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Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: towards the democratisation of relationships

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‘Friends are the families we choose for ourselves’
(Buchanan):
Towards the democratisation of relationships

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University of Huddersfield

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Women and the family
- Changes in family forms
- Friendship
- Democratisation of relationships (Giddens)
- Implications for women's selfhood

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Women in relationship
Nancy Chodorow (1978)
- Patriarchy and the family
Anthony Giddens (1999)
Social structure and sense of self

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Changes in family forms
- Cheal (2000)
- Sasha Roseneil (2004a):
“the hegemony of the the conventional family is experiencing significant challenge”
- The family in television
‘Cultural fantasies’ (Denzin, 1987)

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

Friends

So no-one told you life was gonna be this way
Your job's a joke, you're broke, your love life's D.O.A.
It's like you're always stuck in second gear
When it hasn't been your day, your week, your month, or
even your year

Chorus

I'll be there for you
(When the rain starts to pour)
I'll be there for you
(Like I've been there before)
I'll be there for you
('Cause you're there for me too)



Buffy
THE VAMPIRE
SLAYER

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

Buffy: the premise

- Sunnydale, California: The 'Hellmouth'
- The Slayer (the 'Chosen One')
- Buffy Summers
- Watcher (Rupert Giles)
- Willow, Xander, Tara, Anya, Dawn, Spike.



Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
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‘Family’ (5.6)

Mr Maclay :‘we know how to control her
....problem.’

'Family'

Maclay: The girl belongs with her family. Hope that's clear to the rest of you (...)

Buffy: You wanna take Tara out of here against her will (...) You just gotta go through me

Dawn: And me (...)

Xander: You're dealing with all of us.

(...)Shot of Giles, Dawn, Buffy, Willow, Tara , Xander and Anya all standing together.

Spike: 'Cept me.

Maclay: We're her blood kin- who the hell are you?

Buffy: We're family.

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

'Alternative' families- the down side

- instability
- uncertainty
- roles and responsibilities unclear

A better alternative?

- 'Normal Again' (6.17)



Normal Again



Normal Again

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Deacon and Williams (2004):
'the choices people make are morally informed responses to changes in their circumstances, rather than simple expressions of individual choice or lifestyle.'
- Carol Smart (2004): transformation of relationships
- Angela Phillips: importance of media

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

Conclusion

Friends: the new family?

Berry Mayall (2000) ESRC Children 5-16 project

“Children spoke of friendships in terms of support:
‘telling each other everything’, ‘being there for
you’.”

Buffy quote: