

Öffentlicher Vortrag | Public Lecture
3. NACHWUCHSWORKSHOP FAMILIENWISSENSCHAFTEN

3. Dezember 2014
18.15–19.15 Uhr

Pro Iure Auditorium (EG)
Juristische Fakultät Universität Basel
Peter Merian-Weg 8 | CH-4002 Basel

“Who are my significant family members? Definitions of family boundaries in public and private interviews”

► Prof. Dr. Eric Widmer
Department of Sociology, University of Geneva

The issue of who is considered in and out of the family is a challenging dimension of family identity in late modernity, especially for individuals experiencing non-traditional family arrangements. Based on a study of 150 stepfamilies living in the Geneva area, this presentation will describe a variety of lay definition of family boundaries. Adults in post-separation families may try to maintain a large number of family ties originating from various partnerships, or they may limit the recognition of their family to the members of their new household. Descriptions collected in public interviews with several family members present follow a balance of social tensions among interdependent individuals by which responses of children usually match those of their mothers. Mothers' responses show a high level of exclusiveness, whereas responses of mothers' partners and children are more balanced between exclusivity and inclusivity. Inclusiveness in family after re-partnering is also connected to conditions such as family structure, mothers' education, and employment. Interestingly, such exclusiveness is much weakened in private interviews, where mothers are alone with the interviewers.