifying hidden meanings or underlying assumptions, ideas or ideologies that may shape or inform the descriptive or semantic content of the data” (Byrne 2021). After the first round of coding, we discussed our findings and compared them with our preliminary observations. We revisited the initial codes and began the process of standardizing and refining them into “pithy phrases” that captured the essence and relevant features of each code (Braun & Clarke 2014, 1950).

In the third phase, we collated and organized our refined codes and began developing them into broader themes (ibid. 2014, 1950). To facilitate this process, we used an online visual mind map, allowing us to rearrange the codes, identify similarities and overlaps and examine both semantic and latent meanings in greater depth. We constructed potential themes, and in the fourth phase, we focused on reviewing and refining our “thematic map” (ibid. 2006, 89–91; see thematic map below). To ensure our themes accurately represented our codes and the entire dataset, we re-read both the codes and the data, verifying that our themes “accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (ibid. 2006, 91). We combined some themes and discarded others that did not

contribute to the overall story of our analysis. Ultimately, we consolidated our original themes into three main themes and seven sub-themes (see Figure 1).

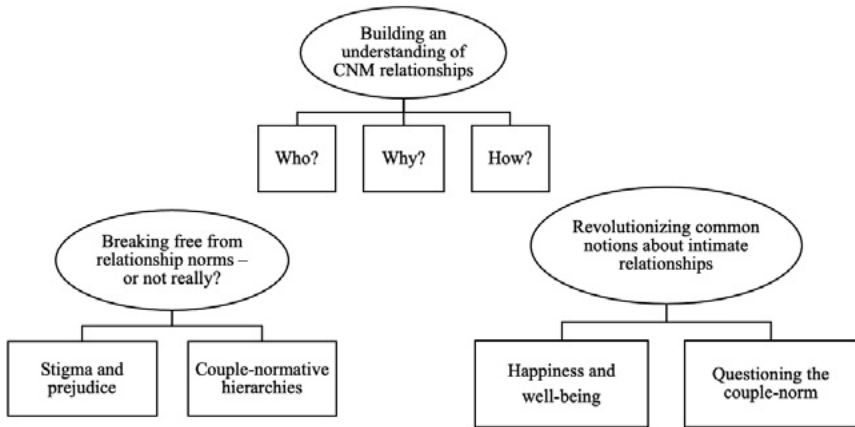


Figure 1: Final thematic map (cf. Braun & Clarke 2006, 91).

In the fifth phase, we further refined our themes, giving them final definitions and names, and then proceeded to phase six, where we compiled the report, incorporating relevant data extracts.

In the following sections, we present our analysis. The first main theme and its sub-themes address the first research question, providing a descriptive account based on our semantic reading of the data. This serves as a foundation for the latent reading of the second and third main themes and their sub-themes, which go beyond the descriptive level to address the second research question.

Building an understanding of CNM relationships

To introduce CNM to the public, media often uses human-interest stories (Ritchie 2010). In our data, this is done by addressing questions of who, why and how: readers are introduced to individuals in CNM relationships; their justifications, and the practices and vocabularies that define their relationships. We refer to these individuals as interviewees,

since they were interviewed for the news stories; however, it is important to clarify that they are not interviewees in the traditional research sense and to note that their narratives are shaped by journalistic decisions and framing.

Regarding the question of *who*, the first subtheme in this section, interviewees are typically identified by an alias or their first name and age; increasingly, they are also presented with their full name and a facial photograph accompanying the story. For example, headlines might read, “Markus, 36, has two lovers – This is how polyamory works” (IL 6.9.2019) or “23-year-old Jami Särkinen has two girlfriends, and they enjoy it so that there is no return to monogamy” (HS 27.7.2017). Most of the interviewees are between twenty and forty years old, with a few exceptions of women over 50.

All interviewees featured in the news stories with photographs are white and appear able-bodied, although they display diversity in terms of appearance, e.g., in body size and personal style. Most are presented as cisgender men and women, with a few explicit exceptions of transgender individuals (e.g., IL 28.06.2021; IL 1.10.2021). The stories often highlight women’s bisexuality and occasionally mention CNM among gay men, but sexual and gender diversity is not discussed in depth. Social class is rarely addressed explicitly; however, interviewees’ fields of employment are occasionally mentioned, suggesting a range of social backgrounds.

It appears, then, that individuals portrayed as consensual non-monogamists in Finland are predominantly young, white, cisgender, and Finnish-speaking. While some aspects of social, sexual, and gender diversity are acknowledged, they are not always made explicit. As noted by Rambukkana (2015, xi) and Cardoso and Klesse (2022, 37), CNM experiences are dependent on the social axes and the marginalized positions people may occupy; some individuals have more “intimate privilege” than others. However, these privileges are not unpacked in our data.

Regarding the question of *why*, the second subtheme in this section, polyamory, open relationships, and swinging are presented as “an

alternative to monogamy” (e.g., HS 10.6.2020; IS 15.10.2020). CNM is defined as an arrangement, lifestyle, ideal, or identity, where “one person does not need to fulfil all the emotional and sexual desires an individual has” (HS 12.10.2020). The articles frame CNM as an “option to cheating, breaking up, and hiding or suffocating one’s emotions” (HS 10.6.2020), which are thus understood as likely outcomes in monogamous relationships when one develops feelings for someone outside the partnership (Ritchie 2010).

The articles tend to follow a pattern, discussing the interviewees’ dating history and explaining their reasons for choosing non-monogamy. They describe the type of CNM relationship each interviewee practices, how long their relationships have lasted and their motivations for being non-monogamous. Articles on polyamory often highlight the interviewees’ youth and how “already as a teenager they realized feeling infatuation towards many people at the same time, which felt natural yet still wrong” (IL 13.6.2020). Discovering polyamory as an adult is portrayed as a form of enlightenment, a moment when everything falls into place: “The text [about polyamory] struck a chord deep within me, my core – and especially my heart. That’s when I realized I’m not a bad person or the cheating type, but that this has a name, and I’m not alone” (IL 28.6.2021).

By contrast, articles on open relationships and swinging typically discuss relationship struggles and a lack of sexual desire before finding CNM. For example, “Our sex life was satisfactory before. However, it is a fact that in a long-term relationship, sex life becomes ruttid” (HS 14.8.2019). Engaging in swinging or open relationships is presented as a way to “spark the relationship” (IS 26.5.2020) or “find a solution to mismatched sexual preferences” (HS 10.6.2020), an opportunity to “experiment with sexual fantasies beyond the primary couple” (IS 4.6.2021) or to prevent the relationship from ending. For instance, “Maija and Niko from Vantaa saved their relationship by becoming swingers” (IS 11.12.2017).

Thus, the articles give various reasons for practicing CNM, which may differ depending on the specific CNM style (cf. Cardoso & Klesse

2022, 31). Polyamory is more often portrayed as a personal enlightenment or ideal, whereas open relationships and swinging are more often framed as solutions to problems with sexual desire within a monogamous relationship.

Regarding the question of *how*, our third subtheme in this section, the articles repeatedly ask how multiple simultaneous intimate relationships can work. Answers often emphasize the importance of time management and planning skills, particularly in polyamorous relationships: “Kekkonen has a Google calendar to keep track of who is where and when. [...] There is also a WhatsApp group, which enables them to stay updated on each other’s lives” (Yle 6.7.2018). Open communication and negotiated rules are also highlighted as essential: “Oja has agreed with T [their partner] that they will tell each other openly about other relationships, take STD tests regularly, and not bring other partners into the shared bed” (IL 9.6.2019). Sex life arrangements, such as safe sex practices and boundaries regarding where, how, and with whom sexual encounters are allowed are discussed in all articles, particularly in relation to swinging and open relationships. Articles on polyamorous relationships often provide details on the interviewees’ relationship structures and domestic life, including living and sleeping arrangements or shared finances:

Ari, Lilli and Tommi form a polyamorous family. [...] In practice, Lilli is in a relationship with both Ari and Tommi. The children [11-year-old Emma and 7-year-old Elias] are Lilli and Tommi’s. Ari and Tommi are friends. [...] All five live together. [...] Lilli and Tommi cover the children’s expenses, such as clothes and hobby equipment. Their share of housing and food costs is also bigger than Ari’s. They share other expenses equally from their joint account. (HS 8.8.2018)

We interpret this focus as an attempt to educate readers with hands-on information on how CNM relationships are practiced. Moreover, the articles teach readers how to talk about CNM by providing glossaries of CNM-related terms and definitions. Typically, these glossaries clar-

ify the distinctions between different types of CNM, and occasionally introduce “poly-lingo,” such as *metamuru* (metamour; meaning one’s partner’s partner) and *myötäilo* (compersion; the joy of seeing one’s partner happy with someone else). By familiarizing readers with the daily practices and vocabulary of CNM, the articles contribute to its demystification. Furthermore, the translation of English CNM terms into Finnish shows how CNM has been discursively domesticated in Finland.

Breaking free from relationship norms – or not really?

Although CNM is portrayed as a contemporary choice that allows interviewees to break away from traditional relationship norms, we suggest that CNM representations in Finnish online news are not entirely free from mononormative or couple-normative influences. These normative elements surface through the recirculation of stigma and prejudice associated with CNM, as well as emphasis on couple-normative rules and hierarchies.

Our first subtheme in this section deals with *stigma and prejudice*. Mononormativity – the assumption that monogamy is morally correct and part of the natural order – is reinforced in online news by the recirculating of stigma and prejudice associated with CNM (cf. Cardoso 2021). The unusualness of CNM is emphasized through references to the lack of research on its prevalence, framing CNM as something bizarre, or suggesting that it might be just a phase. For example, the articles refer to CNM as “a controversial love and sex phenomenon” (IL 27.7.2017), suggest that “a life with many partners may sound to a lay person like someone who simply cannot choose or commit to one person” (Yle 6.7.2018), and question whether “a [family] model departing from the nuclear family can [...] even be detrimental to the child” (IS 2.12.2018). While these beliefs are ultimately debunked by interviewed professionals (including sexologists, therapists, and authors of non-fiction books on CNM) and by individuals practicing CNM, the repetition of such stigmatizing views establishes them as the default perceptions of CNM – perceptions that require rebuttal. Taking stigma and prejudice as the

journalistic starting points ultimately reinforces an intimate world in which CNM is persistently regarded as negative (Ritchie 2010; Cardoso 2021). It lends greater visibility to negative associations of CNM, which are already widely circulated in online contexts (Cardoso et al. 2021; Cardoso & Klesse 2022).

Moreover, mononormativity is reinforced by journalists' skeptical tone and questions that often reveal their lack of belief in CNM. For example, they may ask "How do non-monogamous people have enough time for each other?" (IL 27.7.2017) or "What happens to everyday intimacy, when one person has two partners in the same apartment?" (Yle 6.7.2018). Such framings support mononormativity by positioning monogamy as the unquestioned norm, while depicting CNM as something oddly exotic, undesirable in the long term, and potentially dysfunctional.

This stigmatizing perspective is particularly pronounced in coverage of CNM practices centered on sex, such as swinging and open relationships. This creates tension between the different forms of CNM, as love-based CNM practices, like polyamory, are often distinguished from sex-based forms in online news. The desire to separate "respectable love" from "unrespectable recreational sex" can be interpreted as an attempt to make love-based forms of CNM appear more acceptable in the eyes of the broader public (Matsick et al. 2013; Kean 2018). However, such representations simultaneously reinforce stigma against sex-based CNM practices and create new marginalizations within the CNM community.

Our second subtheme in this section deals with *couple-normative hierarchies*. Our analysis indicates that while online news may question sexual exclusivity as the fundamental aspect of mononormativity, the same does not necessarily apply to couple normativity (Roseneil et al. 2020). This is especially evident in representations of CNM where one couple is central and primary and their other romantic and/or sexual relationships are secondary (e.g., swinging, open relationships, hierarchical polyamory). For example, while the articles may emphasize that individuals practicing couple-centric forms of CNM engage in sexual

activities outside the original couple – thereby challenging a core tenet of monogamy and mononormativity – they simultaneously underscore the importance of maintaining strict hierarchies and adhering to rules aimed at protecting the original couple from other intimate partners' expectations. Depending on the form of CNM, these rules may restrict e.g., the types of physical intimacy allowed, the frequency of meetings, and the ways of communicating with so-called third parties. Typically, the articles report that such rules are not negotiated with individuals outside the original couple, and that the boundaries are intended to shield the original relationship against jealousy, extradyadic crushes, or other anticipated challenges:

However, Mika is my primary partner. I love him the most and spend the most time together with him. Our relationship is very passionate. [...] We can spend time together among the four of us, but I do not have sex with Topi or Iiro in the bed I share with Mika, and we don't engage in group sex. We also have a rule against one-night stands. I am very strict about rules. Mika is protective of me; for example, he wanted to meet Topi and Iiro before I had sex with them. (IL 14.12.2017)

The emphasis on couple-centric rules is reinforced not only in the personal accounts of interviewees but also by journalists and interviewed professionals, suggesting that such rules are indeed essential for CNM to function. Additionally, couple-normativity is evident in how CNM is justified by its perceived ability to strengthen the original couple. In this framing, CNM – and the involvement of additional sexual or romantic partners – serves primarily as a means to improve and re-sexualize the original couple's relationship (see also McDonald 2010).

I think it's nice and arousing to hear about my husband's sexual adventures, and I like that my husband is attractive in the eyes of other women. At the end of the day, though, he comes back to me and is still crazy about me. The rules are that family always comes first, no matter what, and no one is deliberately hurt. (IS 22.2.2019)

Couple-normative hierarchies are also apparent in whose stories get heard in the articles. Often, only the experiences of the original couple are accounted for, while the voices of their other partners go unheard. Therefore, we argue that while representations of CNM may challenge mononormativity (through extradyadic sex or romance), this does not necessarily mean they fundamentally question other relationship norms – particularly couple-normativity, which positions the original romantic couple as the primary couple.

Revolutionizing common notions about intimate relationships

Despite the norm-reinforcing aspects described above, CNM is also represented throughout the data as revolutionary. Its revolutionizing nature is linked to its potential to foster happiness and well-being among those who practice it, challenge the couple-norm, and create new forms of intimate relating, not all of which are linked to love, sex, or romance.

Our first subtheme in this section deals with *happiness and well-being*. One of the revolutionizing aspects of CNM, as depicted in the articles, is its perceived ability to cultivate the well-being of those who practice it. The articles describe the relief and happiness interviewees feel upon abandoning monogamous ideals they found restrictive. Typically, this shift follows a period of deep reflection, spurred by the unhappiness that living within the mononormative relationship matrix causes: “Since I found myself, I am truly happy and it’s easier for me to be” (IS 3.4.2019). When explaining their reasons for being CNM, interviewees cite how CNM “makes sense”, “feels natural” (HS 27.7.2017), and “makes them happy” (IL 14.12.2017). In these representations, CNM is framed as empowering and liberating.

Moreover, CNM is framed as revolutionary through the highlighting of unique solutions interviewees have developed to address past relationship challenges and the positive changes CNM has enabled. Individuals in CNM relationships are portrayed as pioneers who have gained insights about intimate relationships others may not have. For example “When Hanna met Tero, the relationship anxiety she had previously experienced got an explanation” (IS 15.10.2020) and “It

was surprising to all of us, but we decided that this, too, is a way to live – three adults together” (IL 13.6.2020). Articles, particularly those covering polyamory, often include critiques of societal norms, cultural romanticism, and the institution of marriage. They highlight how monogamy did not suit the interviewees, and while some reported having initially felt “a sense of reservation” (IS 24.9.2017) toward CNM, “returning to monogamy was no longer an option” (IL 1.10.2021). Here, CNM is no longer framed as marginal, temporary or suspicious, but rather as a fitting lifestyle for those who have chosen it (cf. Schippers 2016, 20–21).

The articles also highlight how, for some individuals, the freedom to explore their sexuality along the spectrum of bisexuality and pansexuality is part of the happiness found through CNM: “When with a woman, Mirka Kaskenviita missed having a man, and when with a man, she missed a woman. Now she knows she needs both. In a polyamorous relationship she feels whole” (Yle 10.12.2018). Bisexuality can be a motivation not only for polyamory but also for swinging and open relationships: “When I realized I was bisexual, I also began meeting women alone, without my husband” (IS 10.6.2020). This aligns with Lahti’s (2018) observation that bisexuality, as a desire for more than one gender, can challenge monogamy and prompt self-reflection about alternative relationship options (see also Klesse 2014). Such representations frame CNM as a means of liberation from heteronormativity.

Highlighting positive personal testimonies challenges the stigmatizing representations of CNM described above. Additionally, these personal stories are often accompanied by supportive interviews with professionals, which further reinforces the representation of CNM as a viable and beneficial relationship choice for those who prefer it (cf. Schippers 2016).

Our second subtheme in this section deals with *questioning the couple-norm*, something that is done in part of the articles. This is particularly true of stories about CNM formations that are not primarily centered on one couple – such as non-hierarchical polyamory and solo polyamory – which challenge the core idea of the couple norm, where one person is

regarded as most important: “I thought that this is incredibly sensible: there will be more love in the world when people love more. It is a fascinating idea that no one needs to be placed in hierarchies or ranked, but that one could love Mikko as much as Maija” (HS 27.7.2017). In the case of relationship anarchy, relationship categories may be questioned even more explicitly. Here, how the relationship is defined is secondary to the hopes and desires of those involved:

I prefer to not define relationships as coupledness or dating and partners as boyfriends or girlfriends. Rather than applying external definitions to my relationships, I focus on their substance. I find it important to discuss what both parties want and then see if our wishes match and if it’s worth including intimacy or sex. (IS 9.7.2020)

Here, coupledness loses its significance as a singular, life-defining relationship.

Examples of relationship anarchy or similarly radical approaches to relationships remain rare in our data. However, it is worth noting that even within highly couple-centered forms of CNM, such as swinging, a certain fluidity is sometimes reported regarding hierarchies and rules: “At first, we did not kiss because it felt too intimate. Then we met Latin couples in Miami, who said they wouldn’t do anything if there was no kissing! It wasn’t that bad after all, Oliver says” (IS 12.2.2020). In such portrayals, the rules may evolve in a more open direction.

In some polyamory stories, couple-normativity is further challenged through descriptions of non-normative living and parenting arrangements. For instance, interviewees are reported to live with multiple partners and to share domestic or parenting responsibilities among a larger group of adults. In these stories, the domestic intimacies formed around CNM challenge the normative idea of the domestic space as a space belonging to the dyadic couple, similarly to practices of communal living (Heinonen 2022). In some instances, even biological parenthood is questioned within these family and living arrangements:

A daughter was born to the family in February 2018. Paula explains that they have not identified who the biological father of the child is. “We decided together to stop using birth control. We also agreed that if a child came along, they would be raised in a family of three adults. Of course, it’s possible that later the child will have stepmoms and stepdads because, at the moment, we have an open relationship in every sense.” (IS 13.6.2020)

Couple-normativity is further challenged when the focus shifts from the perspectives of couples to those of the so-called third parties. While such examples are rare in the data, they highlight how couple-centered CNM practices can be hurtful to those outside the original couple: “Being a secondary kind of sucks. In some light relationship forms, it might be fun and adventurous, but quite easily one can start feeling like an outsider” (HS 1.6.2020). Occasionally, original couples also express concern for the well-being and rights of third parties, reminding the readers that third parties are not simply play things but human beings with feelings: “Elina notes that she and her spouse do not really discuss what they do with others. It is also a part of the private life of the third party. No details are shared” (Yle 15.10.2020).

Importantly, our data also showcases new forms of intimate relating that emerge in and around CNM practices but are neither romantic nor sexual. For instance, some articles discuss metamour relationships that develop between multiple partners of the same individual. Depending on the people involved, these metamour connections can range from distant or non-existent to close and even blossoming friendships:

When engaging in simultaneous relationships, your partners’ other relationships affect your relationship, too. For instance, you have to decide if you want to meet your partner’s partner. I have met them and that way I have gained amazing new people in my life. Loving the same person is a strong connecting factor. I haven’t had any competition with my partner’s partner. (Mtv 29.7.2017)

Ideally, metamour relationships can enrich one's life by fostering new forms of friendship (Iwanowska 2018). Interestingly, friendships are also emphasized in articles discussing couple-centered forms of CNM where romantic feelings toward sexual partners are not encouraged or allowed. In the case of swinging and open relationships, the articles illustrate how intimate connections can be grounded not only in shared sexual experiences but also in friendships born in such relations. Giving space to friendship, CNM representations thus show how intimacy in CNM is not only about sex or romance, but it can create other norm-breaking and revolutionizing forms of intimate relating.

Conclusion

CNM is increasingly addressed in mainstream media due to a complex web of factors. These include (but are not limited to) the rise of individualism, digitalization, urbanization, and the sexual emancipation of women and sexual minorities. In our exploration of CNM representations in Finnish online media, we have demonstrated how these portrayals both queer and conform to intimate citizenship norms (Roseneil et al. 2020) in complex and enmeshed ways. In our data, CNM is made sense of by exploring who the individuals engaging in CNM relationships are, and why and how CNM is practiced. CNM is both stigmatized and marginalized yet also framed as a valid and beneficial relationship option for those who engage in it. Recognizing its marginalized status, the articles do not uncritically recommend CNM to everyone. However, the approach to intimate relationships in online news increasingly deconstructs normative assumptions surrounding love, sex, and intimacy, offering “alternative plots” of intimacy that transcend normative relationship models (cf. Berlant 1998). In these plots, heteronormativity is questioned, making room not only for bisexuality and pansexuality but also friendships. By portraying how individuals in CNM relationships break away from relationship norms and by discussing CNM's potential to foster happiness and well-being, online news brings the revolutionary side of CNM into view.

However, while the growing visibility of CNM subverts relationship norms, it can also contribute to the othering of CNM, depending on journalistic strategies (see also Cardoso & Klesse 2022). Indeed, despite the aforementioned shift toward a wider understanding of CNM as a valid relationship option for some (cf. Schippers 2016), underlying notions of mononormativity and couple-normativity remain pervasive in our data. Such notions come across in the journalists' questioning tones and in the recirculation of stigma and harmful beliefs related to CNM. Furthermore, while mononormativity itself may be questioned, other forms of couple-normativity persist. This is particularly evident when human-interest stories about CNM are framed around the hierarchy and rules created by the primary/original couple to protect their dyadic relationship – a pattern that appears most prominently in stories about swinging and open relationships, but also in stories on polyamory. Similarly, when considering whose voices are heard in CNM stories, it is often the primary couple rather than the third parties, entire polycules, or non-hierarchical relationship arrangements like relationship anarchy. Coupledness is not entirely queered in Finnish online news about CNM: certain relationship norms have yet to be challenged.

We wish to highlight that media representations of CNM may, and likely do, differ from the lived experiences of those in CNM relationships. While the human-interest stories we analyzed offer a relatively straightforward view of different forms of CNM as distinct and identifiable relationship practices, each with its own approach to (and capacity to challenge) relationship norms, the realities of CNM may be messier, more fluid, and more open to growth and change. Therefore, we encourage further research on CNM that extends beyond representations, delving into the lived and everyday experiences of CNM in both Finland and the broader Nordic context. Additionally, further research is needed on representations of CNM in Finnish fiction and non-fiction, which has also had its momentum lately.

Our analysis demonstrates how media, as a social institution, can contribute to both the construction and the deconstruction of mono- and couple-normativity. From a critical social psychological and femi-

nist perspective, we argue that media representations are not simply “out there” but function as instruments of power that shape public knowledge, understanding, and attitudes toward CNM (cf. Burr & Dick 2017). This insight is crucial not only for journalistic practice but also for addressing broader societal issues such as prejudice, stigma, and othering related to intimate relationships. We suggest that media representations of CNM in Finnish online news can, and in part do, contribute to the marginalization of CNM relationships. However, depending on journalistic choices and strategies, these representations also play a role in queering coupledness and fostering public interest in alternative relationships and lifestyle choices.

NITA TAIVALOJA is a doctoral researcher in Social Psychology at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Taivaloja’s research interests include gender, sexuality and relationship diversities, and critical research methodologies in qualitative research. In her PhD project, she examines how mononormativity affects CNM relationships in Finland.

VARPU ALASUUTARI is a postdoctoral researcher in Gender Studies at the University of Turku, Finland. Alasuutari’s research interests include e.g. queer studies, queer kinship studies, and the study of intimate relationships. In her new project, Alasuutari focuses on LGBTQ people’s experiences of loneliness in the Nordic countries.

REFERENCES

- Alasuutari, Varpu & Anna Heinonen. 2021. Diverse Intimacies: On Friendship, Communal Living, and Non-Monogamy. *The Research Network of Singlehood Studies Blog*. Published December 3, 2021. <https://singlehoodstudies.net/2021/12/03/diverse-intimacies-on-friendship-communal-living-and-non-monogamy/> Accessed November 12, 2024.
- Andersson, Catrine. 2022. Drawing the Line at Infidelity: Negotiating Relationship Morality in a Swedish Context of Consensual Non-Monogamy. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 39(7): 1917–1933.
- Andersson, Catrine & Charlotta Carlström. 2019. More-Than-Two-Parent Families:

- Displaying Legitimate Parenthood in Swedish Media. *lambda nordica* 2019 24(2-3): 81-103.
- Barker, Meg & Darren Langdridge. 2010a. *Understanding Non-Monogamies*. New York: Routledge.
- Barker, Meg & Darren Langdridge. 2010b. Whatever Happened to Non-Monogamies? Critical Reflections on Recent Research and Theory. *Sexualities* 13(6): 748-772. DOI: 10.1177/1363460710384645.
- Berlant, Lauren. 1998. Intimacy: A Special Issue. *Critical Inquiry* 24(2): 281-288. DOI: 10.1086/448875.
- Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2): 77-101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp0630a.
- . 2014. Thematic Analysis. In: *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, edited by Thomas Teo (1947-1952). New York: Springer.
- . 2021. Conceptual and Design Thinking for Thematic Analysis. *Qualitative Psychology* 9(1): 3-26. DOI: 10.1037/qap0000196.
- Burr, Viv & Penny Dick. 2017. Social Constructionism. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*, edited by Brendan Gough (59-80). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Byrne, David. 2021. A Worked Example of Braun and Clarke's Approach to Reflexive Thematic Analysis. *Quality & Quantity* 56(3): 1391-1412. DOI: 10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y.
- Cardoso, Daniel. 2021. UK's Consensual Non-Monogamies in the Press: 2010-2014: An Analysis of News Coverage. (Short Report No. 2; CNM-MOVES Reports). Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Cardoso, Daniel, Ana Rosa & Marisa Torres da Silva. 2021. (De)Politicizing Polyamory: Social Media Comments on Media Representations of Consensual Non-Monogamies. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 50(4): 1325-1340. DOI: 10.1007/s10508-020-01887-5.
- Cardoso, Daniel & Christian Klesse. 2022. Living Outside the BOX: Consensual Non-Monogamies, Intimacies and Communities – Notes on Research and Terminology. In: *The Handbook of Consensual Non-Monogamy: Affirming Mental Health Practice*, edited by Michelle D. Vaughan & Theodore R. Burnes (15-49). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- De Graeve, Katrien. 2019. 'No Expectations': Straight Men's Sexual and Moral Identity-Making in Non-Monogamous Dating. *Sexualities* 22(5-6): 844-859.
- Ferrer, Jorge N. 2018. Mononormativity, Polypride, and the 'Mono-Poly-Wars'. *Sexuality & Culture* 22(3): 817-836. DOI: 10.1007/s12119-017-9494-y.

- FIAM. 2021. *The Finnish Internet Audience Measurement*. <https://fiam.fi/tulokset/>. Accessed November 1, 2021.
- Giffney, Noreen. 2004. Denormalizing Queer Theory: More than (Simply) Lesbian and Gay Studies. *Feminist Theory* 5(1): 73–78. DOI: 10.1177/1464700104040814.
- Gough, B. 2017. *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hammack, Phillip L., David M. Frost & Sam D. Hughes. 2019. Queer Intimacies: A New Paradigm for the Study of Relationship Diversity. *The Journal of Sex Research* 56(4–5): 556–592. DOI: 10.1080/00224499.2018.1531281.
- Halperin, David M. 2003. The Normalization of Queer Theory. *Journal of Homosexuality* 45(2–4): 339–343. DOI: 10.1300/J082v45n02_17.
- Heinonen, Anna. 2022. Friendship at Home: Everyday in Domestic Space Shaping Friendship Intimacies in Finnish Small-Scale Communes. *Gender, Place & Culture* 29(8): 1183–1203. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2021.1979937.
- Hekanaho, Pia Livia. 2007. Pervo aika ja ongelmallinen parisuhtedenormatiivisuus. *SQS: Journal of Queer Studies in Finland* 2(1): 52–61.
- Hämäläinen, Mirja. 2020. *Avoimet subteet*. Helsinki: Kosmos.
- Iwanowska, Joanna. 2018. Metamour Connections as the Underpinning of the Fabric of Polyamory. *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 14(1): 100–128.
- Juvonen, Tuula. 2004. Nyt se näkyy, nyt taas ei. Heteronormatiivisuus ja homoseksuaalisuuden esillepano Helsingin Sanomissa. *Tiedotustutkimus* 27(2): 34–55.
- Lahti, Annukka. 2018. Bisexual Desires for More than One Gender as a Challenge to Normative Relationship Ideals. *Psychology & Sexuality* 9(2): 132–147. DOI: 10.1080/19419899.2018.1441896.
- Kean, Jessica Joan. 2018. Sex/Love Skirmishes: ‘Swinging,’ ‘Polyamory,’ and the Politics of Naming. *Feminist Media Studies* 18(3): 458–474. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2017.1393760.
- Klesse, Christian. 2014. Polyamory: Intimate Practice, Identity or Sexual Orientation? *Sexualities* 17(1–2): 81–99.
- Kuosmanen, Paula. 2007. Johdanto: Sateenkaariperheet, julkiset tilat ja queer-politiikka Suomessa. *SQS: Journal of Queer Studies in Finland* 2(1): i–xxi.
- Magnusson, Eva & Jeanna Marecek. 2017. Feminisms, Psychologies, and the Study of Social Life. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*, edited by Brendan Gough, (17–35). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Matsick, Jes L., Terri D. Conley, Ali Ziegler, Amy C. Moors & Jennifer D. Rubin. 2013. Love and Sex: Polyamorous Relationships Are Perceived More Favourably than Swinging and Open Relationships. *Psychology & Sexuality* 5(4): 1–10. DOI: 10.1080/19419899.2013.832934.
- McDonald, D. 2010. Swinging: Pushing the Boundaries of Monogamy. In: *Understanding Non-Monogamies*, edited by Meg Barker & Darren Landridge (70–81). New York: Routledge.

- Moring, Anna. 2013. *Oudot perheet: Normeja ja ihanteita 2000-luvun Suomessa*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Moors, Amy C., Jennifer D. Rubin, Jes L. Matsick, Ali Ziegler & Terri D. Conley. 2014. It's Not Just a Gay Male Thing: Sexual Minority Women and Men Are Equally Attracted to Consensual Non-Monogamy. *Journal für Psychologie* 22(1): 38–51.
- Munson, Marcia & Judith P. Stelboun. 1999. *The Lesbian Polyamory Reader: Open Relationships, Non-Monogamy, and Casual Sex*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Noël, Melita J. 2006. Progressive Polyamory: Considering Issues of Diversity. *Sexualities* 9(5): 602–620.
- Pieper, Marianne & Robin Bauer. 2005. *Call for Papers: International Conference on Polyamory and Mono-Normativity*. Research Centre for Feminist, Gender & Queer Studies, University of Hamburg, November 5–6.
- Rambukkana, Nathan. 2015. *Fraught Intimacies: Non/Monogamy in the Public Sphere*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Ritchie, Ani. 2010. Discursive Constructions of Polyamory in Mono-Normative Media Culture. In: *Understanding Non-Monogamies*, edited by Meg Barker & Darren Landridge (46–51). New York: Routledge.
- Riggs, Damien W. & Gareth J. Treharne. 2017. Queer Theory. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*, edited by Brendan Gough (101–121). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roseneil, Sasha, Isabel Crowhurst, Tone Hellesund, Ana Cristina Santos & Mariya Stoilova. 2020. *The Tenacity of the Couple-Norm: Intimate Citizenship Regimes in a Changing Europe*. London: UCL Press.
- Schippers, Mimi. 2016. *Beyond Monogamy: Polyamory and the Future of Polyqueer Sexualities*. New York: New York University Press.
- Sheff, Elisabeth & Megan M. Tesene. 2015. Consensual Non-Monogamies in Industrialized Nations. In: *Handbook of the Sociology of Sexualities*, edited by John DeLamater & Rebecca F. Plante (223–242). New York: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-17341-2_13.
- Suominen, Riikka. 2020. *Subteellisen vapaata*. Helsinki: Otava.
- Taivaloja, Nita. 2022. Normatiiviset käsitykset läheisyydestä väistyvät moninaisuuden tieltä: Mitä oikeastaan tiedämme monisuhteisuudesta Suomessa? *Vaikutuksessa-media*. <https://www.sosiaalipsykologit.fi/normatiiviset-kasitykset-laheisyydesta-vaistyvat-moninaisuuden-tieltä-mitä-oikeastaan-tiedämme-monisuhteisyydestä-suomessa/> Accessed: November 14, 2024.
- Taivaloja, Nita & J. Tuomas Harviainen. 2019. Monisuhteisuus rikkoo kulutusoletuksia: Ei-normatiiviset ihmissuhteet haastavat omistamis- ja kulutuslähtöisen monogaamisen parisuhteen. *Kulttuurivihkot* 47(3–4), 35–37.
- Tiessalo, Paula & Aune Karhumäki. 2020. *Parisuhdepäivitys: Uudet säännöt rakkaudelle*. Helsinki: Atena Kustannus.

- Træen, Bente & Thuen, Frode. 2022. Non-Consensual and Consensual Non-Monogamy in Norway. *International Journal of Sexual Health* 34(1): 65–80.
- Veaux, Franklin & Eve Rickert. 2019. *Kahla kauniimmin: Opas eettiseen polyamoriaan*. Translated by Eva Talvikallio. Helsinki: Basam Books.
- Warner, Michael. 1993. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wilkinson, Eleanor. 2010. What's Queer About Non-Monogamy Now? In: *Understanding Non-Monogamies*, edited by Meg Barker & Darren Langdridge (344–361). New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203869802-36.

NOTES

1. Initially, our data collection also included other sources, such as women's magazines. However, we ultimately chose these five outlets, as they have the largest digital readership in Finland and are thus more influential in shaping public discourse on intimate relationships. It is worth noting, however, that CNM has also been discussed in other Finnish online newspapers and magazines within this timeframe.