

Should Homosexuals Be Allowed To Adopt Or Foster?

The question must be answered in scientific rather than ideological or sentimental terms. No civilized society deliberately puts its children at risk to serve a political agenda, no matter how intimidating its advocates or how high-sounding its goals. The home is the primary arena where values are taught and citizens are molded. What happens there is of compelling interest to the community. That legitimate interest is affirmed by the fact that social workers can investigate households and remove children from the authority of abusive parents. It happens daily across the nation.

By the same token, society has the right, indeed the duty, to see that children with radically dysfunctional parents – or with no parents at all – are placed in the best possible environment, the setting where they are most likely to thrive.

For generations, state and local authorities refused to allow homosexuals, whether single or cohabiting, to adopt or foster children. Nor did they place children with cohabiting heterosexuals. Appealing to a social consensus, they regarded these citizens as inferior and provided objectively substandard environments in which to raise children.

From the historic perspective, ideal citizens were those who: 1) produced more stuff than they consumed; 2) obeyed the law; and 3) generated well-socialized children to sustain society. Citizens that approximated this ideal were ‘good,’ those who failed in one or more criteria were ‘poor,’ while massive failure rendered them dysfunctional.

In our time, as in the past, the married come closest to the ideal. They are: 1) the most productive, usually generating a surplus of stuff, 2) the most law abiding, and 3) the most apt to produce sufficient numbers of children. And there continues to be strong empirical evidence that children raised in a married environment are the most apt to be healthy, get educated, get a job, keep out of trouble, get married, and in turn raise their own brood, i.e., be well-socialized.

Today gay rights activists are demanding the “right” to adopt children. They tend to offer two arguments to support their demand: (1) they say they are being denied “equal protection under the law” and (2) they claim that they are just as capable of raising healthy normal children as are heterosexual married couples.

The first argument is legal rather than scientific: That the adoption of children is a ‘right’ guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Any final decision as to this ‘right’ must depend to a significant degree on the resolution of the second argument – the relative fitness of homosexuals to function as parents.

Those who engage in homosexuality fail the good citizen test. They: 1) generally consume more than they produce (miss more days at work and less frequently put in the standard 35 years of employment, drive up societal expenditures by non-conformity and disease); 2) are less law-abiding (more apt to use illegal drugs, drive under the influence),¹ and 3) have few children (at any given instant, about a fifth of homosexuals

are married). Could poor or dysfunctional citizens still do an adequate job of raising children?

That's what gay rights activists maintain. They claim that research supports their demands --that homosexuals are just as likely to be successful parents as are married heterosexuals. Yet how could homosexuals be 'just as good' when:

- They are more apt to get sexually involved with children. In the only random-sample survey that addressed parent-child molestations, adults reported sex with homosexual parents many times more frequently.³ In an analysis of 77 custody disputes that reached the appeals level, the courts laid blame on homosexuals or their associates for 5 cases of molestation/ seduction in their 77 disputes (i.e., 6.5%) vs. nonhomosexuals or their associates were blamed for one case of molestation/ seduction in their 154 disputes (i.e., 0.6%).⁴ In 1997-2002 in Illinois, 34% of the molestations by foster parents were committed by homosexuals.⁵
- They more frequently test as mentally disturbed, and are more inclined to job-, residence-, and partner-change.¹
- Because of their abbreviated lifespan,⁶ homosexuals often orphan their young, and their many diseases risk the health of children in the household (e.g., hepatitis A & B can be transmitted casually).
- They encourage their children to engage in homosexuality -- with a high rate of success.⁷
- They don't model man-woman relationships and often deprecate marriage or the opposite sex.²

In addition, homosexuals associate with other homosexuals. Their associates add additional exposure to a dangerous lifestyle as well as pose a sexual threat to the household's children.

Homosexuals' children are acutely aware of these problems. Two lesbian researchers interviewed children from 52 gay families. These children, selected by their gay parent, knew what they said would be known to the parent. Yet even with this biased sample, under circumstances impelling them to give rosy accounts, children mentioned one or more problems in 48 (92%) families.⁸ Parental homosexuality was implicated in 201 (94%) of the 213 problems (e.g., violence in the household, sexual molestation, difficulties with parental partner-changing) recorded. Thus a 12-year old boy:

"Mum... has had several girlfriends in my lifetime.... I don't go around saying that I've got two mums.... If we are sitting in a restaurant eating, she'll say, 'I want you to know about all these sex things.' And she'll go on about everything, just shouting it out.... sometimes when mum embarrasses me, I think, 'Oh god I wish I had a dad' Been to every Gay Pride march. Last year, while attending "we went up to a field..., when two men came up to us. One of them started touching me. I didn't want to go this year because of that".

More testimonies are appended in reference 8. And like so many of the genre, though written to support homosexual parenting, *Families Like Mine* reveals the same problems.¹⁰ I don't believe that anyone whose primary concern is the welfare of children can read these testimonies and support homosexual adoption or fostering.

Conclusion

Prostitutes, substance addicts and homosexuals do more than fail the 'good citizen' test. Their households are dangerous environments in which to raise children. Although we don't have much reliable information on the long-term effects on children raised by homosexuals (or addicts or prostitutes for that matter), the evidence to date suggests that they are less apt to do well in school and be well-adjusted,² more apt to enjoy homosexual activity⁶ and less apt to marry and have children.⁸

Given these many problems, it is difficult to see how adoption (or fostering) by a homosexual meets the 'best interests of the child' standard. The psychiatric standard 'I feel, therefore I deserve' appears to demand that a child's future be sacrificed to make sure that those who want a child get one. But the child has rights – a quiver of rights that historically trumped the questionable right to 'have a child if I want one.'

Every child tries to be a success, so it's likely that many if not most of the children born to parents creating a dangerous environment turn out OK. Unless a child is forced to participate in sex or substance abuse, taking natural children away from their parents – even if they provide a dangerous environment -- seems unwarranted. But placing a child in a dangerous environment is not just unfair – it's wicked.

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The following are appended so that the reader does not have to look up the literature. The article published in Pediatrics on line, August 2006, lays out additional problems with the claims made by gay rights supporters.

The reports of homosexuals' children:

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Children Of Homosexual Parents Report Childhood Difficulties

Paul Cameron and Kirk Cameron

Summary: Referenced as both supporting and weakening the case for parenting by homosexuals, 57 life-story narratives of children with homosexual parents published by Rafkin in 1990 and Saffron in 1996 were subjected to content analysis. Children mentioned one or more problems/concerns in 48 (92%) of 52 families. Of the 213 scored problems, 201 (94%) were attributed to the homosexual parent(s). Older daughters in at least 8 (27%) of 30 families and older sons in at least 2 (20%) of 10 families described themselves as homosexual or bisexual. These findings are inconsistent with propositions that children of

homosexuals do not differ appreciably from those who live with married parents or that children of
homosexuals are not more apt to engage in homosexuality.

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Children Of Homosexual Parents Report Childhood Difficulties

Self-reported life stories and case studies are a major part of the empirical database of psychiatry. Because everyone has a sense of what 'typical life stories' should be, life stories or case studies of those whose parents were unusual are considered psychiatrically informative. Indeed, many mental health professionals hold that life stories and case studies bear powerfully upon whether certain kinds of parents provide 'abnormal' child-rearing environments which, in turn, are thought to lead to 'abnormal' adults. But self-reports or case studies are not infrequently interpreted in contradictory ways (e.g., Eisold, 1998 v. Saakvitne, 1998).

There have also been contradictory interpretations of published clinical studies of children with homosexual parents. Patterson (1995), Patterson & Redding (1996), Tasker & Golombok (1997), Parks (1998), Fitzgerald (1999), and Stacey (1998) are among reviewers who have referenced clinical studies of children with homosexual parents as evidencing the essential 'ordinariness' of such rearing [e.g., "[n]ot a single study has found children of gay or lesbian parents to be disadvantaged in any important way relative to children of heterosexual parents. Indeed, the evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by gay and lesbian parents are as likely as are those provided by heterosexual parents to support and to enable children's psychosocial growth" (Patterson & Redding, 1996, p. 43)].

Others, including Rafkin (1990), O'Connell (1993), and Cameron (1999) have interpreted the same material as suggesting that homosexual parenting is a source of childhood difficulty. Two of the largest collections of such material were produced by Rafkin (1990) and Saffron (1996), and each investigator pointed to her interviews as validating her decision to have (Saffron) or not have children (Rafkin). So, it seems reasonable to ask whether the childhoods of children with homosexual parents are more difficult than those children raised by heterosexuals, and if so, are these difficulties evident in the published narratives of the children of homosexuals?

Six clinical studies totaling 155 children of homosexuals are at the heart of the controversy [Lewis (1980), Paul (1986), Pennington (1987), Rafkin (1990), O'Connell (1993), and Saffron (1996)]. Collectively, these six publications of case studies or life stories constitute a considerable fraction of what is known as the 'clinical literature' regarding such children (as opposed to the 'comparative studies

literature'). Since none of the six samples was generated as a random sample of the children of homosexuals, nor did any of the six studies include a comparison group, our ability to generalize their findings is extremely limited. Indeed, this is also true of most of the published research on homosexual parenting (Belcastro, Gramlich, Nicholson, Price, & Wilson, 1993). Nevertheless, the interpretation of these children's reports figures large in the debate about whether homosexuals should have, adopt, or foster-parent children. We report a content analysis to aid in choosing between the differing interpretations of this clinical material.

Content Analysis

Four of the six studies in question included their collectors' overall impressions along with fragments of interviews to validate these impressions. These four include (1) Lewis (1980), who interviewed 11 daughters and 10 sons aged 9 to 26 yrs of 8 lesbians living in [apparently] 6 family-units in the Boston area, (2) O'Connell (1993), who interviewed 6 daughters and 5 sons aged 16 to 23 yrs from 8 lesbian mothers who answered ads in Boston homosexual newspapers, (3) Pennington (1987), who reported on a decade's experience with 22 daughters and 10 sons aged 5 to 29 yrs from 28 lesbian family-groups attending a psychotherapy clinic for homosexuals in San Francisco, and (4) Paul (1986), who highlighted findings from systematic interviews with 19 daughters and 15 sons, aged 18 to 28 yrs, from 33 families in San Francisco: 17 had lesbian mothers, 14 had gay fathers, and 4 had two homosexual parents. The format of these studies, since an unknown amount of the interviews was not reproduced by the investigators, makes any reanalysis problematic.

Two of the studies reproduced what appear to be minimally edited "life stories" generated by the children of homosexuals. These narrative studies were done by Rafkin (1990), who included 29 daughters and 9 sons aged 5 to 39 yrs from 34 lesbian family-groups from 13 U.S. states and Saffron (1996), who included 13 daughters and 6 sons aged 11 to 66 yrs who had lesbian and/or gay parents from 18 homosexual family-groups in Great Britain. How the children were obtained and to what extent their accounts were led by particular questions or their responses were edited is not reported. But the children interviewed were apparently aware that (1) the interview bore upon a study of the nature of homosexual parenting, (2) the interview would be published, and thus (3) what the child said would be known to their

homosexual parent(s). In addition to this limitation, Saffron stated that her sample “was biased towards people who have fairly good relationships with their parents” (p. 5). It is likely that Rafkin’s sample had this limitation as well. Thus, if any bias is present in these accounts, the interviewed children would appear to have been under social pressure to emphasize the “brighter” and downplay the “darker” sides of their life-stories.

The 57 Rafkin and Saffron narratives were examined for indications of the traditional concerns of courts when a parent is homosexual and custody is disputed with a heterosexual parent (Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Cameron, 1999; Fitzgerald, 1999); that is, teasing, disturbance of peer relations, emotional disturbance, hypersexualization, instability, and parental alienation, neglect, and pressure to have the child adopt homosexual activity. As these studies did not provide a comparison group, we stress that it is quite difficult to evaluate the findings. However, in order to provide an approximate and somewhat crude basis for comparison, we applied to the 57 narratives essentially the same content analysis that was used for a study of appeals court cases involving homosexual parents (Cameron & Cameron, 1998). In particular, the study by Cameron and Cameron featured a control group of cases involving heterosexual parents and thus may allow for a modest comparison to the current set of children’s narratives.

Following this procedure, evidence of having been teased was coded with a “**T**,” emotional problems with “**Em**,” feeling “different” with a “**D**,” attempts to alienate from the other parent with an “**A**,” the need for secrecy with “**Sc**,” hypersexualization of the child (that is, being made sexually precocious by the situation) with “**Hy**,” being sexually molested with “**Sx**,” parental pressure or encouragement to become homosexual (or heterosexual) or parent-sponsored exposure to homosexuality with “**E**,” violence or conflict between the parents, parents and lovers, or against the child with a “**V**,” neglect with an “**N**,” and desire for a father with “**F**.” Instability of the parenting situation in either numbers of lovers or numbers of residences was coded with an “**I**.” Criminality by the parent(s) was scored with “**C**,” other substance abuse by the parent(s) was noted when mentioned.

If any of these problems were attributed in the child’s life story to the heterosexual parent or his associates or to the heterosexual child-rearing environment, the same codes were prefixed with “**Ht**” (e.g., **HtV** indicates violence or conflict between the heterosexual parents, the parent and heterosexual lovers, or

against the child by his heterosexual parent or stepparent; **HtA** refers to alienation against the homosexual by the heterosexual parent). We also noted cases where a child mentioned discrimination against males by lesbians (coded with “**Dis**”), whether the interviewee intended to marry or to have children, and if the child was 13 or older, his sexual preference if present in the account.

We independently scored each life story, with differences resolved in favor of the score which did not indicate a problem or harm. Some excerpted life stories from Rafkin and Saffron are given below to illustrate each scoring; the rest of the excerpts are appended. Capital letters represent names of the homosexuals or their children. The number before the narrative indicates the family-group from which the child came, the respondent’s age is given in parenthesis. The ellipses [...] are unconventionally employed — merely indicating that material not relevant to the scoring was skipped. Respondents were considered children if below age 18. From Rafkin there were 16 girls, 6 boys, 13 women and 3 men; from Saffron 3 girls, 3 boys, 10 women, and 3 men. All scoring, however, was done by family-group to avoid the problem of bias due to the clustering of children within families. This led to a total of 52 family groups scored in **Table 1** below.

The following testimonies are considerably abbreviated to show how the coding was applied, but give a bit of the ‘flavor’ of the statements. The numbers refer to family units, 1- 34 are from Rafkin, 35-52 from Saffron. A more complete sketch of each statement is provided in the appendix.

19) Girl (6): “I feel different [**D**]. I don’t tell most of my friends I have two mothers... I don’t tell other kids at school about my mothers [**Sc**]... when I was really little, I lived with my grandfather and grandmother because my mother was doing drugs [**C**]... [at five] we started to live together again [**I**]. I have thousands of friends who are lesbians. I mostly see them at AA meetings...” (Rafkin, pp. 107-109)

23) Girl (5): “I was four when my mommy met her, and they got married when I was five. I call her Aunt S... My own family I don’t like very much. I don’t like my Grandma, because she didn’t want my mom to marry Aunt S.... she wanted to shoot her [**HtV**]... I know a lot of people who have dads. My best friend has a dad [**F**]... Sometimes when they argue, it hurts my ears... some friends ask me questions about my moms, and I get embarrassed and scared to answer [**Em, Sc**].” (Rafkin, pp. 128-130)

27) Girl (9): “My biological mother is S and my other mother is L. We’ve lived together for a year.

Before that L lived across the street... My mom met L..., L had just broken up with someone. We moved in together because it got complicated going back and forth every night [I]. All of a sudden I felt like I was a different person because my mom was a lesbian [D]... I get angry because I can't tell anybody about my mom. The kids at school would laugh [Sc]... they say awful things about lesbians... then they make fun of me [T]... having lesbian mothers is nothing to laugh about.... I have told my [mother] that she has made my life difficult [Em].” (Rafkin, pp. 142-144).

28) Man (19) : “When I was about seven, my mother told me that this woman, D, was going to stay with us for a while — and she never left!... I didn't think anything much about it until I was about ten.... it just became obvious because she and my mother were sleeping together. A few months after D left, my mother started to see another woman, but that didn't last [I]... then she got involved with a different woman... she'd be violent toward my mother [V].... after that she started to go on marches and to women's groups... there were some women in these groups who objected to men altogether, and I couldn't cope with that [Dis]. I don't really talk about my mother to anybody [Sc]. To this day my brother doesn't tell anybody about my mother.” (Rafkin, pp. 145-148)

37) Boy (12): “Mum... has had several girlfriends in my lifetime [I].... I don't go around saying that I've got two mums [Sc].... If we are sitting in a restaurant eating, she'll say, 'I want you to know about all these sex things.' And she'll go on about everything, just shouting it out [Hy].... sometimes when mum embarrasses me [Em], I think, 'Oh god I wish I had a dad' [F].... Been to every Gay Pride march [E]. Last year, while attending “we went up to a field..., when two men came up to us. One of them started touching me [Sx]. I didn't want to go this year because of that” (Saffron, pp. 24-30).

45) Woman (24) heterosexual: Both parents were homosexual. “I wanted my father to be that perfect dad that all the other kids have. I didn't want a dad who's different, who's gay and who sleeps with men [F].... On top of everything else that made me different, I suddenly had two gay parents. [D] It was just about tolerable to have one gay parent, but not two. The whole thing embarrassed me. I felt angry with both of them [Em]... When I learned that both my parents were gay, what I needed to clarify was whether I am gay.... I think she'd be quite chuffed [i.e., pleased] if I turned around and said, 'Mum I've met a woman.'... She always tries it on, 'K, why don't you try women?' [E].... [Her mother's] become an ardent

feminist... She's become anti-men [Dis]... I used to not say anything until I had to. I've found that it's like a big secret that I'm keeping. [Sc]" (Saffron, pp. 91-98).

Results

Concerns, Problems, Difficulties

The number and kind of coded concerns, problems, or difficulties from the 57 narratives (except for the one instance of neglect [N]) are summarized in **Table 1**. In four families, the children's accounts mentioned no concerns or problems. Of the 213 concerns coded from the children's narratives, 201 (94%) were associated with the homosexual parent(s) and 11 with the heterosexual parent(s). Instability (**I**), emotional distress (**Em**), and secrecy (**Sc**) were mentioned in more than half of the narratives. The kind and number of problems from the Rafkin narratives were not obviously different in kind or number from the narratives compiled by Saffron.

Sexual Desires and Activity

Of the 30 family groups involving a teenaged or adult daughter of homosexuals, there were 8 cases where a daughter claimed to be homosexual or engaging in homosexuality, 3 additional families where a daughter was possibly homosexual or unsure of her sexual preference, and 1 additional family where a daughter had homosexual experience but was now apparently heterosexual. Of the 10 family groups involving a teenaged or adult son of homosexuals, there were 2 cases where a son claimed to be homosexual and 1 additional family where a son claimed homosexual experience. In 7 of these 40 family groups, no determination of sexual preference could be made. Sixteen narratives mentioned parental encouragement to engage in homosexuality or parent-sponsored exposure to organized homosexuality.

Marriage and Natalism

In three of the family groups, the child respondent was either "happily" married or expressed a desire to get married. In four family groups, the interviewee was explicitly anti-marriage. And in one additional family, the child was unsure about whether they wanted to marry. As to parenting, respondents in 7 families expressed a desire for children, in two families there was an explicit desire *not* to have children, in one a desire to foster-parent, and in one an expression of uncertainty. Three of the female respondents (representing two family-groups) were single mothers.

Discussion

Are the childhoods of the children of homosexuals more difficult and, if so, does this greater difficulty appear in the published narratives of such children? The answers to both questions appear to be ‘yes’.

The narratives of the 57 children of homosexuals stand alone. Even though we might have a sense of “what most kids would say if asked,” without a comparison group, it is difficult to know precisely how these life stories impinge upon the viability of homosexual child-rearing. But it is far more difficult to see the ‘ordinariness’ of their lives that Patterson (1995), Patterson & Redding (1996), Tasker & Golombok (1997), Parks (1998), Stacey (1998) and Fitzgerald (1999) reported.

Obviously, some of the issues/concerns noted by courts in homosexual custody decisions — and which we scored in the narratives — are presumptive of a heterosexual parenting environment (even as custody disputes involving a drug abuser presume non-drug abuse). Specifically, whether a child becomes homosexual or bisexual in preference, whether they are pressured to become that way by the homosexual parent, and to some extent whether a child feels “different” or is teased by peers because of their homosexual parenting environment are all issues unlikely to be of concern in a custody dispute between two heterosexual parents. Mentions of discrimination against males by lesbians would also seem unlikely in a set of parallel narratives from children raised by heterosexuals. Still, the question of whether or not children experience difficulty in homosexual parenting environments is inherently affected by the fact that heterosexual families have been normative both historically and legally. Those children who are raised in a distinctly different family structure might expect to experience greater difficulties simply because their parents are “bucking” accepted social customs or mores (of course, this would be true of parents who abused drugs or engaged in prostitution as well). The difficulty may be expected but nevertheless cannot be characterized as a “lack of difficulty.”

Implications for Custody Disputes

In custody disputes, the total life circumstances of the contested children are judged with emphasis upon problems, difficulties, and probable harms associated with parenting. Between the court room and the appeals process, the choice of with which parent the children will primarily reside is made via the most

objective procedure our society can generate (Cameron & Cameron, 1999). We previously examined forty appeals court case decisions pitting homosexual v. heterosexual parents, and another 56 appeals court records of contesting heterosexual parents — all for possible harms to the children involved (Cameron & Cameron, 1998). How do the narratives from Rafkin and Saffron compare to the appellate case records?

Of the 40 appellate cases involving a homosexual parent examined by Cameron and Cameron (1998), 31 (78%) were scored with at least one harm to the child(ren) by homosexuals. In the narratives from 52 homosexually-parented families, at least one problem or concern by homosexuals was coded in 48 (92%). In the set of appellate cases, 64 (97%) of the 66 separate harms were attributed by the courts to the homosexual parent or his associates. Of the 213 problems/concerns mentioned among the 52 sets of children's narratives, 201 (94%) were scored as associated with the homosexual parent(s). The child(ren) involved in the 40 appellate cases pitting homosexual v. heterosexual parents were recorded as harmed by heterosexuals in two (5%) cases. In the control group of 56 heterosexual v. heterosexual cases, children were recorded as harmed in 6 (11%). Of the 52 family-group narratives, heterosexuals were cited by the children as the source of the problem/concern in 8 (15%). Thus, from the children's narratives in Rafkin and Saffron, the 56 heterosexual v. heterosexual appellate cases, and the 40 heterosexual v. homosexual appellate cases, it appears that having homosexual parents, as compared to being raised by heterosexual parents, was disproportionately difficult for children.

O'Connell (1993) interpreted the published interviews with children of homosexuals as suggesting they had greater difficulty. She cited the studies by Lewis (1980), Rafkin (1990), and Pennington (1987) as presenting evidence that the children of homosexuals felt a great need to keep their parent's sexuality secret and also led them to question their own sexual preference. O'Connell said that the children she interviewed regarded these as "problems" and "concerns." The Rafkin and Saffron narratives included frequent concerns by the children about instability, emotional upset, secrecy and the questioning of one's sexual preference. Excerpts from their interviews were used by Lewis, Pennington, O'Connell and Paul to document the interpretation by these authors that being raised by a homosexual parent is difficult.

Lewis (1980) quoted a number of reactions of children of lesbians that could easily have come from the Rafkin and Saffron narratives: "My God, you're not one of those!'"... The younger children focused on the

need for secrecy and the isolation a secret imposed on them, separating them from their peers. They felt they could not tell their friends about their mother because they would be ostracized and called 'lesie' or 'fag' and their friends' mother might forbid their playing together" (p. 199).

Pennington (1987) noted that when "the children of lesbian mothers are old enough to realize that same-sex relationships are not generally accepted, they commonly fear that other children will find out that their mother is a lesbian. This awareness frequently occurs after seven years of age and intensifies during pubescence and the early teenage years (p. 62)... these children can become anxious, withdrawn, hypervigilant, or secretive.... some... shy away from friends and refuse to bring them home out of concern that someone will 'find out'" (p. 63).

Paul (1986) reported that 17 (50%) of the homosexuals' children he interviewed had "spontaneously mentioned that among their initial reactions to hearing about their parent's sexuality was the concern that this would lead their peers to ostracize or ridicule them" (p. 69). Nineteen (56%) "expressed some concern over the burden of keeping a part of their lives secret," and 15 (44%) "stated that they had felt that their parent's sexuality had placed special demands or constraints upon their friendships" (p. 69). Children's "positive responses" to a parent's homosexuality declined as the child became an adolescent: "later I know I didn't want other kids to know.... I was embarrassed.... When I was little, it was fine. They started having a relationship... before I really knew anything about sex.... [in] secondary school.... I remember suddenly realizing that most people lived with a man and a woman,... I realized that we were different" (p. 77). "I think I was too young to know, to realize what society sees about two women living together.... I had accepted it before I realized that.... it wasn't until later,... probably in sixth grade that it got to be an issue. And then I got to having real problems dealing with other people I was going to school with.... I mean it was hard" (p. 77). Paul noted "[o]ver half of the sample reported having gone through a period when they feared the ostracism or ridicule of their peers" (p. 87). In our content analysis of the Rafkin and Saffron narratives, the need for secrecy was mentioned in 32 (62%) of the 52 families.

The vignettes Tasker and Golombok (1997) reproduced were similar: e.g., "Jeffrey: I mean, people in school called me gay and queer and things.... (p. 89); Amy: ...if we were to go out..., Mum and C would hold hands. I was always so frightened that somebody from school was going to see it (p. 95); Anna: I got

to about 13 [and her best friend found out that her mother was a lesbian] I wasn't allowed to go to her house anymore; her mum and dad forbid me from going anywhere near. And that hurt me...." (p. 96).

Mitchell (1998) reported that in her interviews with 26 lesbian mothers "all the mothers of children over age ten" said that "harassment of their children because they had a lesbian mother began in second or third grade and continued through high school" (p. 404).

Comparing the Rafkin and Saffron narratives with other studies of volunteers

When asked about what sexual orientation their mother would prefer for them to adopt, 9 (56%) of the [apparently] 16 adult daughters of lesbians in the Tasker & Golombok (1997) longitudinal study said "lesbian." None of the [apparently] 9 adult daughters of heterosexuals made this report. Similarly, while all 15 of the heterosexual mothers in the Javaid (1993) comparative study told the investigator that they "hoped their children would marry and produce grandchildren," 7 (54%) of the 13 lesbian mothers said that they would accept "homosexual behaviour in their children" (p. 241). Likewise, 3 (27%) of the 11 early teenage daughters of lesbians vs. none of the 12 early teenage daughters of heterosexuals told Javaid that they explicitly rejected marriage and children. Pressure by homosexuals toward the adoption of homosexuality (including parent-sponsored exposure to organized homosexuality) by their children was reported in all six studies in which children of homosexuals were interviewed. As well, there was evidence that homosexuals' children were more apt to reject marriage and children.

In 12 (30%) of 40 families from the Rafkin and Saffron narratives involving teenaged or adult children, at least one respondent was either homosexual, engaged in homosexuality, or had homosexual experience. In another 3 families, the respondent was either possibly homosexual or unsure of their sexual preference. In Paul's (1986) study, 18 (53%) of 34 reported homosexual tendencies. Assuming that the parents of children who engaged in homosexuality (or the children themselves) were not more apt to volunteer for either study, these findings would be consistent with a higher homosexual outcome among children of homosexuals.

In the largest comparison study of children of homosexual *v.* heterosexual couples, the children's teachers rated 58 children of homosexual couples aged 5 through 12 matched with 58 children from cohabiting couples and 58 children from married couples (Sarantakos, 1996). The children of homosexuals

less frequently received parental supervision and help with homework, generally did less well academically, and were often socially isolated and teased about their parents' and their own sexuality.

Comparison of Interview Studies With Clinical Material

Osman (1972) recorded acting out behavior of a son of a lesbian couple upset about his unusual parenting situation. Javaid (1983) recorded the sexual excesses of a teenage girl being reared by a lesbian (she experimented homosexually and indulged in heterosexual promiscuity). A man entered the Masters and Johnson Treatment Program because his lesbian mother had induced him to become homosexual by introducing him to gay sex (Schwartz & Masters, 1984). A girl with a lesbian stepfamily became electively mute so that she would not have to share the family's secret with others (Rae, 1995). Eisold (1998) detailed the troubles of a 4 yr old boy, who though being raised by a gay couple, wanted a mother. These clinical reports center on many of the concerns expressed in the Rafkin and Saffron narratives.

Although conducted at different times and in different venues, the Pennington, Lewis, Rafkin, Saffron, O'Connell, and Paul studies have reproduced similar content. Each of these samples of homosexuals' children fell short of the research ideal — only volunteers or clients were interviewed. Further, the absence of a control group precludes direct comparison with children of heterosexuals or specific interpretations and evaluations of the reports. However, even with these severe limitations, it is difficult to detect the basis upon which some reviewers have pointed to some of these very studies as evidence that “[n]ot a single study has found children of gay or lesbian parents to be disadvantaged in any important way relative to children of heterosexual parents. Indeed, the evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by gay and lesbian parents are as likely as are those provided by heterosexual parents to support and to enable children's psychosocial growth” (Patterson & Redding, 1996, p. 43). Or “[a]ssessments of... behavioral problems (...; Lewis, 1980) revealed no significant differences between the two groups [i.e., “children of gay and heterosexual parents”]. Researchers have attributed problems in personal development that children of lesbian parents encounter to aspects of family functioning other than the mother's sexuality (...; Pennington, 1987)” (Parks, 1998, p. 383).

There is a substantial discrepancy between the published material in these interview studies and the burden many reviewers have claimed that it carries. Overall, despite the severe limitations of the material, it

is difficult to construe the interviews of the 155 children in these studies as suggesting other than that the homosexual households provided a more difficult environment for children than would have been provided in heterosexual households.

-----**Insert Table 1**

about here

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The appendix can be found in the Archive for Psychological Data and at www.familyresearchinst.org under 'homosexuals' children testify.'

Children Of Homosexual Parents Report Childhood Difficulties

Appendix

The following excerpts are from Rafkin, L. (1990) *Different mothers: sons and daughters of lesbians talk about their lives*. San Francisco: Cleis Press and Saffron, L. (1996) *What about the children? Sons and daughters of lesbian and gay parents talk about their lives*. London: Cassel. The ellipses are unconventionally employed — they just indicate that material irrelevant to scoring has been skipped.

Rafkin

1) Girl (7) California: “live with my mother now, but other times I've lived with lots of women.... my grandma and grandpa are kind of mad that my mom is not with a man and that everybody else is married.... They feel that women should be with men. So do most of my aunts and uncles. They don't tell me this stuff, but grownups keep quiet about things like that.... It seems like everyone who has a dad also has a brother or a sister. It seems like lesbian mothers usually have one kid.... I don't tell other kids about my mom. At school it kind of bothers me because when we play or tell stories, there's always a mom and a dad.... What really bothers me is when my friends come over and then they get into [asking me] if I know my dad. So I tell them no, not really.... I ask my mom about my dad but... you see, I wonder about him. I don't know where he is. I don't think my mom knows either. It's just hard to know that other kids have dads. Everybody else has a dad. My mom has had a couple of relationships with other women, but I didn't realize it at the time. I just thought that we were sleeping over at their house, or they were sleeping over... When I grow up I want to live with someone; I don't know if I want to get married and I don't know if I want to have kids.” (pp. 19-22) **Fa, Em, Sc, D, I**

2) Boy (16) Chicago, heterosexual: “When I was two and a half years old, my mother started seeing her first woman lover.... Her lover came to live with us and stayed until I was ten. She had a son seven years older than I,... during this part of my childhood it didn't seem that different to me to have a lesbian mom.... When my mother and her lover split up, things got a bit messy. Before they split up they were having fights, and about this time my father came back from overseas. My mother had a nervous breakdown, and

my father wasn't very good with children, so I got carted off to my aunt's house to live.... My mother recently split up with her second girlfriend.... I don't talk to anyone at school about my mom.... There is some cover-up that kids of lesbians have to do, because otherwise you are accused of being gay yourself. If I came out and said my mother was gay, I'd be treated like an alien.... [mom's] parents especially really got upset when she came out.... I use to go to the lesbian coffeehouse. I used to hang out there and meet my mom's friends, but now I'm too old and I can't go there any more. I think boys can't go there after they are about eleven or twelve. This makes me feel restricted, but I understand why they want lesbian-only space away from men. But at the same time I felt sad about it, and I think the women I knew there felt sad that I'm now too old to go there. I respect their rules and decisions, but I didn't like being excluded. But the rule against boys was made in 1974 — the year I was born — and it doesn't seem like they're going to change it just for me.” (pp. 23-26) **Sc, D, I, Dis**

3) Woman (21) Indiana, heterosexual: At age 17 her mother told her she was lesbian. “It felt like all of us were getting divorced, the separation and loss would hurt all of us.... The reason I had been ‘neglected’ was because she hadn't known who she was... now, two years after my parents split up, I am starting to feel the pain of that loss. When I recently came home from college, I missed not having one bed, one closet, or one house to settle into. I have to split up my vacations between the two houses, which doesn't make for very relaxing vacations.” (pp. 27- 31) **Em**

4) Girl (10) San Francisco: lives “with my two moms... D... lives upstairs with her girlfriend. L lives downstairs and she works at a downtown job. I live both upstairs and downstairs. I didn't know my dad until ... last year.... he lives with his lover Tim nearby.... Before I was born, L and D lived together, but after they broke up they decided they both needed their own space. I think they broke up before D was pregnant. D has a girlfriend now, and L said she might want to have a girlfriend soon... I have a sister who lives in New York. L had her a long time ago and she gave her up for adoption.... When I was young, D used to go to demonstrations, and she used to sing these songs about lesbian and gay people. I went with her to demonstrations, and I guess I figured things out because of those songs. I sang the songs, too.... When I get older I might feel more comfortable telling people. Right now I don't really know what would make things easier... When I grow up I want to be a writer.... Like I might take my turtle — his name is

Speedy Gonzales — and say that he has *Playboy* magazines under his shell and write a story about that.... I like my life. The only thing I would change about my life is my neighborhood, because there's a lot of drugs around." (pp. 32-36) **Hy, Fa, Sc, I, Pr**

5) Girl (10) Kansas City: "One day when I was about six, I woke up in the middle of the night from a bad dream, and I looked in the bedroom and saw R and my mom sleeping together. The next day I was trying to hint at things because I knew something was up. So I asked them if they wore underwear to bed. They couldn't understand why I asked that. They said, 'why do you want to know?' They never told me either. They wouldn't say anything about it.... I was sort of scared. It felt funny. I didn't know if it was OK or not. And I didn't feel comfortable talking with them about it. I just found out they are gay, officially, two years ago.... I never talk to my sister about it, because we don't feel comfortable talking about.... I consider this a really big secret. I don't feel like anyone is trustworthy. I don't think that if my best friend knew, she would ever come over to spend the night.... I remember my dad hurting my mom. They were fighting, and he was strangling her against the wall. I was saying, 'Let her go!' ... my dad hates gays. He also hates R living with us.... I wonder what will happen when I have boyfriends who find out about my mom. I wonder if they will still like me. And if I want to get married and the guy found out, would he still marry me? I guess if they can't take me how I am, they can't have me." (pp. 37-40) **Hy, D, Em, Sc, HtV**

5) Girl (13) sister to girl above: "I never talk to anyone about it.... I don't tell anyone. If somebody found out, and they were really good friends, they probably wouldn't tell. If they did tell people and kids at school found out, I think I'd be a social reject.... [My dad] is trying to make us think being gay is bad and turn us against our mother. But it's not working. I think he's immature. If he can't accept that other people are different from him, then he is really stupid. I'm thirteen and I can accept it — and I could accept it when I was six." (pp. 41-43) **Sc, HtA**

6) Woman (23) California, heterosexual: parents divorced when "I was three, so I've always known my mother as a lesbian.... I always knew what a lesbian was, and I always knew I had a choice as to what I would be.... My mom has always been in the public eye. She's a political activist... one of the founding members of *Ms* magazine with Gloria Steinem.... I am doing some recovery work and I go to anonymous meetings and I'm not really anonymous. I don't feel comfortable in meetings where everyone knows my

mother. Being known in that way is difficult.... When I was eight, my best friend was a girl called M. We did everything together: played on the soccer team, the bowling team, stayed overnight at each other's houses nearly every night — everything. One night my mom had a party, and M's mother suddenly stormed in and tore M out of the house and told M that she couldn't be friends with me.... My mother suspects that M's mother saw two women kissing on the porch.... once in junior high school my mother ask me to be on television with her, about something to do with gay rights, and I said no. They ended up showing a photo of me anyway. A girl from school, a real bully, saw the program and stood on the front steps of the school and started screaming that my mother was a faggot.... I felt really uncomfortable for about a month. I just hated everyone hassling me. Generally, lesbians with kids hang with other lesbians with kids.... There are a few times when my mother and I lived alone with each other. She always lived with her lovers, or we had housemates.... when the lover relationship was over, these lovers would leave, saying they wanted to continue a relationship with me. But they never did. When the relationship was over, their relationships with me were also pretty much over. My defense against this was that I never became attached to these women... I put up an emotional wall whenever my mom would say, 'this is it; this is the relationship that's going to last forever.' But I'd predict that it would end in such and such amount of time. I had slim expectations of her being in a wonderfully long, monogamous relationship. Women were always in and out of our lives. I couldn't let myself feel anything about these women." Had two boyfriends, "Part of the reason I waited so long to get involved with boys is that my grandmother was always pushing me into it." My grandmother "definitely doesn't want me to be like [my mother].... I don't want to have kids." (pp. 44-49) **Em, Sc, T, I, HtE**, doesn't want children

7) Boy (12) Oakland: "About a year ago one of my mothers moved out of the house we were all living in... my brother and I go back and forth between the two houses.... Now one of my moms is seeing someone else whom I like very much. In fact, my other mother likes this woman too. In one house we live with our co-parent, another mother and her seven-year-old boy, and a gay male roommate... usually I'm not around a lot of men. I'm mostly around women... my little brother, who is half black, asked [the gay roommate] to be his father.... when school started is when I really understood things. At preschool there had been both kids with straight parents and lesbians parents. And at that time all my friends had lesbian parents.... At my

old school when I'd get sick, the nurse would say 'Who's this other person on your emergency card?' I never answered, and I hoped she'd stop asking.... [He explains to the school chums that] one was my aunt. ... But it's hard sometimes. I don't know what the kids would do if they knew.... When I was younger, I went to women's festivals with my mother. There's this kind of famous picture of me and my biological mom. She's on stage with long hair and her breasts are hanging out and she's got me in her arms. I always try to hide that picture.... It's kind of embarrassing. My mother was one of the first lesbians to choose to have a child... I might have been two years old when I first asked, 'Where's my daddy'. She probably said, 'you don't have a daddy, you have a donor'.... Right now I don't have any reason to find out who my donor was. He could be a real asshole." (pp. 50-53) **Hy, Em, D, F, I**

8) Woman (25) Massachusetts, homosexual experience: "The year following my parents' separation was a full one for my mother. I remember her going through periods of depression, when she wouldn't leave her bed for days.... during this time my mother came out as a lesbian.... she and my mother were lovers for nine years.... I was having trouble spending the weekdays with lesbians, who discussed the evils of the patriarchy and the value of women-only space, and then spending an orthodox Shabbos with the other side of my family... I would cry upon leaving my mother's and I felt awkward in my father's community. [Mom lost a custody battle, but] When the verdict was announced, my mother and I tried to run out of the courthouse, but everyone chased us and a huge fistfight ensued. Police officers, lawyers, and lesbians were all yelling and punching each other in the lobby.... [The daughter ran away] with help from friends, who risked being charged with kidnapping.... We went all the way to the state Supreme Court and set a children's rights precedent. Previous to my case, only rights of parents were protected.... As time went on, my mother and L were more and more separatist... when I started fourth grade in our local public school, they notified the principal and the teachers that they were lesbians. Subsequently, I was placed in classes much below my level. I was in a reading group with kids who were struggling to read 'fire hydrant,' and then going home to read *Rubyfruit Jungle*, the lesbian primer novel... by junior high things were very bad at home... I was discouraged from having male friends, and any female friends were to be made aware that I lived in a lesbian household before I could have them over.... I experienced separatism as a constant level of anger and negativity.... men were called mutants, straight women were considered disowned sisters who

wasted woman-energy on men, and other lesbians were sometimes accused of being government spies sent to infiltrate and undermine the community. Anyone who was not like us was evil... [at age 14] I moved out and went to live in a lesbian boarding house.... I also learned to fear the world's judgment, to see relationships as temporary, to be distrustful, and to withhold communication as a means of self- protection and punishment.... I see evidence of how emotionally detached I've become.... L and my mother... explained their parenting style by saying that the patriarchy was pushing me hard in one direction, and they wanted to counteract that pressure by pushing just as hard in the other. I'm lucky I didn't get squashed. I... was left with no appealing role models. I haven't known who or what to strive to become.... When I have kids, I hope to do some things differently than she did..." (pp. 54-63). **Hy, Em, D, Sc, I, E, C, Dis**, wants children

9) Girl (15) Florida: "I have a problem... my mom's gay... this thing with my mom is a big deal for me.... most of the time it's really great. It's only when my mom embarrasses me or when ... the people at school — give me a hard time.... Sometimes I feel like my mom really looks different, like she doesn't look like other moms to me. It's the way she dresses. I feel like lesbianism just reeks off her... at school, people make jokes about dykes and fags... then there are the hard times, like when my mom had a lover move in with us, one that I did not like. They're not together anymore.... she was really out, she had lesbian bumper stickers all over her car, and she looked like a dyke: I couldn't stand it when she would try to hug my mom in front of my friends!... Once I told my mom that she'd have to choose between me and her lover... She said she wished I wouldn't make her do that. I couldn't believe that she didn't just say, 'oh, of course, I'd choose you.' Now it was one thing for her lover to move in with us, but it was another for her to go on the *Oprah Winfrey* show and come out to the whole world without telling me first. That's how all my friends found out about her and my mom.... it got all over school. That must have been one of the worst experiences of my life. People teased me and stuck mean notes in my locker.... my dad... really hates my mom.... my dad's wife said that one reason they didn't want me to come back early was because they thought that if I was with my mom full time I would grow up 'to be like her.'... They said their family was a 'real family.'" (pp. 64-68) **Em, D, Sc, T, I, HtA**

10) Boy (10): at 9 "I really flipped out. I wasn't sure I was going to be able to like her and live with her as a

regular mom like before.... four different girlfriends and I got to know them all. It was difficult to know the first three.... her last girl friend has stayed with her a long time... I've never talked to my dad about any of this... My dad doesn't know that my mom is a lesbian. I think if kids at school found out about my mom, they would tease me.... I went to the gay and lesbian parade. I saw men in women's costumes and women in men's costumes. It was weird. This made me confused.... It wasn't fun for me to find out my mom was a lesbian." (pp. 69-71) **Hy, Em, Sc, I**

11) Girl (7) adopted Indian girl: "My family is L, my mother, and Z, my other mother... and A, who is L's lover.... Sometimes all the moving gets confusing... I used to have two lesbian mothers, but now I only have one.... Because Z isn't a lesbian anymore.... Z has a boyfriend now.... I say daddies are as dumb as bubble gum. I like L being with A because I get to snuggle with them in the nighttime.... I might get married. I might not like men. I might be a lesbian. I might like to be with both, I don't really know yet. There are a lot of choices." (pp. 72-74) **T, I**

11) Girl (7) adopted, sister of girl above: "When I was a little girl my two moms were lovers; then they broke up. Then L fell in love with someone else. Now L is lovers with A. Z is lovers with a man.... all my friends know I have two moms, but some of them think that one of them is my mom and one of them is my sister's mom. But that's not true. Both of them are my moms..... I don't want to have a father.... When we were little we used to go back and forth and back and forth all the time, but now we stay at each house longer and it's much better. It used to be exhausting....I don't know if I want to be a lesbian." (pp. 75-76) **T, I**

12) Girl (15), Michigan, heterosexual, with gay father and lesbian mother: parents were married and then got divorced. Mom "and C were together about four months... my mom dated for a long time. Then she started seeing N. She was with her for about three years... there was one woman that I was really close to, and when my mom broke up with her, it was really hard. That was when I decided not to get so close to mom and dad's lovers.... it's hard having two gay parents, because I can't really talk to anybody about it.... Sometimes I think about being gay. At first, I thought my mom would love me more if I was gay.... I guess I'm straight right now. I don't really know how old you have to be to know you're gay. I guess it's just when you know that's what you are.... I would say I'm a feminist.... My mom is telling me about the

political part of things.... I'm learning about women's rights... I've gone to... the Gay Pride marches.

Most of the adults I know are gay,.... I feel... probably more comfortable [with them] than if I was walking around with friends from school.” (pp. 77-82) **Em, D, Sc, I, E**

13) Boy (13) Oklahoma City, heterosexual: “there’s a rumor going around school that my mom’s a lesbian and that there are naked women hanging all around our house.... When people ask me about it, I say, ‘Hell, no! My mom’s not a lesbian! Shut your face!’ ... No one at school knows one hundred percent sure that my mom is gay and I haven’t told them.... but... I think people will suspect... I figured it out [when] I was in kindergarten.... my mom explained to me what being a lesbian was and what a great responsibility it was for me to know that she was.... my mom has a lover now... we stay at her house on the weekends. They do a lot of hugging, touching and kissing.... I know a lot of gay people, some who are my mom’s friends.... [one of his friends said gay wasn’t good] he’s sure not [my friend] any more.... I am quite straight. I like girls very much.” (pp. 83-86) **Hy, Sc**

14) Woman (21) student from New York City, bisexual: When I was seven my “mother called me and T, my brother, into her bedroom. We saw A — the woman who had moved into our apartment two week before — lying next to mother in the queensize bed. Mother rolled onto her side and said “I want you to know that A and I are lesbians. That means that I’m married to A the way I used to be married to your father. But you can’t tell anyone about this.... all of mother’s friends, few of whom were heterosexual.... most lesbian couples we knew stayed together between three to five years. Mother could never stay tied down that long. She changed lovers every year to eighteen months. We moved a lot because mother always lived with her lovers.... Every year she apologized for being a lesbian, for making us keep her secret, and for changing lovers like shelf paper... my first year at boarding school — tenth grade — I developed a physical attraction for my roommate. I had just learned what it meant to be gay or lesbian — it took me that long to understand the sexual aspect.... I wrote in my journal about my attraction and my strong fear that I might be a lesbian just like mother.... my roommate read that entry of my journal to every girl in our hallway.... Nasty words were written on my walls. Obscene pictures were taped to my door.... I was ‘D the dyke’ and that was it.... Mother wasn’t the only one in the closet. I was in there with her.... This summer I realized that I am bisexual. I don’t know if living with my mother had influence on this or not. [her mother

said] after observing me all those years, you're following my example." (pp. 86- 90) **Hy, Em, Sc, T, I**

15) Woman (approximately 21) Boston, heterosexual: "I must have been nine, my brother seven... The last time we talked about it, he told me that not many of his friends knew about mom... I remember the awkwardness in high school and wanting to believe that I was not different. Neither my brother nor I had many friends sleep over at our house during those high school years because it would mean explaining things... my brother [lives with] secrecy all the time..." (pp. 91-95) **Em, D, Sc**

16) Woman (18) student in New York: apparently totally accepting of her mother, her mother's lover, and gay friends. (pp. 96-98)

17) Boy (10) Florida: "I have a lot of friends who are lesbian.... When I visit my dad he always says that it's wrong for my mom to be a lesbian.... He says he hates C and that he doesn't like my mother very much.... No one at school knows about my mom. I think my friends would feel pretty bad if they knew.... I went to the Southern Music festival with my mom... I see a lot of naked women there... at the festival I got my hair dyed... blue... now I have stripes." (p. 99-101) **Hy, Sc, HtA**

18) Woman (19) student in Wisconsin, heterosexual: "My parents were liberal and I was raised to think of homosexuality as nothing more than another option. After dad died, when I was nine, I felt fine when she told me she was gay.... Growing up is hard enough thing to do, and I sometimes resented my mother for making it harder.... none of what I did mattered, because of what my mother 'had become,' boys thought my mother was reason enough not to date me. I would date a boy, and sooner or later I'd have to spring him with news of my family's hidden — or sometimes not so hidden — secret.... my mother, my sisters and I attended these [lesbian/feminist] merrymakings before mom had her sexual metamorphosis.... I'd sometimes bring my best friend and we'd pretend to 'be together' to avoid being hit on." (pp. 102-106) **Em, Sc, E**

19) Girl (6): "I feel different. I don't tell most of my friends I have two mothers... I don't tell other kids at school about my mothers.... when I was really little, I lived with my grandfather and grandmother because my mother was doing drugs. I got back with my mother when I was three. Then when I was four, my mother lived in this special house because she was getting off drugs.... [at five] we started to live together again.... I feel kind of good and kind of bad about not having a dad.... I know my real dad was always

drunk. I had another dad for a while, and he hit me all the time.... [M moved in] M is going to have a baby next year.... I have thousands of friends who are lesbians. I mostly see them at AA meetings... D and D are these men who are giving us sperm. We're putting it in a bag and using a little shooter thing.... Last year my teacher found out. She saw both of my moms at PTA night... I didn't want her to know, because I wanted her to think of me the same as the other children." (pp. 107-109) **Hy, Em, D, F, Sc, HtV, I, C 20)** Man (27), heterosexual with homosexual experience: "Lesbians should not fill their children with their own fears and hatred. I say this after considering the causes of needless pain in my past, and my troubles understanding the present. I was eleven when my mother sat me down and told me she was a lesbian. It meant nothing to me... she kept her sex life out of the small one-bedroom apartment we lived in.... my stepfather... abused me sexually, physically, and emotionally... [then his mother kidnapped him] I suspect she knew her action was illegal... I was very troubled at that time; reclusive, quiet, withdrawn, unsocial... from about the time of the divorce on (I was seven or eight) I was the kid whom all other kids — including the kids who got picked on — picked on.... I met lesbian friends of my mother's who also had kids.... I do recall our wishing our mothers were more attentive to us than to each other. We kids would get together and have sex, males or females in any combination — unbeknownst to our parents, but ironically I don't think any of us really knew what our mothers' lesbianism really meant.... in sixth grade I joined the Boy Scouts, and it was then that I started to be called a new word: faggot.... that one word was really harmful to my development... Since my parents had sex with the same sex (my mother with other women, my stepfather with me), I had not understood that homosexuality was wrong. Also, at the time I couldn't figure out my own sexuality, because I was having sex with people of both sexes.... in the feminist lesbian movement in Washington, D.C.... I was being exposed to damaging experiences... I was twelve at the time — would be left with other lesbians who said horrible things to us. I distinctly remember a woman telling me, 'you are a most despicable thing on earth because you are nothing but a future man' for me, this kind of hatred ruined my life. This hatred, of men by women, of women by myself, has existed in my life until recently.... Until I was sixteen or so, I was sexually abused by many straight men, 'friends' of my mothers' whom I was occasionally left with.... today I don't trust people. Period.... she was a lousy mother. Her friends thought so too. ... I was into drugs by the age of fifteen.... Since I turned seventeen my relationships

have all been heterosexual, except for a couple of one-night stands with men in the pre-AIDS era.... I don't fight for any cause, because I know better than to be deceived by promoters of causes. I believe that people in causes are motivated by selfishness, not by principle.... my mother wasn't there for me when I needed discipline or parental support. She was out with the girls instead of being at home when her child needed her.... A few female lovers have described me as emotionally withdrawn, difficult to talk with, at times not there, exclusive, shut in. I find relationships hard to believe in.... I don't know what a normal relationship is supposed to be like.... I have a lot of experiences; I just don't feel them very deeply. I have built such immense and thick walls around my spirit that nothing but the thinnest vein of emotion seeps through.... I have survived by staying in shallow water." (pp. 110-116) **Hy, Em, Sx, T, V, E, Dis, N, C**

21) Woman (19), student, heterosexual: "my mother met her lover at college; I think my mother was her teacher. Five years later they got together, and they've been together now nine years. I have never gotten along with my mom's lover.... she's real stubborn and had a problem with drinking... when she's drinking she doesn't really have a middle ground; she is either angry or happy..... There was a time when I was angry at my mom because I thought her being gay wasn't fair to me.... it looked to me like [mother would] do anything her lover said to do.... I haven't told a lot of people about it [mother's lesbianism]... sometimes I felt embarrassed about her... my grandmother... doesn't like it, and she was worried about me living with lesbians.... My mother has also worried about my dad finding out about her being gay... [but] he never really wanted me, even before she was gay.... He has been married four times... I'm engaged to be married now, and my fiancée likes my mother and doesn't mind her being gay... his family is in Germany. They don't know anything about my family.... we're planning a long engagement... My mother has many friends who are gay, many of whom are men" (117-121) **Em, Sc**, engaged to be married, substance abuse in home

22) Girl (6) San Francisco, result of artificial insemination: "I found out that my mom is a lesbian the first time I went to a gay and lesbian parade. I was about four.... I really want to know him [her father]... Sometimes they [kids] tease me about it because all of them have dads... They think that one of my mom's is a fake mom.... I'm different than all the other kids in my class.... I'm the only kid in school with a lesbian mother... Sometimes I get called names like 'No-Dadhead' and that makes me feel bad.... [after a friend's divorce, she told her] every day you wonder what's going to happen. That's how it was when my moms

split up.... [she met her 'donor father' who is a gay writer] who lives on the east coast.” (pp. 122-127) **Em, D, F, Sc, T, I**

22) Girl (13) San Francisco: “I told people [at school] I didn’t have a dad, and they started laughing... none of those kids know about my mothers.... If it did get around, I think I would be treated differently because of my mom’s sexuality.... I don’t have many men in my life, so I’m not as comfortable around them as I would like to be... if kids found out... [they] wouldn’t want to come over to my house or maybe their parents wouldn’t let them come over. I think the older I get, the more pressure there is from other kids. When you are young, kids don’t really understand.... I wish sometimes that we had a dad that lived with us.... it’s really hard for kids of lesbians... I don’t know if I’m gay or straight, but I don’t feel pressure to be either way.... I’ve liked most of the women that my mom has been in relationships with.... right now I need more attention than she is giving me.... I spend one weekend a month with one woman, and another one I see two times a week. Sometimes I wish there was a second person in the house so when my mom goes out there would be someone else to watch me.” (pp. 122-127) **Em, D, F, Sc, T, I**

23) Girl (5), North Carolina: “I was four when my mommy met her, and they got married when I was five. I call her Aunt S... My own family I don’t like very much. I don’t like my Grandma, because she didn’t want my mom to marry Aunt S.... she wanted to shoot her. One time my grandmother went to this person who helps other people hurt people that they don’t like. She tried to put a spell on Aunt S... I don’t want to grow up gay, because it’s hard. There’s a lot of argues and stuff... I know a lot of people who have dads. My best friend has a dad... Sometimes when they [my mom and Aunt S] argue, it hurts my ears... some friends ask me questions about my moms, and I get embarrassed and scared to answer. And sometimes I’m mad that I don’t have brothers and sisters.” (pp. 128-130) **Em, F, Sc, HtV**

24) Boy (10) foster child in San Francisco: An attempt is being made by two lesbians to adopt him and his sister. “It took a while to find out about I and S.... when we started to spend the nights with them, we noticed that they stayed in the same room together... they are nicer to us than if we had a mom and a dad. We’re lucky. I think it’s funner to have two moms, and I think it’s fine for lesbians to adopt kids.... My real mom wants us to live here. And most of my friends know about us having two moms and it’s okay with them, too. If I ever have kids, I’d want to adopt them. I’d like to help other kids who don’t have families.”

(pp. 131-132)

24) Girl (9) foster child in San Francisco: “we met L.... Two ladies are better than a mom and a dad.... You know when other kids say ‘Your Mama?’ It’s a bad thing to say. But when they say it to me I say, ‘Which one?’” (pp. 131-132)

25) Girl (13) Hawaii: “my mom and dad were never married.... I’ve been around gay people all my life. I like it when my mother has lovers, because she seems happier then... some kids at school have teased me about my mother being gay, and this makes me mad.... because of my mother’s work [edits a gay newsletter] we’ve received crank calls.... It’s scary, and for this reason I sometimes wish my mother was straight. And it’s difficult to bring people to the house. There’s stuff about lesbianism all over the house, lesbian books and things. I think this stuff would be a problem for my friends, so I don’t bring them home much. I don’t want to give them more opportunity to tease me. Right now my mother isn’t so open about it because I’ve asked her not to be.” (pp. 133- 134). **Em, Sc, T, I, E**

26) Woman (39) California, homosexual: “In my memories, I’m always looking for my mother and finding her with women doing things I don’t understand... Sometimes they blame me for opening a door that wasn’t even locked.... [at about the age of 10] I noticed a door that I hadn’t yet opened. Inside I saw a big bed. My mother sat up suddenly and stared at me. She was with B... and then B shouted, ‘you fucking sneaking brat’... my mother never said a word.... I came to hate N because of the way she and my mother fought every night. They screamed and bickered and whined and pouted over everything... N closed my mother’s hand in the car door... [mother told her recently that] she and N hadn’t made love in seven years.... I’m living a good life... I’ve been with my lover, Mary, since we met in college... my mother showed me that lesbianism is a possibility.” (pp. 135-141) **Hy, Em, V, I**

27) Girl (9): “My biological mother is S and my other mother is L. We’ve lived together for a year. Before that L lived across the street... My mom met L..., L had just broken up with someone. So they started going out. Then they started seeing each other more often. We moved in together because it got complicated going back and forth every night. All of a sudden I felt like I was a different person because my mom was a lesbian. Before that I didn’t really know any lesbians. So it was amazing that my mother was a lesbian.... Once in a while I wish my dad was in my life, because I never knew him as my father.... Sometimes I get

angry because I can't tell anybody about my mom. The kids at school would laugh.... they say awful things about lesbians... then they make fun of me.... having lesbian mothers is nothing to laugh about. Those kids should think about putting themselves in my shoes... I have told my [mother] that she has made my life difficult." (pp. 142-144). **Em, D, F, Sc, T, I**

28) Man (19) San Francisco, heterosexual: "When I was about seven, my mother told me that this woman, D, was going to stay with us for a while — and she never left!... I didn't think anything much about it until I was about ten.... it just became obvious because she and my mother were sleeping together.... If anyone asked, I said that D was a close friend from London... I felt a bit odd, but I got the idea that this was how things were... D moved to London... It was all very painful.... It had been nine years... over half my life, and it was hard not to see D every day.... A few months after D left, my mother started to see another woman, but that didn't last... then she got involved with a different woman... she'd be violent toward my mother... my mom went back to University and she started to get political. Then my mom was dismissed from her job because she was a lesbian, and after that she started to go on marches and to women's groups... there were some women in these groups who objected to men altogether, and I couldn't cope with that. There was one woman who was working on my mom's case, and she went at me one time because I was a male — and I was only twelve or thirteen then.... I don't really talk about my mother to anybody. But once I told a close school friend that my mom was a lesbian... This boy got mad and started shooting his mouth off about my mom... [mom] said she was going to get married to a gay man so that she could live with her American lover... I really didn't know any gay men until I came here,... and I find the idea of two men touching each other a little hard to take. Whenever I meet them, they usually try to figure out if I'm gay... I'm not,... I don't think having a lesbian mother has really affected me, except that I think she talked to me more than most parents... I wish I'd had somebody to talk to about this when I was young, someone who wouldn't tell anybody. Instead I kept quiet. To this day my brother doesn't tell anybody about my mother. I don't even think he has even told his wife. But it's a lot easier to talk about all this here in America.

Homosexuality is just not as accepted in Britain." (pp. 145-148) **Sc, V, I, Dis**

29) Woman (approximately 20), student in Washington state, possibly homosexual: "My mother is a lesbian. It took me until my senior year of high school to be able to say those words without remorse... The

biggest hardship was T's [my mother's] separatism. This lasted throughout most of my younger years. T was very serious about this issue,... I just remember thinking that all lesbians felt the way my mother felt about everything. If that were true then all lesbians would talk about men as crude, destructive, dishonest, sleazy creatures that were really not supposed to exist. They were a mistake. Yet while she told me these things... I chose not to believe her... I already thought lesbianism meant treating men as inferior. From there I decided that lesbians were a bunch of hypocritical women. Just a bunch of women who preach freedom and individuality, yet their values and beliefs were basically homogeneous.... lesbianism looked like a bleak future to me. T called my sister and me 'baby dykes,' making us wear those small hand-crafted lesbian signs she had made for us by a local lesbian jeweler. Both my sister, M, and I have always been extremely resentful of that... I felt I was cheated out a normal childhood... at age nine I earnestly asked my mom for my own checking account and a small apartment, sincerely believing I could handle it.... I want a life partner, yet I don't know if there is any such thing. I am not sure if I can trust anyone enough to let them be my lifelong friend, much less my lifelong lover. Many women have passed through my life. Some I saw as mentors and friends, while others were just my mother's lovers.... Sometimes I would open up and hope that one of these women would be there forever, but it never happened.... It wasn't until more recently that T and I developed our own relationship, separate from and less affected by our lovers." (pp. 149-152) **Em, I, E, Dis**, wants children and a "life partner"

30) Girl (13) adopted, from Puerto Rico, heterosexual: "Each of my mothers already had a girl when they got together, and now they have one together, too. So now that makes four of us. [She was adopted when she was 3] I consider both M and J my mothers. When I was little I never noticed anything different about us; I never felt it was different having two moms. But in the last three years I've started to feel the difference.... I always told people that M was my mother's best friend,... but I've never told anyone the real story. I don't think I'll ever tell it. I think if anyone found out about my mother being a lesbian, they would think us kids were strange because we have these strange mothers.... I've gone to the gay march for the last few years. It's kind of strange, because all during the parade I was worried that my friends might see me.... I think being gay is kind of strange. Sometimes when my mother and M are hugging, my brother and I say 'Ugh!' and go to our rooms. We don't like to see it. If it was my decision I wouldn't be gay.... My aunt is a

lesbian, too, and she adopted my brother. So my brother J lives with her.” (pp. 153-155) **Hy, Em, D, Sc, E**

31) Woman (21) student from San Francisco, homosexual: “I was adopted at the age of three by my aunt, who is a lesbian.... I refer to my aunt as my mother and think of her as such. None of my biological mother’s first four children grew up with her, and we all went our separate ways.... My mother, brother, and I moved around a great deal... later moved to a woman’s co-operative in Texas. Many of the kids I knew had gay moms, .and everything seemed natural to me... I naively accepted her as she was... when I started school... things began to shift.... I began to have a different view of my mother and myself... about nine or ten, I began to hear words such as ‘fag,’ ‘dyke,’ and ‘queers’.... We moved out of the women’s co- op, and I remember vividly knowing things were different in the bigger world.... because of this, I began to lie and hide. I also learned to keep quiet.... Friends would come to my house, and I would run ahead to check if my mother was home or if she was with her lover. All I could imagine was my friends coming home with me to find my mother kissing another woman in our living room.... I built up a great deal of fear and frustration. I was angry that I want not part of a ‘normal’ family and could not live a ‘normal’ life with a ‘normal’ mother. I wondered what I did to deserve this. Why did my biological mother let a lesbian adopt me? How could she think that this life was better than what she could have given me?... my brother felt a lack of identification with men. He also felt some rejection due to his gender by some ‘radical’ lesbians. It felt to me like my brother was taken away from me because my mother was gay.... I now had to take responsibility for who my mother was. I had to learn to protect her, and myself, from the harsh reality of society’s prejudice... As a child I was always involved with her community, and with other lesbians. I went to concerts, marches, and to many other events. Now I rejected it all. In response, my mother became upset and, sometimes, started to exert her parental authority.... there was a concert... featuring Holly Near, Cris Williamson, and Meg Christian. I refused to go, and my mother forced me to attend. I was not only angry that I had to go to something so lesbian-oriented... but [also]... that she made me go anyway.... I talked with my sister... we swore we would never be gay.... [but one night] my sister confessed to me that she was dating a woman.... Then when I was sixteen, I met and fell in love with a woman. I was really shocked. I didn’t understand how this could happen. Up to that point I had dated men — one relationship lasted a year and a half, and several others spanned months at a time.... What I began to understand about being gay was

that it was a feeling, rather than a choice I was making.... I am involved with the Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance.” (pp. 156-161) **Hy, Em, D, Sc, I, E, Dis**

32) Man (23) from New York, heterosexual: “My parents were divorced when I was eight... I do recall us spending a lot more time with a friend of my mother’s and her three kids, all of whom had been friends of ours for years.... in the six years of living in Queens, I was exposed to and learned a lot about people: gay people, straight people... I certainly didn’t tell just anyone about my mom, as most people would not understand due to their lack of exposure.... I have always had an accelerated knowledge of sexual education due to the nature of my mother’s and her first lover’s occupations. They were both physical and sex education teachers [in NYC].... When my mom broke the big rule — the one that says only men and women get married — I began to question other rules which had designs on my life. Her breaking out of traditional heterosexuality really put a kink... into my way of thinking.... I... will always be heterosexual. I’m confident that my [two] sisters, too will remain heterosexual. None of us seem to have the urgency toward marriage. This has freed us up a little so that we can live our lives and concentrate on ourselves....” (pp. 162-165) **Hy, Sc**

33) Woman (26) San Francisco, homosexual: “My mother found a new, very close friend right before I left for college.... We came out to each other at the same time.... my mom was almost forty and still living with my father, although they had different bedrooms... The woman she was seeing was about to go through a divorce. Both of them were married and had families... her lover was worried about her kids.” (pp. 166-170) wants children if she can find right “co-parent”

34) Woman (18) student in San Jose, heterosexual: “My mom met her lover, L, fourteen years ago.... After the divorce, L moved with us... I saw them kiss — they didn’t sneak off or anything... I always told my friends soon after I met them, and few of them have had problems with it. I also tell my boyfriends about it... it seems relationships don’t last. Lesbian relationships are hard... my grandmother has never accepted L... My dad... doesn’t know about my mother and L... It doesn’t matter what kids have — fathers, mothers, or both — they just need love and support. It doesn’t matter if you are raised by a pack of dogs, just as long as they love you! It’s about time lesbians and gays can have children. It’s everybody’s right as a human being.” (pp. 171-174) **Hy**

Saffron

35) Girl (15) London, bisexual: “My biological mother, S, got pregnant by accident... she realized that she didn’t want to be heterosexual any more. She lived in a communal household... and all the women there agreed to help... over the years the number of women in the household dwindled away... I ended up living with J, who is S’s sister, and J’s girlfriend R and F... S stayed in Bristol... one day when I was four, S came and took me away... ‘you’re coming to live with me... and you’re not going to see J, F, and R again’.... Three weeks later [she was kidnapped by J and R, who eventually got legal custody]. “I’ve been trying... to fit in [with other kids]. But I’m just fed up with all of them. They can go their way, I’m very happy now being me. Now I say, ‘This is me and if you don’t like it, well that’s tough.... I always go to Gay Pride every year with my parents.... I’m interested in boys or girls, depending on my current mood.... I see myself as different, and it’s kind of because my mothers are lesbian.” She considers her parents to be J, F, and R, who live in two different houses, although she now also sees her biological mother S (pp.15-23). **D,**

T, I, E, C, Dis

36) Boy (14) London, heterosexual: “Mum...used [a man as a donor].” Lived with mum in a communal household and H. “Mum recently split up with H.... I missed having a relationship with a man when I was growing up.... then I do wish I had my Dad around more.... I feel different. I don’t trust anybody unless I know them.... I’m quite closed to everybody, I don’t tell anyone much... one kid started teasing me about my mother. I beat him up.... I can’t be that open about my family to people I don’t know. I didn’t feel bad about it initially, because I didn’t notice it. I think from about the ages of ten to twelve, I began to realize that I was odd because of having a lesbian mother... But I’m different because I want to be different. I don’t want to be like other people” (pp.15-23). **D, F, Sc, T, I**

37) Boy (12), Brighton, England: Mother was artificially inseminated by a gay man. “Mum... has had several girlfriends in my lifetime.... I don’t go around saying that I’ve got two mums.... The kids at school were asking me whether I’d got a dad. I wanted S to come... so that they could see that I did.... [Mum’s sister is also a lesbian.]... If we are sitting in a restaurant eating, she’ll say, ‘I want you to know about all these sex things.’ And she’ll go on about everything, just shouting it out.... sometimes when mum

embarrasses me, I think, 'Oh god I wish I had a dad.' ... Been to every Gay Pride march. Last year, while attending "we went up to a field to play football, when two men came up to us. One of them started touching me. We just ran. I didn't want to go this year because of that" (pp. 24-30). **Hy, F, Sc, Sx, I, E**

38) Girl (11) Leicester, England: "I say that A's [her mother's lover] living with us, just sharing a house with us.... Most of the kids are the sort of people who make jokes about all of this.... Sometimes I'm scared that my friend C might actually say something to one of them about my family... at school, I have another best friend, but she doesn't know about this either." (pp. 31-39). **Sc**, probably wants to have children someday

39) Girl (17) London, possibly bisexual: "My Mum took me to a lot of women's functions and it was never hidden from me.... [First C was her mother's partner.] I was eleven when they split up, and that was a shock... [the next lover] T was scary. They had a big fight in the kitchen... I'd never seen such damage and I didn't like it at all... Then my Mum met R, whom I now hate with a passion.... If I did see her on a dark night, I probably wouldn't hesitate to beat her up.... I miss the idea of a father. I worry when I haven't seen him for ages... I may have wished for a father-figure in my life, but that was a dream really. I never had one.... I do like it when some male gets all protective over me.... I never had it from my Dad.... As I was growing up, I would hotly deny it if my Mum was accused of being a lesbian.... Mum was aware that I didn't want everyone to know... house used to be plastered with lesbian and feminist posters.... [At age 15, one boy] was a malicious, conniving little git... He knew about Mum and he told everybody.... they started making jokes against lesbians... C's [Mum's first lover] daughter is the same age as me, and Mum told me that she's a lesbian now. She used to be boy-crazy. We were both tomboys, but I went all girlie at some point. Hearing about C's daughter made me question my own sexuality... I think perhaps I might be a lesbian. I've pushed myself to be heterosexual because I know my Mum wants me to be a lesbian. I'd like to have a lesbian experience, because otherwise how will I know what I want?" (pp. 40-48) **Em, F, Sc, T, V, I, E**

40) Boy (15) London, disabled, possibly asexual: Mother and C lived together for 4 years, split up. Now he lives in both households, going back and forth. "this woman helper... knew my mother was a lesbian. She made fun of me... I've been bullied in school." Arrested for blocking traffic in a demonstration for

“disability rights.” (pp. 49-53). **T, I**

41) Woman (20) from London, sexual preference uncertain: “All my life I’ve lived in a communal household.... At the moment I live with my dad, T, L, and S.” Mother split up with dad when she was 2, and died when she was 5. “because my Dad’s gay, I’ve also had the added benefit of a positive experience of homosexuality.... I feel comfortable with gay men and can enjoy myself at Gay Pride.... His homosexuality influenced me to question my sexuality more than I might have done. Until recently, I would have said I was straight, but I’m not sure at the moment.... When I was twelve... I felt nervous about revealing my secret. I was worried that people would hold it against me.... [Dad has had a number of boyfriends but none have lived in the commune.] There were a number of other men messing him about, which upset me... In the last six months, tension has grown between me and my Dad.... I’m also angry at my Dad and confused about my feelings toward him.... I don’t want anything to do with men. I’ve been having a hard time with them.... my boyfriend was unfaithful to me... I felt insecure about my femininity. I started feeling that I was too masculine in my mannerisms, attitudes and dress. In my early teens, I was often mistaken for a boy.” Has been on TV supporting gay rights. (pp. 54-62) **Hy, Em, Sc, I, E**

42) Woman (19) from Scotland, heterosexual: Father was pastor, became gay when she was aged 11, divorced his wife. Respondent went to live with him at age 16. “It was a difficult time for me. I used to find myself crying, mostly because of the responsibility of knowing my Dad was gay... Not being able to talk to anyone about it was hard.... He was in a gay Christians’ group... That’s where he met A.... If I do fall in love with a woman, then I wouldn’t be particularly bothered about it. At the moment, I’m heterosexual.... A year ago, Dad and A split up. Dad’s with G now... I don’t think of my Mum as family, not now.... Being a father isn’t great for my Dad’s image.... When we go together to the supermarket and I call him Dad, he tries to shush me up... He’s serious when he says that... He thinks men won’t look at him if they know he’s got a daughter... [Her best friend’s] boyfriend jumped up and said, ‘God, your dad’s a fucking poof.’ I was shocked and went out of the room.... after that I didn’t want to be around him at all.... I don’t think there’s any point in getting married. I don’t really agree with marriage.” (pp.63-70). **Em, T, I**, anti-marriage

43) Woman (21) homosexual: Mother became a lesbian after marriage to dad. “when I was twelve... Mum

said, 'Do you know what a lesbian is?' ... 'Well, I'm a lesbian.' ... When I was eleven, Mum finally left for good... six weeks later Dad had a nervous breakdown and disappeared for several weeks to a mental hospital... We were spread out round the country and it was very confusing... I naively told some staff at the school that Mum was a lesbian... turned into a major village scandal. I ended up leaving the school because of the homophobia that emerged... The court welfare officer wrote that I was idolizing my mother and that I was gay because Mum was... After hearing the welfare officer's report, I started feeling that my sexuality was subversive, that I was different because of my sexuality.... My first affair was with a woman at Dad's school...I was also extremely heterosexually promiscuous. That was the way I coped at the time... I was very lonely, made suicide attempts... I used to self-mutilate... I have an addictive personality... The reason I stopped cutting myself is that I woke up and realized it wasn't helping me at all. My girlfriend at the time was incredibly unsympathetic... Whenever my friends, most of whom are dykes.... I've had a few problems getting Mum and her partner to recognize the commitment and seriousness of my relationship with J. I tell them, 'Treat her as a daughter-in-law.' They're backing off, because every time they've got to know one of my girlfriends, six months later they've had to meet a new one. They find it hard to take me seriously... I'd like to have my own family.... the main problem is that I only want a girl. I don't like myself for it, because I can't justify it ethically.... I hate heterosexual sex" (pp. 71-79) **Hy, Em, T, I**, wants a girl child

44) Woman (33) heterosexual, single mother: Didn't know her mother was lesbian when her parents divorce occurred at age 8. "It's only when a friend confides in me something that's relevant that I would share something about Mum back.... generally I don't drop it into the conversation.... I wasn't totally comfortable bringing friends home because of Mum's lifestyle.... I hated being different from my friends. I don't want my children to go through what I went through.... I always wished that I had a family with a mum and a dad together like the majority of my friends.... [Lost her virginity very soon after being informed about her mother's lesbianism at age 16 because] knowing about her sexuality made me feel the need to find out about my own.... [Her dad] never allowed me to have friends, either girls or boys, in my bedroom. I had to entertain them in the living room with him sitting there behind the newspaper. He told me recently, 'With a mother like yours, what did you expect?' I was very upset by that.... I don't have any

faith in marriage guaranteeing relationships. (pp. 80-90) **Em, D, F, Sc**, anti-marriage

44) Woman (25) heterosexual, single mother, sister to woman above: “Before I was born, Mum fell in love with a woman friend who lived nearby.... [Later] Mum didn’t have permanent partners, just women who stayed a couple of nights a week and went out with her.... [When her mother revealed her lesbianism] I had a brief dramatic reaction and wrote an entry in my diary which read: ‘Oh God, what am I going to do? Why can’t this family be like everybody else? God help me.’... It’s not something that I would talk openly about with friends until they were close enough to be trusted... I’ve accepted that my Mum is lesbian, but it’s a slightly uncomfortable subject, if I’m honest.... I was aware of being different... I never had a loving relationship with Dad and grew up without a father’s love.... I would have liked the same type of love from a man that my Mum gave me.... after my Mum told me she was lesbian, I wondered if I was too. My mother’s brother is gay as well.... [Respondent was promiscuous perhaps because] I was also trying to prove to myself that I wasn’t a lesbian. My Mum was cool about my sexual experimenting” (pp. 80-90)

Em, D, F, Sc, I

45) Woman (24) heterosexual: Both parents were homosexual. “our family life wasn’t great. There were a lot of arguments and we were always going to family counseling.... I wanted my father to be that perfect dad that all the other kids have. I didn’t want a dad who’s different, who’s gay and who sleeps with men.... On top of everything else that made me different, I suddenly had two gay parents. It was just about tolerable to have one gay parent, but not two. The whole thing embarrassed me. I felt angry with both of them... I wanted to punish and hurt her.... [Mom and her current partner J] talk to me about my life, ask me why I want to get married.... [Respondent moved out on her own when she was 16, but I had to live with my mother for a month, and that helped me learn an awful lot about the lesbian lifestyle. When I learned that both my parents were gay, what I needed to clarify was whether I am gay.... I think she’d be quite chuffed [i.e., pleased] if I turned around and said, ‘Mum I’ve met a woman.’... She always tries it on, ‘K, why don’t you try women?’... I think she’d be quite pleased if I did.... [Her mother’s] become an ardent feminist... She’s become anti-men.... I used to not say anything until I had to. I’ve found that it’s like a big secret that I’m keeping.” (pp. 91-98). **Em, D, F, Sc, I, E, Dis**, wants to get married

46) Woman (24) from London, heterosexual: When I was ten, [mother was to go on a TV program about

homosexual parents], she asked me if I wanted to go on TV, and of course I did.... The TV program changed my life. Three days later, my father started a custody case to take me away from my Mum. He'd found out she was a lesbian by watching the programme.... My world went to pieces... I left school on Friday evening a secure and happy child. When I went back to school on the Monday, I'd lost all my friends, I was picked on... I became frightened of being rejected. I didn't want to tell my friends.... We had a rule that my Mum and her lover didn't hold hands or make any display of their relationship when we went out or were near my friends.... My Dad has always been the deepest, most painful issue for me.... When I was twelve, I went to my Mum and said that I'd like to see my Dad.... I cried when I had to leave him.... [Mother] was always open about her sexuality. I was involved in her political activities and went on marches and demonstrations.... [Mother had a number of lovers.] my world fell apart again when I was sixteen. Mum and S separated because S wanted to have another relationship... three weeks later, J separated from J. Suddenly I lost two major figures in my life. That was all very peculiar. One minute the relationships were fine and the next minute they were over. And they both went out of my life completely.... lost my virginity on my fifteenth birthday.... I doubt very much I'll ever get married. Marriage represents absolute pain." (pp. 99-107) **Em, F, Sc, T, I, E**, anti-marriage

47) Man (29) West Midlands, England, homosexual: Mother got pregnant by another man, married and then divorced his father when he was aged 6. Lived with his father for three years when his "father and stepmother both beat me with their hands and belts for minor indiscretions... I was becoming increasingly disturbed — I had nightmares, phobias, permanent bed-wetting, and nervous twitches and habits. [His mother remarried and re-divorced and became lesbian around the time he was aged 15.]... My mother was thirty three [but she was seeing a 23-yr old woman. Mother had a number of different live-in partners.]... from fifteen onwards I was around a lot of lesbians.... Some of the lesbian separatists found me difficult, because I was becoming a man. I really disliked those who saw me only as a man, not as a person.... I started cottaging [having sex with strangers in public toilets] when I was thirteen years old and was promiscuous for fifteen years.... [at age 15] I met a man in a toilet in Birmingham who was thirty. He was the first man I'd ever met and I fell head over heels in love with him... [Mother was not happy that his lover was aged 30].... Compared to most of my friends, I had it lucky. They were getting beaten by their parents

and at school. Some were in care. We were very angry and confused. We took our revenge whenever we could by being vile and loud and hateful. Coming out is one of the biggest things in your life. It's the self-consciousness of walking down a street knowing that I had just sucked a man's dick in a toilet, thinking that people know and despise me, that there must be something wrong with me. It's a mixture of being proud to be gay at the same time as thinking I'm a disgusting pervert. I'd had fifteen years of indoctrination by straight society to overcome... having a lesbian mother helped me to come to terms with being gay very young and to be quite vocal about it.... I often feel oppressed and threatened by heterosexual society. It's important for gays not to turn the other cheek but to educate people on their heterosexism, to challenge them in a direct and positive manner, to let people see that we are strong and powerful... From the ages of fourteen to twenty-two, I was out of control, depressed, attention-seeking and very unhappy. I made a couple of fake suicide attempts... the pattern of instability I've repeated all my life, moving from one relationship, job, school and house to another." (pp. 108-116) **Em, HtEm, HtV, I, Dis**, wants to foster parent

48) Woman (19) Brighton, England, heterosexual, single mother: Mother became lesbian and divorced her father at age 3. Her stepmother "abused" her. "My sexuality isn't influenced by my Mum's at all. My Mum encouraged us to have relationships, but she didn't mind whether it was with boys or girls.... My parents are liberals. They've been easy about me having sexual relationships with my boyfriends. As a result, here I am with a baby at the age of nineteen!... I wish that my parents had been stricter. I didn't get any messages from them that what I was reading or hearing was wrong.... There have always been gay people in my life. My Mum used to bring me and my brother to gay events.... I went on a lot of demonstrations [with her]. (pp. 117-123) **Hy, HtHy, HtV, HtI, E**

49) Man (34) from London, homosexual: "My mother always had lots of women friends.... I could hear them making love when I got up early or woke at night.... My mother started to have long-term live-in relationships with women when I was in my early teens. I was quite grown up. I knew what lesbianism was and I knew that's what she was. It wasn't traumatic for me at all.... When I was seventeen, my mother started living with S, who was the same age as me.... Each successive long-term relationship was a good thing, and the one with S was fantastic.... Her being lesbian didn't affect me, ...[but] I did want a more

conventional mother... My mother's relationships used to be very volatile with lots of screaming and arguing..." He reports that his younger brother and sister are heterosexual. (pp. 124-132) **Hy, I 50)** Woman (20) bisexual: Mother married a man, he turned out to be gay. She married again, and the new man was gay — the father of the respondent. "When I was about ten, Daddy came to look after us in the flat which Mummy went away on a retreat. Daddy brought a beautiful young man with him who was about twenty. At the time, my Dad was forty. There were in bed together when I came in.... [Mother became a lesbian. One of her lovers] used to stay the night and I got annoyed with her prancing around in the morning without her clothes on. I didn't actually want to see her body. It felt like she was taking liberties in my house.... [Another lover was a teacher for whom the respondent had a crush at age 14.] Once we saw the little Gay Pride badge she wore, we knew for sure, and my friends and I used to go and talk to her about our crushes on other girls. She became our dyke counsellor.... I became the school dyke... I wasn't interested in boys at all. I kept trying to proselytize little girls, saying it's all right to be gay. People got a bit annoyed with me over that... I've been going out with a boy... and I've slept with a couple of women since then. It's good fun... That my parents were gay made it a lot easier for me to come out and to see that there could be a physical dimension to my friendships with girls.... I have experimented sexually, and my parents have created a supportive environment for that.... you could do what you want in my house. We were allowed to smoke pot in the house when no one else was.... I would like to have children... I don't believe in marriage." (pp. 124-140) **Hy, I, E, C,** anti-marriage, wants kids

51) Woman (24) student in Birmingham, England, bisexual: Lived in a commune with her mother since first year of life. Two of the other women were mother's lovers. "My Mum wears a lesbian necklace and I remember saying to her, 'You've got to hide your necklace when you come in to school.'... I was concerned that someone was going to see it... My Mum always respected the fact that I might not want my friends at school to know.... When I was a teenager, I would try to make sure that there weren't any lesbian leaflets or books lying around when my friends came to visit.... Apart from those two, none of her other lovers lived in our house. I got on with most of Mum's lovers.... Until recently I was in a relationship with a bloke... so I considered myself heterosexual. I just became involved with a woman called Sam.... I still maintain that my mother being a lesbian has not actively encouraged me to be a lesbian myself. It has

simply meant that I feel comfortable being sexually involved with a woman.” (pp. 133-140) **Sc, I**

52) Man (66) heterosexual, married father of six: Mother divorced his father when he was aged 6 and “began having affairs with both men and women... started to prefer women. She developed a powerful relationship with a woman gynaecologist, who got cancer and died soon after.... [At his age 8 mother lived with N, an art teacher.] My mother died quite young, at the age of sixty... my mother’s father... was so disgusted by the fact that she’d joined the Communist Party... that he cut her out of his will.... When I was eight... sent to a boarding school so my mother could sort out her emotional life [he stayed there and then was sent to the U.S.; returned home at age 14. He was then sent to a boarding school until age 18. He only saw his mother and N at holidays.]... My mother was a manic depressive, and I think that’s one reason N went off and had an affair with another woman... they slept in the same bed, but there was never anything that would remotely suggest a sexual relationship... When my parents separated, my father had said he’d see a lot of us, and he did.” (pp. 157-163) Labour peer in House of Lords, highly supportive of lesbian and gay parenting as a legislator

The Largest Comparative Study of Homosexuals’ v Heterosexuals’ Children, Australia

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Children in Three Contexts: Family, education and social development

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between family environment and behaviour of primary school children living in three family contexts. It uses data from studies including children of married heterosexual couples, cohabiting heterosexual couples and homosexual couples, and examines the extent to which these children differ with regard to scholastic achievement and aspects of social development. It shows that in the majority of cases, the most successful are children of married couples, followed by children of cohabiting couples and finally by children of homosexual couples.

Introduction

The significance of the family for the educational success and social development of children has already been documented. (Connell, et al. 1982; Brown, 1990) Writers from diverse backgrounds have produced evidence which supports the notion that family resources in general and structural conditions and parental attributes in particular are very significant for shaping the future of the child. In spite of this, very little is known about the effects the nature of the family has on the development of the child; we know very little, for instance, about whether families of heterosexual married couples, heterosexual cohabiting couples and homosexual cohabiting couples offer significantly different environments for their young children. Have children of married heterosexual parents better chances for a better social and educational development than children of heterosexual cohabiting parents or homosexual parents? Does the nature of the relationship of the parents make a difference? Are children of cohabiting heterosexual and homosexual parents "children of a lesser God"?

In this paper an attempt will be made to seek some answers to these questions. Using findings from studies conducted by the author relating to educational achievement and social development of children living in these three contexts (marriage,

heterosexual cohabitation, and homosexual cohabitation) the relationship between the nature of parental relationship and the educational and social development of young children will be explored.

Method

This paper presents findings which were collected through a sample of 174 primary-school children living in three different types of families. More specifically this sample included 58 children of heterosexual cohabiting couples, 58 children of heterosexual married couples and 58 children of homosexual (47 lesbian couples and 11 gay) couples, matched according to age, gender, year of study, and parental characteristics (education, occupation and employment status). All children were of primary-school age, and were living with at least one of their biological parents at the time of the study.

The sample of the parents was chosen from the context of previous studies. The homosexual couples were taken from the homosexual project which is currently in progress, and were chosen by means of snowball sampling procedures. All couples came from metropolitan and country areas of NSW and Victoria, and constitute a part of a larger project on homosexual couples which is currently under way. Only couples with children of a primary-school age were considered in this study.

These couples were matched according to socially significant criteria (eg. age, number of children, education, occupation, and socio-economic status) to married and cohabiting (heterosexual) couples taken from a longitudinal cohabitation study conducted by the author over the last 20 years (Sarantakos, 1984, 1992); this study included 330 married and 330 cohabiting heterosexual couples and over 900 children.

The selection of the children for this study began with the children of homosexual couples. As stated above, all children of the cohabiting homosexual couples which are currently included in the homosexual cohabitation project were included in the study. These children were born in a previous relationship (marriage, cohabitation or unmarried motherhood) and were subsequently brought into the homosexual relationship. These children were subsequently matched to children living in families of married and cohabiting heterosexual couples of same or similar attributes (education, occupation, employment status etc.) to those of the homosexual parents.

One child of primary school age from each unit was selected to match the children of homosexual couples. This process resulted in 174 children, who constituted the sample of this study.

The study was interested in exploring a large number of issues, attitudes, conditions, etc. regarding parents, children, and schools. Issues related to parents and schools will be discussed in another place. In this paper the following areas will be considered: (a) the level of academic performance of these children at school, by considering their achievement in a number of representative subjects (eg. language, mathematics, social studies and sport); (b) their social behaviour at school, attitudes to school and learning, and educational aspirations; (c) some fundamental personality issues, such as sex identity, autonomy, and power; and (d) school-related family issues such as parental support, participation in household tasks, methods of control and punishment, and parent-school relationships.

Information for this study was collected primarily from teachers and only secondarily from parents and children. This information was collected by means of semi-structured questionnaires, and was enriched through telephone interviews. Information already available through previous studies (cohabitation project, homosexual cohabitation project) was also considered. Measures of achievement included a child's aptitude in various areas and were computed by the teachers, according to a child's performance in class and in out-of-class interests and activities, and by means of criteria which will be discussed later in this chapter. Analysis of variance allowed us to test the significance of the differences identified in the various contexts.

It must be noted that although precautions have been taken to control for bias, objectivity and distortions, certain aspects of the nature of the study deserve special attention. In the first place the sample is rather small: a larger and more representative sample might bring to light more accurate and more detailed data on children living in diverse family environments. In a similar vein, the measures chosen to evaluate the status of children are limited; considering more diverse measures of children's performance may enhance the overall image of children. Finally, using teachers as informers may entail an inherent bias which could distort the real picture of children. For these reasons, the findings of this study reported below should be interpreted in the context of these parameters.

Findings: Group differences

a. Language

The first issue that was considered in the context of this study was related to the level of performance of all children in the area of language. The main question was about whether children living in certain family environments, performed differently than children living in other environments. In order to establish the linguistic abilities of these children a series of tests were employed, administered by the teachers; in most cases they were part of the normal school assessment but some additional tests were also initiated just for this study. These tests contained a number of elements, such as reading, writing, comprehension, verbal skills, vocabulary, and composition. An overall score was computed by the teacher and assigned to each student of the three family groups on the basis of his/her performance in each of these areas ranging from 1 (very low performance), through 5 (moderate performance) to 9 (very high performance).

The findings arrived at through this process of evaluation can be summarised as follows:

1. the achievement of the children of the various family groups varied with family type;
2. the children of the married couples achieved the highest scores and the children of the homosexual couples the lowest: the average achievement score of the children of homosexual, cohabiting and married parents was 5.5, 6.8 and 7.7 respectively; the respective standard deviations were 0.9319, 0.6097, and 0.6606 ($F=128.66$, significant at 0.000 level).
3. the average score of the children of homosexual couples in all items of assessment was lower than the average of the children of the other two groups, and it was more pronounced in the areas of verbal skills, vocabulary and composition.

b. Mathematics

The achievement of the children in arithmetic was concentrated in three major areas, namely, basic mathematical skills, knowledge of the basic operations and application of arithmetic in solving problems. The performance of the children in the three family groups shows the same trend that was identified in the context of language: here children of homosexual partners showed an overall performance of 5.5, as against 7.0 and 7.9 for the children of cohabiting and married couples respectively; the respective standard deviations were 0.9753, 0.5484 and 0.5414. ($F=167.48$, significant at the 0.000 level) While the achievement of the children of homosexual couples in the area of problem solving was satisfactory (6.9), their score in basic mathematical skills was 5.6 (which is below the average score of all students: 7.1); and their ability in doing operations was even worse: their score was 4.9, while the average score of all students was 6.5.

c. Social Studies

In the area of social studies, the performance of the children in our study is quite different from that demonstrated in the areas of language and arithmetic. Here, children of homosexual couples tend to perform slightly better than the children of the other two groups. The teachers reported that their interest in social issues and their involvement in projects related to social studies were very strong, their knowledge and comprehension of relevant issues above average, and the quality of their work relatively high. The differences between these three groups is shown in their average scores, ie 7.6, 7.3 and 7.0 for the children of homosexual couples, married couples and cohabiting couples respectively; the respective standard deviations were 1.018, 0.827 and 1.188. ($F=5.07$, significant at the 0.008 level). As the figures show, the differences between the scores of the three groups of children are not as strong as in previous measures.

d. Sport

The interest and involvement in sport activities of the children of the three groups was diverse, with the children of heterosexual cohabiting couples following closely the children of married couples and with children of homosexual couples far behind.

More specifically, the average scores of married, heterosexual cohabiting and homosexual couples were 8.9 and 8.3 and 5.9 respectively; the respective standard deviations were 0.6745, 0.9965, 0.9074. ($F=175.43$, significant at 0.000 level).

The performance of the children of homosexual couples in sport activities has caused some concern to the teachers. The reason for this concern was that firstly children of homosexual couples did not express an interest in group sport to the degree other children did; secondly, because of their "rather passive" orientation to sport; and thirdly because of the type of sport interests they chose to pursue - when they did so.

Commenting on the low performance of these children in sport the teachers added that many children avoided involvement in group activities of any kind, including group work in class, project work in teams, and preferred to work alone; and were considered by their teachers to be "introverts" and "loners". Experiences in their personal and family life were thought to have motivated them to avoid having to work with and rely on others, and to mistrust other children, and (with regard to children of lesbians) particularly males.

e. Class work, sociability and popularity

The class behaviour of children of all three groups was similar. Overall, most children were reported to listen attentively, to attend closely to classroom activities, to complete assigned homework on time, to obey school rules, to participate in classroom discussions, to volunteer for special tasks, to show interest in subjects taught, and sensitivity to the needs and problems of others, and to enjoy helping others in class, while the teacher was present. In this sense, and without considering at this stage the degree to which these tasks were accomplished, these children were not different.

Nevertheless, there were more children of homosexual couples than from the other two groups who were reported to be timid, reserved, unwilling to work in a team, unwilling to talk about family life, and holidays and in general about out-of-school activities, feeling uncomfortable when having to work with students of a sex other than the parent they lived with, and to be characterised as loners and as introvert. To a certain extent these feelings were reciprocated by a number of the students in class,

who preferred not to work with them, to sit next to them, or work together on a project.

A similar attitude was expressed by these children in their out-of-class activities. In most cases children of homosexual couples ended up being by themselves, skipping rope or drawing, while the others were involved in team sports. In extreme cases, they have been ridiculed by the other children for some personal habits or beliefs, or for the sexual preferences of their parents. In certain cases, these children were called 'sissies', or 'lesbians'/'gays', or asked to tell 'what their parents do at home', where they slept, and so forth. Such incidents were one of the reasons for these children to move to another school, to refuse to go to that school, or even for the parents to move away from that neighbourhood or town.

The averages of sociability scores for the three groups of children, as reported by the teachers, were 7.5 for the children of married couples, 6.5 for the children of cohabiting couples and 5.0 for the children of homosexual couples; the respective standard deviations were 0.9319, 0.991 and 1.0121. ($F=94.29$, significant at the 0.000 level)

When two or three children of homosexual parents were attending the same school, and if they happened to know about their family circumstances - and in most cases they did - they tended to group together and to spend their time inside and outside the class together. Such incidents were reported to 'make these kids happier', but also to generate negative reactions on the part of the other school children and to motivate them to take more drastic and more aggressive attitudes towards the children of homosexual families. Parents and teachers alike reported that comments such as "the pervs are coming", "don't mix with the sissies", or "sisterhood is filthy", made by some pupils were not uncommon.

Another point raised by many teachers is that children of homosexual parents in comparison to children of the other two family groups, tend to be more overly polite and formal, careful in their behaviour and actions, generally distant, and to show stronger feelings of respect to authority, to teachers, secretaries and to parents of fellow students.

f. School and learning

The general attitude of most children to school and to learning was positive. Overall, this attitude was found to depend on the experiences children have at school, with the students and the teachers. On the whole, most children were found to try hard to please the school in general and the teachers in particular, and to avoid conflicts and disappointments, but children of cohabiting couples (especially homosexuals) demonstrated a stronger attitude to learning than other children. These children seem to have a high tolerance level of irritating behaviour and to act towards the others - students and teachers alike - in a formal, polite and distant manner.

In general, the average score of the children of the various groups, ranked between 1 and 9 by the teachers on the basis of the attitude to school and learning, was 7.5 for the children of married couples, 6.8 for the children of cohabiting couples and 6.5 for the children of homosexual couples; the respective standard deviations were 1.373, 1.179 and 1.183 ($F = 9.60$, significant at the 0.000). Obviously, the influence of the attitudes of teachers to life styles on the process of evaluation of students' performance cannot be underestimated. A separate study of these attitudes is currently under way.

g. Parent-school relationships

While many married couples (particularly mothers) maintained close relationships with schools and teachers, visited school functions, and saw the teacher frequently, cohabiting couples did so to a lesser extent. In such cases it was more likely that the biological parent of the child visited the school or attended school functions.

With regard to homosexual couples the relationships between parents and the school were relatively weaker and the visits fewer and almost exclusively between the school and the biological parent. In most cases the parent visited the school or the teacher either to discuss problems of the child, or at the teacher's request concerning the child's progress or behaviour at school. In only a few cases both 'parents' visited the school, or explained to the school principal or the teacher the nature of their relationship and ask for consideration. There were also only a few parents who attended parents and teachers meetings, or who offered volunteer work of any kind.

They rarely inquired about the progress of their child at school in person, and when they did so, it was the biological parent who undertook the inquiry, and in most cases by telephone.

Ranked in a continuum between 1 and 9, the average school participation score of the parents was 7.5 for the marrieds, 6.0 for the cohabitants and 5.0 for the homosexual couples ($F = 151.30$, significant at the 0.000 level)

h. Sex identity

This issue was approached especially with regard to children of homosexual couples who have quite often been thought to have difficulties in establishing a sex identity, to know what is expected of a male or a female, and to behave the way it is expected of a male or a female in the school and in the community in general. This was assumed to be particularly relevant for the very young pupils, but it was also common among older students.

More particularly, children were reported by teachers to have some identity problems, varying in extent and intensity from case to case. Teachers felt that a number of students of homosexual parents were confused about their identity and what was considered right and expected of them to do in certain situations. Girls of gay fathers were reported to demonstrate more 'boyish' attitudes and behaviour than girls of heterosexual parents; and most young boys of lesbian mothers to be more effeminate in their behaviour and mannerisms than boys of heterosexual parents: they were reported to be more interested in toys, sport activities and games usually chosen by girls than boys of heterosexual parents; they cried more often than boys of heterosexual parents when under the same type of stressful situations; and they sought the advice of female teachers more often than boys of heterosexual parents.

In general, children of homosexual couples were described by teachers as more expressive, more effeminate (irrespective of their gender) and 'more confused about their gender' than children of heterosexual couples.

With regard to the experiences young children of homosexuals gain in their everyday life, the findings show that these children usually find it difficult to be accepted fully

by their peers as boys or girls. In many cases these children have been harassed or ridiculed by their peers for having a homosexual parent, for "being queer" and even being held to be as homosexuals themselves.

In certain cases, heterosexual parents advised their children not to associate with children of homosexuals, or gave instructions to the teachers to keep their children as much as possible away from children of homosexual couples. Teachers also reported exceptional cases where a group of "concerned parents" demanded that three children of homosexuals be removed from their school. Others approached the homosexual parents with the same request.

Teachers have reported that children who went through such experiences have suffered significantly in social and emotional terms, but also in terms of scholastic achievement, and developed negative attitudes to school and learning. These children found it very difficult to adjust in school, to trust friends inside and outside the school, and to join peer groups in general. Children with such experiences were reported to show more interest in the circles of the acquaintances of their parents, than in the peers of the school or their neighbourhood.

i. Support with homework

The amount of school-related support offered to children by their parents varies among the three family types of our study. In general, all parents offered support to their children; however, children of married couples received support more frequently and in higher proportions.

More particularly, the study shows that the proportion of children receiving assistance with their school work at home increases significantly when we move from the homosexual couples, to cohabiting couples and to the married couples. The extent of support, ranked in a continuum ranging from 1 to 9, was expressed in relevant scores identified by the teachers on the basis of statements made by the children. The average scores for each of the three groups were 7 for the children of married couples, 6.5 for the children of cohabiting couples and 5.5 for the children of homosexual couples; the respective standard deviations were 0.9688, 0.8057, 1.1698. ($F = 34.34$, significant at the 0.000 level)

Personal judgement of the teachers suggests that, in many cases, while children of married couples obtain assistance in all subjects (reading, writing, arithmetic and project work), children of cohabiting and homosexual couples are less likely to obtain assistance in more than reading or arithmetic. Married couples are reported, further, to offer assistance more readily, and more often on their own accord than parents of the other two groups, who are more likely to assist their children at the child's request and/or at the teacher's advice. Homosexual parents are more likely to employ tutors to assist their children with their homework than parents of the other two groups, who are more likely to assist their children personally. While in families of cohabiting and married couples both parents are likely to be involved in helping their children with their homework, in most homosexual families only the natural parent of the child provides assistance.

Overall, married couples and to a certain extent cohabiting couples are reported by the teachers to offer more assistance and more personal support, and to be more interested in the school work of their children than homosexual couples. A similar trend was reported with regard to parents assisting their children with sport and other personal tasks. Given that parents of the three groups were matched according to education, the educational status of the parents is excluded as a possible cause of this trend.

j. Parental aspirations

Children were asked by their teachers about the educational aspirations of their parents, ie whether the parents expected them to continue beyond year ten, to undertake tertiary studies and to have definite plans, and whether they expected them to enter certain occupations. Parents' efforts to facilitate such aspirations were also considered. Teachers fused the information they obtained for each child and expressed it in a score ranging from 1 to 9, expressing the relevant strength of parental aspirations respectively.

The findings show a marked difference between the three groups. The average score was for married parents 8.1, for cohabiting parents 7.4 and for homosexual parents 6.2; the respective standard deviations were 0.6807, 0.7027, 1.0978. ($F = 75.38$,

significant at the 0.000 level). More significant was the difference between married parents and homosexual parents ($F = 53.13$, significant at the 0.000 level) and cohabiting parents and homosexual parents ($F = 28.0$, significant at the 0.000 level).

Overall, most of the children had a firm idea about what they intended to do in the future. However, the proportion of children of homosexual couples who reported that they were expected to continue their studies beyond year 10, and who would undertake university studies, and particularly engineering, law or medicine was significantly smaller than the proportion of the children of the other two family groups. There were also more female children of homosexuals who expressed a preference for traditional female jobs than girls of the other two family groups. Finally, there was an obvious trend among the children of cohabiting homosexual and heterosexual couples to get a job as soon as possible, to earn money, and to establish a household of their own.

It was more likely for homosexual parents to have no firm expectations regarding the education of their child and to leave the decision to their children and their future interest and progress. Unlike the parents of the other two parent groups, although they valued higher quality education, they still tended in lower proportions to expect their children to complete high school, to study at a university and to enter prestigious professions.

k. Personal autonomy

Of interest is also the degree of autonomy the child has in his/her own home. The question is about the extent to which children are involved in buying new clothes, spending free time, going out with friends, choosing friends and leisure time activities, watching TV, having to go to bed, spending holidays, and about inviting friends home. On the basis of this information children were ranked in a continuum of autonomy ranging from 1 (lowest degree of autonomy) to 9 (highest degree of autonomy).

The findings show that the average autonomy score for the children of married couples, heterosexual cohabiting and homosexual cohabiting couples was 5.9, 7.2 and 8.3 respectively; the respective standard deviations were 1.147, 0.9562, 0.7897. ($F =$

87.89, significant at the 0.000 level) The highest difference was between children of married couples showing the lowest level of autonomy and children of homosexual couples showing the highest (F = 157.80, significant at the 0.000 level).

Overall, the study shows that children of homosexual couples enjoy the highest degree of autonomy and power to decide on personal issues, followed by the children of cohabiting couples and last the children of married couples. In many cases, the child's life revolved around his/her own space which overlapped with that of the parents to a much lesser extent than that of other children. More children of homosexual couples had their "own living room" which usually was their bedroom equipped with their own TV set, radio and, sometimes, stereo system and sitting area, giving them a relatively high degree of freedom and autonomy at home.

Further, children of heterosexual cohabitants report less autonomy and power at home than children of homosexuals but more than children of marrieds, who seem to report lower scores in this context. Marrieds are reported to control and direct their children more than the couples of the other two groups.

1. Household tasks

A similar trend was identified in the context of the contribution children made to household tasks. The issue considered here was the extent to which children were making their bed, doing the shopping, preparing their lunch, ironing clothes, doing the dishes, sweeping the floor, washing clothes, cleaning the table, tidying their room, and tidying the house, ie whether they were participating in these tasks every day, often, sometimes or never. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Household participation of children, by life style.

Degree of participation	Married couples		Cohabiting couples		Homosexual couples		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

Every day	6	11	12	21	19	32	37	21
Often	8	14	16	27	17	29	41	24
Sometimes	15	26	20	34	14	24	49	28
Never	29	49	10	18	8	15	47	27
Total	58	100	58	100	58	100	174	100

The responses show that the proportion of children of homosexual parents completing these tasks on a regular basis ('every day' or 'often') is significantly higher than the proportion of children of the other two family groups ($\chi^2 = 28.84$, $df=6$, $p<0.001$). The highest difference in household participation is between children of married and children of homosexual couples ($\chi^2=21.953$, $df=3$, $p<0.001$), and the lowest between children of heterosexual and homosexual cohabiting couples ($\chi^2=2.892$, $df=3$, ns) The degree of autonomy and independence coupled with responsibility for household tasks is significantly higher among these children than among children of heterosexual cohabiting and married couples.

m. Parenting styles: Control and punishment

The study explored the ways in which punishment is administered in the families in question, who administers it, and in what way. The first question asked by the teacher in this context was: If you do something wrong that makes your parents angry, who usually punishes you? Mostly father, father and mother, mostly mother, or none?

The answers to this question indicate that (1) in the majority of cases the natural parent controls the children in all three groups; (2) for minor problems the 'mother' or the person who spends most time in the home administers the punishment; (3) in step-relationships, the natural parent carries the responsibility for the misbehaviour of the child; (4) in a small number of cases both partners/spouses are reported to have control over the child, and share the responsibility for his/her actions.

In summary, there were no differences between the three groups with regard to controlling young children. What was characteristic for the same-sex couples was that when the relationship was based on the "butch-femme" model, (where one partner plays the role of the husband and the other the role of the wife), minor offences were settled by the "wife" and more serious problems by the "husband", irrespective of their sex, or of whether he/she was the natural parent of the child. Designation of the role also entailed the authority to control the child unconditionally.

The next question was: If you do something wrong what does your father/mother do to you? The following options were given, of which the respondents were asked to answer one for each parent: They tell me they hate me (9); hit me (8); yell at me (7); withdraw privileges (6); ignore me for some time (5); threaten me (4); tell me to be more careful (3); sit down and talk about it (2); do nothing (1). The numbers next to each response category indicate the scores allocated to each item.

Overall, parents throughout the study indicated that they did not punish their children more or less than their own parents punished them. Nevertheless, there were relatively more married and cohabiting couples reporting punishment levels administered to their children which were lower than those employed on them by their parents punishing them, than homosexual partners did. Finally, in spite of the diversity of responses, there were no statistically significant differences between the three groups regarding control and punishment of children.

Discussion

Overall, the findings show that there are differences between the children of the three family groups, and that these differences were significant in most areas of educational and social development. However, although differences between the three groups of children might be easy to accomplish, the justification of these differences is not. The paucity of research on heterosexual married and cohabiting couples and their children as well as on homosexual families makes an attempt to clarify this issue even more difficult. The only information available in this area is about families as social systems and about their effects on young children. We shall use this information as a basis for our approach to understand and justify the

differences identified among our subjects. The general trend in the literature on this point can be summarised as follows:

1. Socioeconomic status (SES): Australian and overseas studies have shown that SES, as expressed in the form of class, income, occupation and material wealth of the parents, has a significant impact on a child's educational and occupational achievement (Lareau, 1987:83; Stevenson and Baker, 1987; Lareau, 1989). Keeping in mind the concerns of some writers (Share et al. 1993; Winter, 1988), namely, that SES differences may reflect personal and social attributes of the parents such as parental education and school involvement, educational aspirations, language models, income and academic guidance, most relevant studies show that the higher the SES

- the higher the retention rates (Poole, 1983; Ashendon et al, 1987).
- the more access children have to private coaching; and this is reported to have a 'massive effect' on test scores (Egan and Bunting, 1991:90)
- the more likely it is for children to attend private schools (Graetz, 1990)
- the more likely it is for children to enter tertiary institutions. (Byrne and Byrne, 1990; Lee, 1989; Mortimore and Mortimore, 1986; ILEA, 1983)
- the higher the IQ; (Birch, 1980), eg the more opportunities children have to develop their potential or even to better prepare themselves for IQ tests and to do well in them.
- the more access they have to resources, and the less likely it is for them to live in poverty, a factor which has adverse effects on the educational success of children. (Edgar, 1986; Connell and White, 1989:111; Garmezy, 1992; Werner, 1989; Garner and Raudenbush, 1991:258).

Although the notion that SES has a diverse impact on the educational development of young children is valid, this explanation is of little value for our analysis since all family units were chosen to be of the same or similar status. Consequently, the differences identified in the three groups of children are unlikely to be caused by differences in the status of the SES of the parents.

2. Parental characteristics: More logical is the explanation that educational achievement of children may be associated with personal characteristics of the parents. This notion has been widely supported by relevant Australian and overseas research, which indicates that:

- the higher the *expectations* of the parents, the higher the motivation of the children and the higher the educational success. (Ainley et al. 1991);
- the higher the *education* of the parents, the more likely it is for children to succeed at school. (Dronkers, 1993) Positive *parental characteristics* help also reduce attrition rates (Ensminger and Slucavcick, 1992; Useem, 1992);
- authoritative *parenting styles* are more conducive to educational success than other styles, eg permissive or authoritarian (Steinberg et al. 1989; Dornbush et al. 1987; Grolnick and Ryan, 1989; de Jong, 1993; Rumberger et al., 1990; Rumberger, 1987);
- the higher the *motivation* of the parents, and the more they *support* and *encourage* children to do well at school, the more likely it is for these children to succeed at school. The example with ethnic families is relevant here (Partington and McCudden, 1992; Hartley, 1987; Cahill and Ewen, 1987; Bullivant, 1988; Clifton, et al. 1991).

This suggests that the differences among the three groups of children identified in our study may be caused by differences in the attributes of the parents. Of these attributes, parental expectations, parenting styles, motivation, support and encouragement are most important. Parental education is less significant since parents of the three groups were chosen to have same or similar education. It is therefore reasonable to expect that differences in educational achievement between the three groups of children may be associated with differences in personal attributes of the parents.

3. *Family environment*: The environment of the family and its relationship to educational progress and school performance has been explored very extensively by many writers (eg Bradley, et al., 1988). For instance, the importance of a stimulating environment and of gifted mentors such as parents and teachers has been stressed by a study of child prodigies and exceptional early achievers (eg Radford, 1990). Although both environmental and genetic factors are given due recognition, family environments seem to be assigned central position in the process of personal and educational development. Overall, it has been reported that the family environment

- entails materials and experiences which contribute immensely to the child's education in general and scholastic achievement in particular.

- offers the setting of growth and development and is 'the gatekeeper which controls the child's access to society and also the society's access to the child'; and it encourages social competence which is associated with scholastic achievement (Wentzel, 1991)
- regulates quality of life.
- offers the setting for social development and instils social control which promotes attentiveness at school (de Jong, 1993).
- maximises or minimises learning potential, depending on its quality. Reading activity at home, for instance, has been reported to have 'significant positive influences on students' reading achievement, as well as the mediating variables of attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom' (Rowe, 1991:30) and, finally, on educational development in general (Kirner, 1989; Hewison, 1988).

Applied in the area of our analysis, these findings indicate that the differences identified in the performance levels of children of the three groups of families of our study may be due to differences in family environments of married couples and cohabiting homosexual and heterosexual couples. Family environments of married couples may be more positive, supportive, rich, rewarding, secure and guiding than the family environments of cohabiting heterosexual and homosexual couples. Family environments may explain parts of the differences identified in our study among children of the three family contexts.

4. Family structure: Two-parent and one-parent families have often been reported to offer different educational opportunities to children. In the first place single parent families are often the product of divorce; and divorce experience is reported to affect the scholastic achievement of children (Zimiles and Lee, 1991; Amato and Keith, 1991) and particularly of boys (Bisnaire et al. 1990). Compared to children of intact and stepfamilies, children of single-parent families seem to demonstrate the lowest academic performance. This relates to overall performance but also to achievement in specific subjects, such as mathematics as well as to specific family conditions of the single-parent family (Mednick et al. 1990) Similar views have been held by other writers (Hetherington et al, 1983; Milne, et al. 1986; Thompson et al. 1988) although the justification of such differences vary (Mulkey et al. 1992:62). Children of divorce, finally, are thought to demonstrate in higher proportions low performance and misbehaviour at school, and to be suspended from school more often than other

children (Furstenberg et al. 1987; Peterson and Zill, 1986; Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein and Blakeslee, 1990; Sarantakos, 1995).

This factor is found to have the strongest impact on a child's behaviour. As shown elsewhere, (Sarantakos, 1995a), children who experienced parental divorce and have been through a change of family changes (eg cohabitation and step-family) are more likely to report problems, to have been involved in antisocial activities and delinquency and to be more likely to become recidivists than children who experienced no radical changes in their family history. In most cases it was not single parenthood alone that contributed to the problems but also marital breakdown of the parents, divorce, separation from the parents and siblings and finally step-parenthood. It is then reasonable to assume that parental divorce explains a part of the differences in educational development of the children of the three contexts.

This factor may be considered not directly relevant to our study. However, given that the majority of children of cohabiting homosexual and heterosexual couples have experienced parental divorce, and in many cases not long ago, divorce as a factor of education and social development in general is far from irrelevant. For a number of theorists, divorce experiences influence the development of young children for a long period of time (Sarantakos, 1995; Wallerstein and Blakeslee, 1990).

Conclusion

The study has shown some directions regarding the effects the nature of parental relationships may have on the development of children. Some major differences between children of married and unmarried heterosexual couples and of homosexual couples were found to be significant. Overall, the study has shown that children of married couples are more likely to do well at school, in academic and social terms than children of cohabiting heterosexual and homosexual couples.

However, these findings must be treated with caution. Before one jumps to conclusions encouraging homophobia and traditionalism other relevant factors must be considered. There are many other factors which can cause or contribute to the trends demonstrated above in addition to the life styles of the parents. These factors can be equally responsible for such trends in the educational development of young

children. Gender is one (Campbell and Greenberg, 1993; Jones, 1990; Leder and Sampson, 1989; Leder and Sampson, 1989); adequacy of linguistic models offered by the family is another (Mehan, 1992). Despite the similarity in education and socio-economic status, parenting styles and other competencies may vary. Apart from this, it is possible that the techniques of data collection may favour one life style more than another.

Overall, although the conclusions presented above are defensible, there are additional factors which must be considered when the differences in children's performance are generalised. In the first place it must be stressed that assessment of children's personal and educational characteristics were in most cases made by the teachers, who judged performance and state of mind of children on the basis of their personal qualities and cultural beliefs. The criteria of assessment are obviously expected to be fair and objective, however, they might have been biased - consciously and/or unconsciously - by their personal views and beliefs of the teachers. In this sense, the attributes of children described in this study might reflect *perceptions of attributes* rather than actual attributes or differences. Such perceptions might have favoured children of married couples more than children of other couples. (Teachers' attitudes to life styles and their implications for the quality reports on children's' performance is being considered separately and will be reported elsewhere).

In summary, family environments are definitely instrumental for the development of the attributes which encourage educational progress and social development among children. However, these environments are shown to vary significantly according to the life style of the parents, leading to adverse reactions among these children. Married couples seem to offer the best environment for a child's social and educational development. Despite this, more research is required in this area.

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Analysis of all custody cases that reached appeal in U.S. and Britain involving a homosexual parent up to mid-1998.

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Homosexual Parents In Custody Disputes: A Thousand Child-Years Exposure

Paul Cameron, Ph.D. and David Harris, Ph.D.

It is to be hoped that the lives of vulnerable children – those requiring fostering or adoption – would not to be sacrificed to political movements. Placement decisions ought to be arrived at through scholarly evaluation of all the available evidence. Unfortunately, these children have become pawns on the gay rights battleground.

Propaganda has demonstrated ability to change the political landscape. Propaganda “cherry picks” its information and makes categorical statements (e.g., *every, no*). In contrast, scholarly discourse ideally reviews all of the evidence and tempers its conclusions given the limitations of the evidence.

In 1995, the briefs about Amendment 2 to the U.S. Supreme Court by the American Psychiatric and Psychological Associations, and National Educational Association addressed homosexual parenting in a decidedly propagandistic manner (e.g., “research has failed to find any evidence that children of gay or lesbian parents” are “different in their ...sexual orientation”; quoted by Cameron, Cameron, & Landess, 1996). Many reviews of homosexual parenting are similarly propagandistic. Among these are:

Gold, Perrin, Futterman, and Friedman (1994) reviewed the available literature and asserted that “children of gay or lesbian parents are less likely to be victims of parental sexual or physical abuse” (p. 354), but brushed this putative difference aside to conclude there “are no data to suggest that children who have gay or lesbian parents are different in any aspects of psychological, social, and sexual development from children in heterosexual families” (p. 357). Stacey & Biblarz (2001) selected “21 psychological studies ... published between 1981 and 1998 that we considered best equipped to address sociological questions about how parental sexual orientation matters to children” (p. 167), concluding that “every relevant study to date shows that parental sexual orientation *per se* has no measurable effect on the quality of parent-child relationships or on children’s mental health or social adjustment” (p. 176). Perrin’s 2002 review, which had a substantial role in the American Academy of Pediatrics declaration in favor of gay adoptions in 2002, said “No data have pointed to any risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with 1 or more gay parents.”

Categoricals (e.g., “no data,” “any aspects,” “every relevant study,” “any risk”) and their decision not to review studies that might pose problems for categoricals are hallmarks of propaganda. These three reviews also did not cite the 1993 review by Belcastro, Gramlich, Nicholson, Price, & Wilson in which the serious problems with the studies upon which the three reviews relied were noted. Further, each of the three reviews considered ‘no statistically significant difference’ between small groups of volunteer children with and without homosexual parents as proving (e.g., “any risk,” “no data”) that there was no difference between the two *classes* of children [a Type II error]. Propaganda is willing to misuse logic and statistics.

The professional literature these associations and reviewers did not address included:

- 1) clinical reports of the difficulties homosexuals’ children experienced,
- 2) children’s testimonies about the difficulty of having homosexual parents, and

3) four comparative studies with a total of 174 children with homosexual parents -- almost as many children as the children of lesbians in the comparative studies reviewed by Stacy & Biblarz (2001).

Specifically:

Javaid (1993) reported a fairly comprehensive study which involved comparisons of 26 older children of 11 lesbian v. 28 children of 15 divorced mothers. The 4 children who reported asexuality had lesbian mothers and more lesbians' daughters were apt to reject or be uncertain about getting married and having children. Besides possible gender-inappropriate attitudes, the findings suggest other possible inappropriate socialization of the lesbians' children. The Javaid study ought to have been included in the amicus briefs of the professional associations and all three reviews.

Cameron & Cameron (1996) reported on 17 adults (out of a random sample of 5,182) with homosexual parents. The 17 were disproportionately apt to report sexual relations with their parents, more apt to report a less than exclusively heterosexual orientation, more frequently reported gender dissatisfaction, and were more apt to report that their first sexual experience was homosexual. This study should have been included in Stacy & Biblarz (2001) and Perrin (2002).

Sarantakos (1996) matched couples raising elementary school children: 58 elementary school children being raised by coupled homosexual parents were closely matched (by age, sex, grade in school, social class) with 58 children of cohabiting heterosexual parents, and 58 children being raised by married heterosexual parents. The married's children scored best at math and language skills, somewhat lower in social studies, experienced the highest levels of parental involvement at school and at home, and had parents with the highest expectations for them. The homosexuals' children scored somewhat higher in social studies, lowest in math and language, were least popular, experienced the lowest levels of parental involvement both at school and at home, had parents with the lowest expectations for the children and least frequently expressed higher educational and career aspirations for them. As the largest matched sample of volunteers, the Sarantakos study should have been included in Stacy & Biblarz (2001) and Perrin (2002).

Cameron & Cameron (1998) compared 73 homosexuals' v. 105 heterosexuals' children within 40 custody disputes in 21 different states. Of the 66 problems or harms listed and published by a different panel of judges in each dispute -- who summarized the intensive investigations of the living situations and

psychological reactions of children being contested by homosexuals and heterosexuals -- 64 (97%) were attributed, in the appeals record, to the homosexual. This study should have been included in Stacy & Biblarz (2001) and Perrin (2002).

That the claims of professional organizations and these three widely cited reviews have the hallmarks of propaganda rather than scholarly discourse is of concern. Their claims have been used as justification for the placement of vulnerable children with homosexuals. Yet a scholarly consideration of the evidence would almost certainly have indicated otherwise. Indeed, the totality of the evidence from all the comparative studies, encompassing selected aspects of functioning of no more than 600 children with homosexual parents, with the exception of the two Cameron & Cameron studies regarding 90 such children, was generated from volunteers. Not only is evidence gotten from samples of volunteers questionable as to its representativeness of the classes involved, it is only one line of evidence.

At least 5 other lines of evidence are relevant to judging the parenting of homosexuals: 'common sense' or stereotypes about homosexuals' children; clinical reports of childhood difficulty with homosexual parents; testimonies by children with homosexual parents; news stories about events regarding homosexuals' children; courtroom experience with homosexual parents; and child protective agencies experience with homosexual foster and adoptive parents.

Stereotypes: A great deal of information, including historical and personal experience, is assembled to create cultural stereotypes. Scholars differ in how they treat stereotypes. Some ignore or denigrate them, others give them weight. Although the Cameron (1999) review of the literature found 'common sense' beliefs about homosexual parents -- such as their children being more apt to become homosexual and experience sexual problems -- fairly robust, whether reviews ought to include it is subject to debate.

Clinical Reports: At least 6 clinical studies totaling 155 children of homosexuals have been published. Among these are Lewis (1980), who published sketches of interviews with 10 sons and 11 daughters of 8 lesbians, Javaid (1983), who noted the sexual problems of an adolescent daughter of a lesbian, and Pennington (1987), who reported her clinical impressions and quoted material from 22 daughters and 10 sons of lesbians. With few exceptions, these children reported problems with having a homosexual parent, making review statements such as "no data," "any aspects," and "any risk" intellectually irresponsible.

Testimonies of Children With Homosexual Parents: Rafkin (1990) published 38 narratives from

children who had lesbian mothers. Cameron & Cameron (2002) included these in their assembly and scoring of the verbatim testimonies of 57 children with homosexual parents. Most of these testimonies mentioned social and psychological problems associated with having homosexual parents, again bringing in question review statements such as “no data,” “any aspects,” “every relevant study,” “any risk.”

Newspaper Stories: Cameron (2003a) reported that 15 of 25 foster parent perpetrators of sexual abuse against their charges engaged in homosexuality. Since this information was not published prior to the above reviews, they cannot be faulted for failure to include it.

Child Protective Agencies: In 6 years, the Illinois protective agency reported that 92 (34%) of the 270 cases of substantiated sexual abuse by foster or adoptive parents involved homosexuality (Cameron, 2003b). Since this information was not published prior to the above reviews, they cannot be faulted for failure to include it.

Courtroom experience with homosexual parents: The Appeals literature is a highly intrusive set of information regarding homosexual custody of children. The highest societal standards of evidence and proof are employed in the decisions. As the findings do not depend upon volunteers (as in the bulk of comparative or interview studies) and are not compromised in unknown ways by refusals (as always happen in random surveys), in veridical empirical content the Appeals literature stands head and shoulders above social science surveys or interviews of any kind. Its chief weakness lies in not knowing how representative of homosexual parents in general it might be. Homosexual parents were disproportionately implicated in the harms to children documented in 40 of these records (Cameron & Cameron, 1998; Duncan, 1998). That Stacy & Biblarz (2001) and Perrin (2002) did not include this evaluation of Appeal cases in their literature reviews, or even their own interpretations of the same database, is yet another flaw.

We report an extension and elaboration upon courtroom experience with homosexual parents. It bears upon the propagandistic nature of many of the claims regarding placement of children with homosexuals.

Rationale

Intensive examinations and objective evaluations of the effects of parents on children are performed in custody cases. In appeals from these decisions, the decision reached at the trial level along with additional information supplied by the lawyers for each side in consultation with their clients, is given an extensive examination by a panel of judges before their decision is reached. Appeals courts assume that children will be least harmed

in the care of the contestant with the ‘better’ character and associates, and much of the courts’ efforts are aimed at determining which contestant is the better for the child.

Such appeal cases constitute a uniquely objective database from which to judge the effects of various kinds of parents upon children (Cameron & Cameron, 1998; Duncan, 1999; Cameron & Cameron, 1999). A British jurist who participated in many of these appeal decisions, Lord Wilberforce, noted that “Character and personality certainly cannot be judged as well from a transcript of evidence, even where the evidence seems not to be contested, as by seeing and hearing those involved. The fact that there may not be explicit references to these matters in the judgment (and judges tend to be reticent so as to avoid giving unnecessary pain) does not mean that they are not an important and unexpressed foundation for his views” [1977 AC 602 at page 626]. Thus, when making evaluations from the published appeals decision, everything recorded about the character of the disputants is reasonably considered important.

As noted above, 40 custody appeals cases prior to 1996 in which at least one parent openly engaged in homosexuality were examined for character of participants and harms to children and compared with 56 nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual custody appeal cases (Cameron & Cameron, 1998). In the 40 cases, parents who engaged in homosexuality as compared to the currently nonhomosexual parents were more apt to be rated as having poor character and to be reported in the record as having engaged in criminality and/or to have lied in court. Of the 66 recorded harms to children in these cases, homosexual parents (that is, parents who engaged in homosexuality) accounted for 64 (97%). We report an extension of the previous investigation with 38 generally more recent cases involving at least one homosexual parent. Combined, the 78 records summarize some of the effects of over a thousand child-years of exposure to parental homosexuality. In addition, another 22 comparison cases were examined for lying and/or criminality of parents, whether the children were recorded as fundamentally harmed, and the various harms that the children were recorded as having experienced.

Method

We conducted a nationwide computer search on *Westlaw* under “sexual orientation” and “parent” updated as of April 8, 1998 -- thus bringing cases after 1995 and from states other than our original (largely

Midwestern) states under analysis. In addition, we included appeals cases cited in reviews of the appeals literature [Hutchens & Kirkpatrick (1985); Rivera (1991); Wardle (1997)], or referred to in the additional cases we uncovered. Our search generated 54 additional cases, 38 of which were extensive enough to be evaluated (that is, they were at least 3 pages long and included some detail about character of contestants and/or harm to children).

We applied the same criteria as were applied to the original 40 cases involving 39 different disputes between currently homosexual parents and currently nonhomosexuals to each of the 38 new cases. The harms of “neglect” and “emotional upset” of the children involved in the original 40 cases had not been coded, so they were re-coded for these harms. Thus the 78 appeals write-ups involving 77 disputes (one dispute generated two appeals) were examined for whether (1) there was evidence of hypersexualization/eroticization of the child by the homosexual parent (that is, the child was apparently made sexually precocious either behaviorally or in knowledge by the parental situation). If so, it was indicated with an **Hy** (for hypersexualization). If the nonhomosexual parent was the apparent source of the hypersexualization, it was recorded as **HTHy**. If the child was under the age of 3 and therefore too young to understand, this categorization was not employed unless the record indicated that sexual molestation occurred. (2) If the child was subjected to overt pressure or influence to accept homosexuality or consider homosexuality as a personal option for himself, it was indicated with a **P** (pressured or evangelized). If the child was under the age of 5, this categorization was not employed. (3) If the child was physically abused or exposed to physical abuse by the homosexual parent or associates it was indicated with a **V**; a similar abuse by the heterosexual parent and/or associates with **HTV**. (4) If the child was sexually abused by the homosexual parent and/or his associates it was indicated with an **S**; heterosexual parents and/or associates cited for sexual abuse were recorded **HTS**. (5) If the child was teased because of his homosexual parent the case was given a **T**. (6) If the child evidenced sexual confusion, it was denoted with a **C**. (7) A tendency for the homosexual parent or his associates to alienate the child from the currently heterosexual parent was recorded with an **A**. If the heterosexual parent or associates tended to alienate the child from the homosexual parent we recorded **HTA**. (8) Any false charge of child molestation against a parent was scored with an **F** or an **HTF**, respectively. (9) Mental instability, or instability of residence or employment

by a parent (which would disturb the children's stability) is indicated with an **I** or **HTI**. (10) Neglect of children is indicated with an **N** or **HTN**. (11) If the children were recorded as having displayed emotional disturbance that was indicated with an **Em** or **HTEm**. Weak evidence of any of the above is indicated with a small case letter, e.g., "e" for a liberal attitude toward the child adopting homosexuality, but not explicit pressures on the child to do so; "s" if there was a seductive atmosphere but no evidence of actual seduction/molestation. If a parent was recorded as having lied, it was indicated with an **L** or **HTL**. Harms to children was indexed two ways. If the children were explicitly recorded in the record as harmed that was recorded with a **harmed**, if they were explicitly recorded as not harmed that was scored **NH**, and if the well-being of the children was not commented upon or too little commented on to be sure how the court judged the children's state, that was coded with a question mark (?). We also coded the specific harms to which the children were exposed as noted above (e.g., hypersexualization, neglect, seduction). The child(ren) could be recorded as exposed to harms and recorded as **NH** or **question mark** in the record. However, no child was recorded as **harmed** without exposure to at least one harm also being noted. Criminality by a parent or his associates is indicated if recorded.

A random procedure was utilized to pick generally later volumes of appeals cases in the various jurisdictions from which the 38 new appeals cases came. Twenty-two additional currently nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual comparison cases that were extensively-enough reported and not primarily monetary in nature were acquired from those listed in each region's volume's index (e.g., **A.2d, SW2d, Cal. Rptr.**) under "divorce, custody." These 22 cases were examined for whether the court recorded the children as fundamentally **harmed**, **NH** (not harmed), or unknown (?) as well as the various harms noted above.

Results

The 38 generally more recent cases involving a homosexual parent were somewhat shorter and "thinner" in description of the circumstances of the children and character of the parents and contained more discussions of legal theory than the 40 original cases. This may be related to the apparent fact that many courts are less frequently applying the "probable future harms" standard to cases of this kind. Instead they more frequently are applying a nexus standard that requires the children to have exhibited

demonstrable harm by emotional distress or disturbances in their social, school, or family relations. Additionally, some courts have discarded morality as a factor in their judgments [e.g., **904 P.2d 66**], so that “living together in a sexual union without marriage with the full knowledge of the children” is not noteworthy. In **904 P.2d 66** the trial record reveals two pre-teenage girls exposed to gay activism as well as two lesbians living together in the same bedroom. Heretofore these factors would have almost certainly been recorded in the appeal decision and resulted in a code of **Hy** and very possibly **P**. However, the appeals record did not contain these facts, and since our scoring was record-driven, this case is scored **NH** (no harm). Child(ren) were less frequently recorded as harmed by the homosexual parent in the 38 new cases (e.g., 13 [34%] v. 18 [45%] in the original 40). Likewise, fewer of the 38 new cases recorded the child(ren) as being exposed to at least one harm from the homosexual parent (e.g., 23 [61%] v. 32 [80%])

In Table 1, the original set of 40 cases are listed: those coded for the two additional harms of neglect and emotional upset, a re-appeal, and the 14 cases that were not included in our totals because they were too ambiguous, too short, or the putative homosexual denied homosexual activity. In Table 2, the 38 new cases were coded for whether the children were recorded as harmed (**H**), not harmed (**NH**), or unknown (**?**), specific harms to children and recorded lying or criminality of parents and their associates are noted. In these 38 cases, 44 harms to children were recorded of which 42 (95%) were attributed in the appeals record to the homosexual parent. The homosexual parent or associates were recorded as responsible for 6 of 8 instances of criminality and three recorded lies. The findings from the additional 22 coded comparison cases are summarized in Table 3. In these 22 cases, the children were recorded as harmed in 3 (14%) and as exposed to 6 harms in 5 cases. In these cases, nonhomosexual mothers were recorded as responsible for an instance of probable lying and an instance of criminality.

The combined data-base of scorable US appeals cases involving separate disputants thus consists of 78 cases in which 79 different parents who engaged in homosexuality were involved in 77 different disputes (two cases involved the same dispute, in two disputes two currently lesbian mothers were involved) and 154 disputes (the 77 disputes minus the one between lesbians and the local authority, plus the 56 control disputes plus the 22 comparison disputes) in which different nonhomosexuals were involved. Since the median age of the 142 children involved in the 77 disputes involving homosexuals was about 9

yr. (the age of the children cannot be determined from the record about a third of the time), more than a thousand child-years of experience with a homosexual parent was placed under legal scrutiny and put to the extensive legal test of an appeals decision. The 272 children with one or both nonhomosexual parents (i.e., the 135 children who were contested by a nonhomosexual parent plus the 137 children from the comparison disputes) also had a median age of about 9 yr., they generated over two thousand child-years of experience with nonhomosexual parents for comparison.

insert Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 about here

Sexual Preference, Character Of Parents, Harm Of Children, and Exposure of Children to Harms

In 12 (8%) of 154 disputes nonhomosexuals and/or their associates were recorded as having lied and/or having engaged in criminality (in 7 [5%] lying, in 6 [4%] as having engaged in criminality). In 19 (25%) of 77 disputes homosexuals or their associates were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality. The relationship between the recorded harm of children or exposure of children to harms was correlated and is summarized in Table 4. The nonhomosexual was also blamed for one of the instances where the children who were recorded as harmed in the 76 homosexual v. nonhomosexual disputes (one dispute of the 77 was with a child service agency), and of the 56 comparison cases, since in only 6 disputes were the children exposed to harms, in only 6 could the children have been recorded as harmed. In the 22 nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual cases, the children were recorded as harmed in 3. So for the set of 154 disputes in which nonhomosexuals were involved, in no more than 10 (6%) could the children have been recorded as harmed. The child(ren) were recorded as harmed in 31 (40%) of the 77 disputes involving homosexuals. Children were exposed to harms in 15 (19%) of the 154 disputes involving nonhomosexuals, and exposed to harms in 54 (70%) of the 77 disputes involving homosexuals. In the 31 disputes where parents were recorded as having lied or engaged in criminality, the children were harmed in 12 (39%) and recorded as having been exposed to harms in 22 (71%). It will be noted that the frequency of harming or causing harms to the children in these disputes ran, from least to most: nonhomosexuals who were not recorded as having lied or engaged in criminality; nonhomosexuals who were recorded as having lied or

engaged in criminality; homosexuals who were not recorded as having lied or engaged in criminality; and homosexuals who were recorded as having lied or engaged in criminality.

Lesbian Mothers vs. Gay Fathers:

59 currently homosexual mothers (e.g., lesbians) were involved in 57 (74%) of the 77 disputes involving homosexuals (two lesbian mothers contended in two of the disputes). In 23 (40%) of the 57 disputes the children were recorded as **harmed** and in 12 (21%) as **not harmed**. In 43 (75%) of the 57 disputes involving lesbians the children were recorded as exposed to harms. Ten instances of criminality, 5 lies, and 3 false accusations by the lesbians or their associates in the 57 disputes were recorded. Lesbians or their associates were recorded as having engaged in criminality, and/or lying, and/or false witness in 14 (25%) of the 57 disputes. In the 57 disputes involving lesbians, 94 harms against the children were recorded, 92 (97%) of which were laid in the record to the fault of the lesbian or her associates. The harms associated with the lesbian mother and/or her associates were: **Hy**= 32; **I**= 17; **Em**= 11; **P**= 9; **N**=7; **A**=5; **V**=3; **S**= 4; **T**= 2; **C**=2. In these 57 disputes, 2 harms were associated with the 52 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates, **HTHy** and **HTa**. The 75 nonhomosexual fathers in the 78 control disputes generated 5 recorded harms to children (**HTEm**=2; **HTV**=2; **HTHy**). Five (4%) of the 127 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates in the 154 disputes involving nonhomosexuals were recorded as lying and/or having engaged in criminality. In the 57 cases involving lesbian mothers, 3 (6%) of the 52 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality while 2 (3%) of the 75 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates in the 78 nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual disputes were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality. None of the grandparents or extended family members who opposed lesbians in these cases were recorded as having lied or engaged in criminality, as having harmed a child, or as having exposed a child to harm.

Of the 20 disputes involving a currently homosexual father (e.g., gays), in 8 (40%) the children were recorded as **harmed**, in 7 (35%) as **not harmed**. In 4 (20%) different disputes gays or their associates were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality; in two of these disputes the children were recorded as **harmed** and in one as **not harmed**. Of the 16 disputes where gays or their associates were not recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality, in 6 (38%) the children were recorded as **harmed** and in 6 (38%) **not**

harmed. Gays or their associates who were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality were recorded as having exposed the children to harms in 2 (50%) of the four disputes v. 8 (50%) of the 16 disputes in which the gay was not recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality. Nineteen (90%) of the 21 recorded harms to children in these 20 disputes were charged against gays or their associates. The harms associated with the homosexual father were: **Hy**= 8; **Em**= 4; **P**= 2; **S**= 2; **I**= 2; **N**=1. Two harms, **HTS** and **HTHy**, were associated with the nonhomosexual mother or her associates in the 20 cases and 9 harms (**HTA**=3; **HTEm**=2; **HTV**=2; **HTHy**; and **HTN**) by the 77 nonhomosexual mothers in the 78 nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual comparison disputes [one mother, who apparently had engaged in homosexuality, was excluded from the analysis]. In the 20 gay father cases, 1 (5%) of the 20 nonhomosexual mothers or her associates were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality (the instance of **HTS** by a stepfather for which he was imprisoned); in the 78 nonhomosexual v. nonhomosexual disputes, 6 (8%) of 77 nonhomosexual mothers or her associates were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality. Thus, 7 (7%) of the 97 nonhomosexual mothers in the 154 disputes were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality.

Although gay fathers would appear to have better character and be less apt to harm children than lesbian mothers, time-with-children differed in that 48 (84%) of the lesbians vs. 3 (15%) of the gays were involved in disputes regarding who would get primary custody, while the rest of the homosexual parents were involved in visitation disputes.

Discussion

Generalizability: The 78 appeals cases are close to a total sample of scorable appeal cases in the US through early 1998. It appears likely that the 78 cases gotten by combining the previous 40 cases with the current investigation's 38 cases accounts for ~90% of the appeals cases involving a homosexual parent that provide sufficient detail to be examined and scored prior to 1998. Since a case involving a probable homosexual parent turned up in the set of 56 heterosexual v. heterosexual comparison cases (Cameron & Cameron, 1998) and that case was not listed by any reviewer we utilized, uncovered by the *Westlaw* search, nor referred to within any of the 78 cases, and our method of "mining" for cases missed some that it would seem that we should have "caught" in the states covered by our original 40-case survey, it is likely that a

few more are lurking in the law libraries.

Perhaps homosexuals involved in custody cases are fairly representative of the class 'homosexual parents.' The parameters of the 78 case sample approximate the few "facts" that seem to have emerged from random or near-random samples of homosexuals. For instance, of the 79 homosexual parents in the 77 disputes, 20 (25%) were gay fathers. This is in line with the widely-held estimate (Cameron & Cameron, 1996) that three or four times as many women as men who engage in homosexuality are parents. This estimate is also in line with the study of British custody appeals cases (Cameron, 2003c), in which 5 (83%) of the 6 homosexual parents were lesbian. Similarly, as the number of lesbians jointly having children through surrogacy has grown, the numbers of lesbians engaged in custody disputes has grown as well. In our review of appeals cases, 12 lesbians were contesting each other's custody since 1990 [272 Cal.Rptr. 520; 472 N.W.2d 175; 279 Cal.Rptr. 212; 572 N.E.2d 27; 533 N.W.2d 419; 682 A.2d 1314] v. 18 lesbians contending with ex-husbands. Homosexuality's expansion into the legal arena is reflected in the number of appeals cases involving homosexual parents we could locate: in the 1950s we located two such cases, in the 1960s one, in the 1970s 10, in the 1980s 32, and 1990 through 1997, 39 (the 33 we examined plus the 6 lesbian v. lesbian cases). Further, the 78 cases came from 35 states and D.C. The appeals write-ups make it clear that both liberal and conservative judges speaking from liberal and conservative states were involved in the 77 disputes. In any case, the 79 homosexual parents involved in these disputes constitute the largest sample of such parents and their 142 children the largest sample of children with a homosexual parent to be extensively and intensively examined and reported upon.

Most importantly, the evaluations made in these appeal cases come close to what must be considered to be "the truth" in our society. Individuals are deprived of their freedom -- even their lives -- after trials and appeals that are often less complete than occurs in appeals of custody cases. In particular, spouses usually cannot testify against spouses in criminal proceedings and the state is thereby deprived of a great deal of information bearing upon the possible crime. But in custody cases spouses can and do testify against each other, and with rare exception make certain that every possible adverse secret that might reasonably (or unreasonably) bear upon the fitness of their ex-spouse to hold custody comes before the court. No test or series of tests, no questionnaire, nor any interview schedule can possibly be as thorough, intrusive, and on-

point as a hostile ex-spouse in laying bare the possible unfitness of the other contestant. And whereas an interviewer or test giver is seldom able to detect lying in an answer, a judge skilled in detecting lies is aided by the hostile ex-spouse to accomplish this important task. Further, just as the legal system is aware that a mistake in a capital case could cost an innocent person his life, so it is aware that the future of children is at stake in a custody decision. It is extremely likely that the judgments recorded in appeals of custody cases are more thorough and accurate than the results of interviews, test scores, or questionnaires administered to large numbers of volunteers. The database -- that is the write-ups of the cases themselves -- is available for inspection in essentially every US law library and the British component is available in many British law libraries. Thus, unlike professional reports of a particular study in which the totality of the examination is never made publicly available -- e.g., because of brevity demanded by the journal, neglect by the investigator to notice or record something potentially significant, privacy concerns, etc. -- nothing about the database we employed need be unknown. Given that the literature on the issue of homosexual parenting is mostly based upon small numbers of volunteers (Cameron, 1999), and not a single study reports the results from a large representative sample of homosexual parents or children with homosexual parents, the aggregated findings published by the court system must be taken exceedingly seriously.

Our findings from the US are generally supportive of the common beliefs that homosexual parents and parents with poorer character will be more apt to harm their children and/or expose their children to various harms. These outcomes are also consistent with the belief that the two phenomena are additive -- that is, it is unfortunate for a child to have a parent who engages in criminality and worse if that parent is also homosexual.

Character of Homosexual Parents: The 6 readily-available British homosexual parent appeal cases and 6 heterosexual v. heterosexual comparison appeal cases were judged by the same standards employed in the 77 dispute study (Cameron, 2003). In 5 of the 6 British cases involving a homosexual, the homosexual and/or his associate(s) was recorded as lying or having engaged in criminality. In none of the 6 comparison disputes was a nonhomosexual parent or his associates recorded as lying or having engaged in criminality. Aggregating these two datasets from the English-speaking world -- 77 disputes from the US and 6 from Britain involving homosexual parents -- yields 83 custody disputes with homosexual parents

that reached appeal.

(1) Of these 83, in 5 (24%) of the 21 disputes involving fathers who engaged in homosexuality, they or their associates were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality *v.* one in which one of the 21 nonhomosexual mothers or their associates was recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality (the instance of **HTS** by a stepfather for which he was imprisoned). In the 84 nonhomosexual *v.* nonhomosexual disputes (that is, the 78 comparison disputes from the US and 6 comparison disputes from Britain), 6 (7%) of the 83 nonhomosexual mothers or her associates were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality. Thus, 7 (7%) of the 104 nonhomosexual mothers in these 105 disputes were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality.

(2) Of the 21 disputes of the 83 which involved a homosexual father, in 8 (38%) the children were recorded as harmed, in 7 (33%) as not harmed by the homosexual. Gays or their associates were recorded as having exposed the children to harms in 11 (52%) of the 21 disputes. Of the 24 recorded harms in these disputes, 22 (92%) were charged against the homosexual father or his associates. The harms associated with the homosexual father were: **Hy**= 9; **Em**= 4; **P**= 3; **S**= 2; **I**= 3; **N**= 2. In the 28 nonhomosexual *v.* nonhomosexual disputes in which nonhomosexual mothers or their associates were scored for harm to children, in three the children were recorded as **harmed** and **not harmed** in four.

(3) In 62 (75%) of the 83 disputes the homosexual was a woman. In 25 (40%) of the 62 disputes the children were recorded as **harmed** and in 12 (19%) as **not harmed** by the lesbian. In 48 (77%) of the 62 disputes the children were recorded as exposed to harms. Twelve instances of criminality, 7 lies, and 3 false accusations of sexual abuse were made by the lesbians or their associates in the 62 disputes. Lesbians or their associates were recorded as having engaged in criminality and/or lying in 18 (29%) of the 62 disputes. Of 103 harms recorded in the 62 disputes involving lesbians, 101 (98%) were attributed to the homosexual or her associates. The harms associated with the lesbian mother and/or her associates were: **Hy**= 34, **I**= 18, **Em**= 14; **P**= 9; **N**= 10; **A**= 5; **V**= 4; **S**= 4; **T**= 2; **C**= 2. In these 62 disputes, 2 harms were associated with the 52 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates: **HTHy** and **HTa**. The 81 nonhomosexual fathers in the 84 comparison disputes generated 5 recorded harms to children: **HTEm**= 2; **HTV**= 2, **HTHy**. In the 62 cases involving a lesbian mother, 3 (5%) of the 55 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates were recorded as

having lied and/or engaged in criminality while 2 (2%) of the 81 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates in the 84 nonhomosexual *v.* nonhomosexual disputes were recorded as having lied and/or engaged in criminality. Five (4%) of the 136 nonhomosexual fathers or their associates in the 146 disputes were recorded as lying and/or engaging in criminality.

Aggregating this set of 83 disputes from the US and Britain arguably provides the most intensive and objective look at the effects of homosexual *v.* nonhomosexual parenting on children. Instead of answers to an interview or questionnaire, short observations of parent-child interactions, and/or scores on psychiatric scales, the *total life* of the children as children and the *relevant life* of the adults as parents in our appeals cases were put under the microscope of the adversarial trial system. Not only were the adult participants grilled under the watchful eyes of skilled attorneys and trial judges, expert witnesses, and guardian *ad litem*, but they also performed before the hostile eyes of their opponent -- an opponent who had lived with them for a number of years. While social scientists can generally only ask questions and hope that the answers approximate the truth, the court venue assures that if lying or lily-gilding occurs, the opponent can be counted upon to probably bring that to light. This kind of case, in which each litigant has approximately an equal right to the child (or, in the case of grandparents or kin, at least some right to the child) and is highly motivated to get custody -- would seem to provide a "gold standard" against which all other social and psychiatric science efforts attempting to assess the effects of homosexual parenting on custodial children might be compared. Since the courts are seldom involved with custody after the children attain the age of 12 or so, even though it is assumed that those who experience more difficulty in their childhood are more apt to be socially and personally disturbed, analysis of these cases cannot yield information about long term effects upon the children such as involvement in homosexuality, marriage, divorce, or criminality, educational success or mental health in their adulthood .

Real Life vs. Social/Psychiatric Science: The 83 dispute database permits a number of tests of social science findings and psychiatric claims. From a broader perspective, both Moore (1976) and Bluestone, O'Malley, & Connell (1966) reported a disproportionate number of homosexuals in prison populations (that is, those who have sex with their own sex). Bluestone et al, argued that male homosexuals probably weren't actually more criminal per se, but female homosexuals probably were. Criminality was more frequently

reported by homosexual than heterosexual volunteers in Saghir & Robins (1973) and Bell & Weinberg (1978). Both of these studies reported more self-reported criminality by gays than by lesbians. Likewise, in the 1996 National Household Survey of Drug Abuse (www.icpsr.umich.edu/samhda), 31.9% of men who reported having had sex with males in the past 12 months as opposed to 19.0% of men who reported having had sex only with women, and 12.9% of women who reported having had sex with females v. 4.0% of women who reported having had sex only with men reported that they had “ever been booked” for a crime. In another random-sample survey, more lesbians self-reported criminality than did heterosexual women. But there was somewhat less self-reported criminality among lesbians than among gays (except for shoplifting), and essentially no difference in self-reported criminality between gays and heterosexual men (Cameron, Cameron, & Proctor, 1989). While these 4 different surveys reported that self-disclosed criminality among homosexuals was more frequent, it could be argued that this difference reflected an underlying reality or merely greater candor by homosexuals.

In the 83 disputes involving homosexuals (that is, the 77 US disputes and the 6 British disputes), 29% of the female and 24% of the male homosexuals were recorded as having lied to the court or having engaged in criminality. In the 163 disputes involving nonhomosexuals (4 of the disputes with lesbians were with authorities), 7% of the nonhomosexual mothers and 5% of the nonhomosexual fathers were recorded as having lied or having engaged in criminality. In 12 (19%) of the 62 disputes involving a lesbian, she and/or her associates were recorded as having engaged in criminality. An instance (5%) of criminality was recorded by a nonhomosexual mother or her associates in the 21 disputes involving gays. For the 136 disputes in which a nonhomosexual father was involved, 2.5 (2%) were recorded as having engaged in criminality and for the 104 disputes involving a nonhomosexual mother, 2.5 (2%) were recorded as having engaged in criminality (the ‘unit’ of criminality in 276 N.W.2d 582 was divided between the nonhomosexual spouses since both the mother and father were involved in selling drugs). So criminality was also higher among homosexuals in these appeals cases.

The appeals samples are unique in that no one could refuse to cooperate. Further, the stakes were high enough to assure that everyone’s character would receive a stern test along with intensive scrutiny. The data is not self-report, instead it is as “factual” and “objective” as our society can determine through the

pre-trial, trial, and post-trial adversarial processes.

The evidence we have uncovered in the appeals cases lends weight to the notion that homosexuals of both sexes are of poorer character than their nonhomosexual counterparts and more apt to engage in criminality *per se*. Since their opponent gave every indication of being as hostile to the gay as to the lesbian parent, the slightly more frequent lying and criminality by lesbians recorded in the appeals cases lends limited support to the opinion of Bluestone, et al. (1966) that male homosexuals have better character and engage in criminality less frequently than their female counterparts.

Appealing to studies of volunteers, a number of reviews (including the three quoted above) and professional associations have declared homosexual and heterosexual parenting equivalent (Cameron & Cameron, 1997). If the study of volunteers can lead to definitive conclusions upon which societal decisions can be based, the task of social scientists is made infinitely easier -- they can discard concerns about representative samples. But how is one to test the generalizability of results from volunteers? Surely, even replication of the same outcomes with additional volunteers would do nothing to prove that volunteers comprise a representative sample.

The 77 database of disputes involving homosexual parents enables reasonable tests of claims about child custody ostensibly based upon the volunteer-generated database. Gold, et al. (1994) said that "children of gay or lesbian parents are less likely to be victims of parental sexual or physical abuse" (p. 354) but cited no supporting documentation. In the 77 custody disputes involving homosexual parents, the courts laid 4 instances of violence against the 142 children to the fault of the homosexual parents or their associates in the 77 disputes in which homosexuals were involved *vs.* 2 instances of violence against the 279 children to the fault of the 226 nonhomosexual parents or their associates in the 163 disputes (including the 56 + 22 control cases from the US and 6 control cases from Great Britain) in which nonhomosexuals were involved. Similarly, homosexuals or their associates were blamed for 5 cases of molestation/ seduction in their 77 disputes (i.e., 6.5%) *vs.* nonhomosexuals or their associates were blamed for one case of molestation/ seduction in their 154 disputes (i.e., 0.6%). Thus, counter to Gold et al. the ratio of both recorded violence and molestation/ seduction appears to favor nonhomosexual parents. Likewise, a large random sample was asked about molestation experiences. Those 17 with homosexual parents were more

apt to report sexual involvement with their parents (Cameron & Cameron, 1996).

The Tasker & Golombok (1997) structured 2 1/2 hour interviews of 25 children of 18 lesbian mothers (vs. 21 children of 16 divorced mothers) 14 years after interviewing their mothers might be considered to have examined 350 child-years of experience with homosexual parenting. As is typical of social science efforts, over a third of the initial respondents could not be contacted or refused a re-interview. Further, both the questioning and scoring were done by a researcher whose personal stake in the outcomes was rather evident (e.g., p. 109). Even with these biases, 43% of the children of lesbians reported evangelization (e.g., they said that they believed that their mother wanted them to become homosexual) and a number had been subjected to hypersexualization. As might be expected from these findings, the homosexuals' children more frequently were attracted to and engaged in homosexuality. Additionally, the children reported problems with peer relationships because of their mother's homosexuality (e.g., because of teasing and difficulty finding friends who would accept their mother, Cameron, 1999). Respondents were not explicitly asked about neglect, sexual seduction, violence, instability et cetera -- thus most of the topics that the appeals courts were interested in and recorded as harms by us in the Tables above were not even broached. The follow-up consisted of asking questions of the now-grown children who were volunteered by their mothers and chose to complete the interview.

Unlike the appeals cases, in the Tasker and Golombok study of volunteers there was no other source of information than self-report, there was no knowledgeable spouse or opponent to challenge and correct claims, there was no skilled trial judge to evaluate the answers, and no panel of judges to winnow the trial record. Yet Tasker and Golombok's effort is one of the better studies utilizing volunteers (Sarantokos [1996], over twice as large with 58 children, having two matched comparison groups [e.g., children of married as well as of cohabiting couples] and broaching not only psychological, but intellectual and social outcomes of homosexual parenting would appear the best to date).

Conclusion

When participants' and associates' characters were rated by remarks recorded in the appeals record (Cameron & Cameron, 1998), nonhomosexual-parents-in-general were of better character than homosexual parents-in-general. Confirmatory of this finding, in both sets of appeals cases that have been examined,

homosexual parents-in-general exhibited poorer character as indexed by lying or criminality. They were also more apt to be recorded as having harmed children and more apt to be recorded as exposing them to harms. These findings are made more plausible in that the 142 children exposed to both a homosexual and a nonhomosexual parent suffered many more recorded harms from the homosexual parent. That about the same volume of nonhomosexual-caused harms happened to children in the nonhomosexual *v.* nonhomosexual cases, where there was double the “density” of nonhomosexuals as in the nonhomosexual *v.* homosexual cases, considerably strengthens the finding of exposing children to about one harm per 20 heterosexual parents. In the two cases in which two lesbian parents were involved (**585 P.2d 130; 212 N.W.2d 55**), that is where there was higher homosexual “density,” the children were exposed to harms in both cases but the court judged the children harmed in only one. Additionally, in one of these cases lying and criminality by the homosexuals involved were recorded. A set of cases in which two homosexuals who had equal legal claim to their children appealed custody settlements could provide a test of the higher volume of harms associated with homosexual parenting. We could not find such cases, but if joint adoptions by homosexuals continue to be permitted, cases of the sort required for this test should emerge.

Nothing generalizes to a real-life event as well as a large unbiased set of the same kinds of real-life event. It would seem that these real-life outcomes from 78 cases involving homosexual parents could be generalized to other real-life outcomes. Thus, counter to the propaganda in reviews and professional associations’ statements it would appear that children placed with the nonhomosexual in homosexual *v.* nonhomosexual parent custody disputes would have considerably less chance of being harmed or being exposed to harms, and measurably reduced chances of living with a parent of inferior character as well.

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Problems With Pawelski, *et al*'s Article on the Well-Being of Children of Homosexuals

Pawelski, *et al*¹ argue for a dramatic social change — the legalization of gay marriage — contending it will enhance the well-being of homosexuals' children. Yet they also say:

“There is ample evidence to show that children raised by same-gender parents fare as well as those raised by heterosexual parents. More than 25 years of research have documented that there is no relationship between parents' sexual orientation and any measure of a child's emotional, psychosocial, and behavioral adjustment. These data have demonstrated no risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with 1 or more gay parents.” (p. 361)

If children raised in same-sex households are *currently indistinguishable* from other children, two-thirds of whom are raised within marriage, then why disrupt society by legalizing gay marriage? However, if children in same-sex households now fare *worse* than their non-homosexual counterparts, a legitimate question can be raised: is it because of a lack of gay marriage or because of a deficiency in same-sex parenting? Pawelski, *et al* cannot have it both ways: if there is no *current* risk to the children of homosexuals, then the 'need' for gay marriage cannot be predicated on advancing their “health and well-being.”

A deficiency associated with same-sex parenting is plausible, especially since the empirical evidence is by no means as emphatic and categorical as Pawelski, *et al* contend in their use of phrases such as “fare *as well*,” “*no* relationship,” “*any* measure,” “*no* risk.” They are either unaware of, or choose to ignore, a number of empirical studies that appear to contradict their thesis.²⁻⁸ These studies identify significant problems experienced by children in same-sex households, using a variety of research methods and disparate databases. Children with homosexual parents testified to heart-rending difficulties,^{2,7} and fared *worse* than those with non-homosexual parents, in a) data drawn

from retrospective national surveys,⁶ b) comparative school results and interviews of teachers and parents,⁵ c) comparisons of single homosexual and heterosexual mothers,⁴ and d) analyses of appellate level judicial decrees in custody battles.^{7,8}

Dealing with each contention by Pawelski, *et al* would require a paper at least as long as theirs. Instead, we will consider two points on which there is recent empirical data: 1) sexual assaults by foster parents on foster-children, and 2) sexual orientation of children raised in same-sex households.

Although foster-parents appear in reports of child sexual abuse (CSA),⁹⁻¹² the first report¹³ allowing a linking of sex-of-perpetrator to sex-of-victim found that 6 of 3,714 adults reported that as children a foster-parent made “serious sexual advances” to them (foster parents accounted for 0.6% of the 1,021 perpetrations reported by respondents — 3 foster-mothers against girls; one foster-mother against a boy; and 2 foster-fathers against girls, one of which culminated in “sexual contact”). In 415 instances of CSA by a ‘caretaker,’ one contact by a foster-father (0.2%) was reported. In a review of 248 molestations processed in one hospital,¹⁴ one foster-father molested one boy and one foster-father molested one girl — accounting for 2 (0.8%) of the cases.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services¹⁵ reported on “substantiated abuse” for 1997 through 2002 in Illinois for all foster- and supervised adoptive-parents. 67 (69%) of 97 mothers and 148 (86%) of 173 fathers abused girls; 30 mothers and 25 fathers abused boys. A total of 34% were involved in same-sex abuse of charges.

In a review¹⁶ of news stories in the 50 largest newspapers and wire services during the period 1980-2003 across the English-speaking world, 169 foster parents (149 men, 20 women) were implicated in CSA with their charges in stories in which the sex of victim could be determined. Of these, 53% (76 men and 14 women) engaged in same-sex abuse. The same study also located 21 news stories of assaults in group homes; same-sex sexual assault was reported in 15 (71%).

During 2004, 29 news stories¹⁶ about foster/adoptive parent CSA included both the sex of perpetrator and sex of victim (the sex of two perpetrators who molested boys in a group home was unreported). Of these, 19 were same-sex abuse (18 men, 1 woman) in which the foster-parents abused 28 boys and 1 girl. In 10 opposite-sex abuse stories, 10 foster-fathers molested 16 girls. Altogether, 66% of the stories involved same-sex CSA.

In 2006, we obtained compilations of CSA of foster-children by foster-parents from the Minnesota Department of Human Services for 2003-2005 and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for 2003 through May 2006. Combined, 12 foster-mothers sexually abused their charges: nine victimized daughters, three victimized sons. Another 28 foster-fathers also engaged in CSA with their charges: 23 victimized daughters, five victimized sons. Overall, 14 (35%) of these foster-parents engaged in same-sex abuse.

While the fraction of foster-parents who engage in homosexuality is unknown, there is no reason to believe that it exceeds the homosexual prevalence of less than 4% reported

by many general population studies.¹⁷ Furthermore, those who engage in same-sex CSA call themselves homosexual or bisexual: in the only published study¹⁸ that asked those convicted of sexual abuse about their own sexual orientation, 86% of men who sexually abused boys said they were bisexual or homosexual. These facts together suggest that those who engage in homosexuality are disproportionately involved in foster-parent CSA, accounting for at least a third of foster-parent perpetrators.

Our point: Though foster parent families are but a small slice of the ‘parenting pie,’ there is sufficient evidence to strongly question Pawelski *et al*’s assertion that there exists “*no risk* to children as a result of growing up in a family with 1 or more gay parents.” [emphasis added]

A second potential risk is that children raised in same-sex households might be more apt to pursue homosexuality — an orientation Pawelski, *et al* claim leads to more frequent suicide attempts (p. 358). It would clearly be a “psychosocial” consequence were same-sex households to produce *proportionately more* homosexual children when compared to non-homosexual households. Yet, despite the authors’ assertions to the contrary, there *is* evidence that children raised by homosexuals are more apt to engage in homosexuality. Pawelski, *et al* cite a review article making this very suggestion,¹⁹ and they note from another study that “9% of sons of gay fathers identified as bisexual or homosexual in orientation” (p. 360), a percentage 2-4 times the estimated incidence of homosexuality in the general populace. More recently, in the largest assemblage²⁰ of *adult* children (n = 77) of homosexual parents — compiled from three different investigations — at least 30% identified themselves as homosexual, including 35% of children of lesbians and 20% of children of gays.

Thus, recent empirical data run counter to Pawelski, *et al*’s contention that legalizing gay marriage will lead to nothing but good for children raised in same-sex households.

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