

**Executive Summary
And Summary of Research Results
Children and Same Sex Parenting
Courage International Conference: “Living the Truth in Love”
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This Executive Summary provides an analysis of the state of our knowledge about the likely impact of same sex parenting on children.

Information is necessarily incomplete.

- The number of children in same sex households is small.
- Children can enter into a same sex household in several ways: adoption, third party reproduction and from a previous heterosexual relationship. Making appropriate comparisons between children of same sex couples and comparable opposite sex couples requires an enormous amount of data.
- Same sex parenting is relatively new, and the full impact over the lifespan of the child cannot now be fully known.
- At this point in time, we must draw inferences, based on studies of varying quality and other social science results on related topics that we know with more certainty.

Highlights of the Talk:

The Ruth Institute Dream: that every child be welcomed into a loving home with a married mother and father.

- So that, every child can have a relationship with his or her own parents, unless some unavoidable tragedy prevents it.
- So that, every adult, without exception, can know his or her cultural heritage and genetic identity.
- When children are deprived of these rights without a serious or unavoidable reason, we at the Ruth Institute call this a ***structural injustice to the child.***

The children who live with their own mothers and fathers married to each other in a low conflict union have better life chances and outcomes on a variety of measures compared with children in other family forms that have been carefully studied. These outcomes are a reflection of the basic injustice done to children who are deprived of a relationship with one of their parents without good reason.

Overall plan of this document:

1. Provide a general overview about the children under 18 in the United States who are currently being raised by same sex couples.
2. Analyze the methodological weaknesses of the studies showing “no differences” ” between children of same sex couples and opposite sex couple.
3. Compare several studies of the same outcome: the newer studies showing some differences are methodologically superior to those showing no differences between same and opposite sex couples.

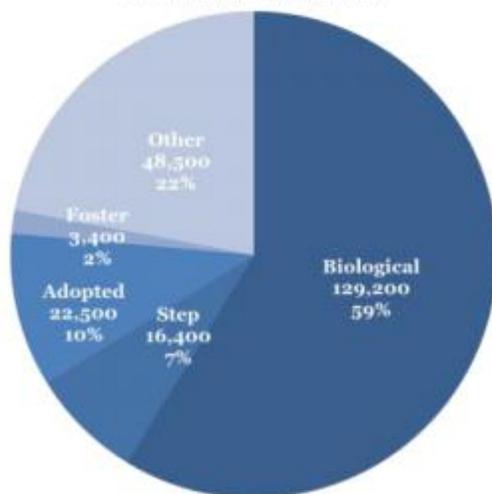
4. Take a brief look at the state of knowledge about other situations in which children have been separated from a parent. Children of Divorce have been extensively studied: they face elevated risks for a variety of serious negative outcomes. Preliminary information about Donor Conceived Persons suggests problematic outcomes.
5. Studies comparing the stability of same sex unions with opposite sex unions show that same sex unions are less stable than opposite sex unions.

The overall inference to draw from this body of evidence is that we cannot convincingly claim that there is “no difference” between the children of same sex couples and opposite sex couples. Over time, we will accumulate more data and observe longer term outcomes. We have no scientific basis for presuming that the social experiment of same sex parenting will be harmless, much less beneficial to the outcomes children experience.

1. Basic demographic facts about children of same sex couples in the United States:

According to the Williams Institute, “LGBT Parenting in the United States,” (5):

Figure 4. Relationship of children under age 18 to householder (person 1) in same-sex couple households
2011 American Community Survey



- About three tenths of one percent or .3% of American children aged 18 and under are being raised in a same sex couple household. This amounts to 220,000 children out of the some 73 million children total in the US.
- Of these 220,000 children, about 59% or 129,200 children are classified as “biological” children of one of the adults. These children were produced via some form of Third Party Reproduction. An unknown percentage of these children have never known their gamete “donor” parent.
- Of the total 220,000 children, 7% or 16,400 are classified as stepchildren. These children were conceived in a heterosexual relationship, and experienced the separation or divorce of their parents.
- Of the total 220,000 children, 12% were either adopted or foster children. Ten percent or 22,500 were adopted and 2% or 3,400 were foster children, for a total of 25,900 children.

- Of the total 220,000 children, 22% or 48,500 were classified as “other,” including grandchildren, siblings or others unrelated to the adults in the home.

2. Studies claiming to show “no differences” between children of same sex couples and opposite sex couples are flawed.

Careful reviews of the methodology of the same sex parenting studies have concluded that the “no differences” claim is not supported by the available evidence. (11, 13, 16) The most recent, in 2012, (13) is a careful examination of the 59 studies cited in the American Psychological Association’s brief (18) that claims, “Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents.” This review raised the following points:

The studies were based on small, unrepresentative samples: 77% of the studies were based on small non-representative convenience samples of less than 100 participants, with one study having only 5 participants. The individuals studied are predominantly well-educated white women, with few low-income or minority or male participants.

Many studies included no heterosexual comparison group. Only 56% (33 out of 59) studies included a heterosexual comparison group.

When heterosexual comparison groups were used, not all were comparisons to heterosexual married couples. Of the 33 studies that had a heterosexual comparison group, 13 compared the outcomes of lesbian mothers with single heterosexual mothers. Some of the remaining studies are ambiguous as to the family structure of the heterosexual comparison group.

The “no differences” studies addressed a limited set of questions, not necessarily the most relevant for public policy. Emotional functioning was the most often studied outcome (12 studies), followed by sexual preference (nine studies), gender role behavior (eight studies), behavioral adjustment (seven studies), gender identity (six studies), and cognitive functioning (three studies). Very few address societal concerns of intergenerational poverty, collegiate education and/or labor force contribution, serious criminality, incarceration, early childbearing, drug/alcohol abuse, or suicide.

The studies do not address the long-term consequences or outcomes for the children of same sex parents. Based on the 59 studies cited by the APA, we know nothing about long term outcomes.

The studies are prone to “Type II Errors,” that is, prematurely concluding no differences between heterosexual couples and same sex couples. Virtually none of the studies in the APA brief, and very few since, have sample sizes large enough to guard against Type II Errors.

The conclusion:

“Not one of the 59 studies referenced in the 2005 APA Brief compares a large, random, representative sample of lesbian or gay parents and their children with a large, random, representative sample of married parents and their children. The available data, which are drawn primarily from small convenience samples, are insufficient to support a strong generalizable claim either way. Such a statement would not be grounded in science.” (13)

One important exception to this statement is the 2010 study by Michael Rosenfeld, (20) using US Census data. This study examines a socially significant question, namely, do children of same sex couples make

timely progress through school compared with other children? This study has a large random sample, of over 700,000 observations and concludes that there is “no difference” between the children of same sex couples and other children. However, this data was re-analyzed with different methods and obtained a different result. This brings me to my next point.

3. Comparing studies of the same outcome, the newer studies showing some differences are methodologically superior to those showing no differences.

A. Studies of school achievement: Allen, Pakaluk and Price’s challenge to Rosenfeld’s study of US children making normal progress through school

Allen, Pakaluk and Price (2) challenge these results because Rosenfeld excluded all children who were completely unrelated to both adults in the household, and all households in which the family did not reside in the same location for the 5 previous years. They argue that excluding these children eliminates two of the important routes through which living in with a same sex couple may affect children and their progress through school. When all the children are included, and these variables are statistically accounted for, significant differences between children of same sex couples and other family structures do emerge. (The sample size without the restrictions rises to 1.6 million children.)

Compared with children raised by same sex couples: (Column 4 of Table 3 below.)

- Children raised by heterosexual married couples are 35% more likely to be making normal progress through school.
- Children raised by cohabiting heterosexual couples are 15% more likely.
- Children raised by their never married mothers are 23% more likely.

Table 3 from Allen, Pakaluk and Price:

Table 3 Association between family type and making normal progress through school (varying the sample restrictions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Married Heterosexual	1.153 [0.144]	1.258** [0.097]	1.295* [0.137]	1.354** [0.089]
Heterosexual, Cohabiting	0.910 [0.124]	1.086 [0.088]	1.057 [0.123]	1.156 [†] [0.081]
Divorced Women	0.841 [0.107]	0.955 [0.074]	0.993 [0.107]	1.053 [0.070]
Never-Married Women	0.992 [0.129]	1.161 [†] [0.093]	1.140 [0.127]	1.232** [0.085]
Divorced Men	0.773 [†] [0.102]	0.821* [0.067]	0.895 [0.101]	0.900 [0.064]
Never-Married Men	0.807 [0.141]	1.096 [0.124]	0.952 [0.152]	1.183 [0.122]
Sample Restriction				
Own child (R_1)	X	X		
Five-year resident (R_2)	X		X	
Unweighted N	716,740	1,397,188	792,294	1,610,880

Notes: Each cell reports the odds ratio from a logit regression with the omitted group being children being raised by same-sex couples. Each regression includes controls for disability, race, logged income, highest education in household, birthplace, metropolitan status, private school attendance, and state fixed effects. In column 2 we also control for whether the household moved; in column 3 we control for whether a child is the parent’s own child; and in column 4 we control for both. Standard errors are provided in brackets.

[†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

B. Allen’s study of Canadian high school graduation rates (1)

This is a variation on the theme of children making appropriate progress through school, examining high school graduation rates for Canadian children. The study is based on a random 20% sample from 2006 Canadian Census with roughly 2 million observations.

Children were classified as having same sex parents if they answered yes to the following question: “Are you a child of a male (female) same-sex married or common law couple?” Families with a gay or lesbian single parent were classified as single parents.

Children living in same sex couple households were on average 65% less likely to graduate from high school on time, with girls struggling more than boys and girls living with two fathers struggling particularly: such girls are 15% as likely to graduate on time.

C. Sullins' studies of children's emotional difficulties, using the Strengths and Difficulties Test

This study (22) and the accompanying study on ADHD (23) is based on the US National Health Interview Survey, with approximately 1.6 million people, including 207,000 children from 1997 -2013. Family variables include family structure and biological parentage. Biological parentage indicates the degree of biological relationship of the child to her or his parents, with three categories: it is coded zero if both biological parents are present in the home; one if only one biological parent is present, as in a single parent or step-parent family; and two if neither biological parent is present in the home, as is the case with adopted children.

Same-sex couples were identified as those persons whose reported spouse or cohabiting partner was of the same sex as themselves.

NHIS sample included 2,751 same sex couples—2,304 cohabiting and 447 spousal—consisting of 1,387 male couples and 1,384 female couples; 582 couples—406 female and 176 male—had children under age 18 in the home. A more extensive battery of health questions, including the measures of emotional health used in this study, was completed for 512 children sampled, one per family, from the same-sex parenting families.

The key variable of interest is the child's score on the Strengths and Difficulties Test, which is a standardized measure of emotional functioning.

KEY FINDINGS:

Children of same sex parents are more likely to have:

- Higher scores on the Strengths and Difficulties test
- Serious emotional problems, as reported by parents.
- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Learning Disability

These differences can NOT be attributed to:

- Bullying: in this nationally representative sample, children of same sex parents were bullied *less* frequently than other children.
- Residential instability
- Parental psychological distress

Children of same sex parents have a higher risk of emotional problems than children of married biological parents, and have risk levels most comparable to children of single parents. Children of married step parents and cohabiting biological parents have lower risk levels than children of same sex couples.

Of great interest is the finding in Table 5. The extent to which the child is biologically related to the adults in the home is the most important explanatory variable, absorbing ALL the variation, wiping out the significance of all the other variables. In other words, once biological relatedness is accounted for, family structures cannot be distinguished from one another. But children of same sex couples are necessarily less related to the children in their care than biological parents married to each other. If this relationship between biological connections and emotional stability holds up, it will significantly

undermine the claim of the entire Sexual Revolution that society can safely ignore that biological connections between parents and children.

Table 5: Risk ratios for child emotional problems contrasting same-sex parents with four opposite-sex family structures: two married biological parents, married step-parent family, cohabiting partners, and single parent: NHIS 2001–2013

Relative Risk for Same-Sex parents compared to:	Model 5.1 (baseline)	Model 5.2 (controls)	Model 5.3 (controls and confounders)	Model 5.4 (controls and parentage)
Risk for same-sex parents relative to reference group:				
Two married bio parents	3.50 ^{***} (2.5-4.9)	3.62 ^{***} (2.6-5.0)	4.52 ^{**} (2.53-8.1)	1.48 [†] (1.01-2.2)
Married step-parent	1.82 ^{**} (1.3 - 2.5)	2.16 ^{***} (1.6-3.0)	2.97 ^{**} (1.7-5.3)	1.39 (0.95-2.0)
Cohabiting	1.49 [†] (1.04 - 2.13)	1.97 ^{**} (1.3-2.6)	2.46 [†] (1.3-4.7)	1.31 (0.9-2.0)
Single Parent	1.38 [†] (0.99 - 1.9)	1.78 ^{**} (1.3-2.4)	3.08 [†] (1.2-1.8)	1.50 [†] (1.03-2.2)
Controls				
Female		0.65 ^{***} (0.62-0.70)	0.83 [†] (0.71-0.98)	0.65 ^{***} (0.6-0.7)
Older (in years)		1.04 ^{***} (1.03 - 1.05)	1.05 ^{**} (1.03-1.07)	1.04 ^{***} (1.03-1.05)
Nonwhite		1.50 ^{***} (1.4-1.6)	1.32 ^{**} (1.1-1.6)	1.51 ^{***} (1.4-1.6)
B.A. Degree		0.82 ^{***} (0.77 - 0.88)	0.97 (0.81-1.2)	0.83 ^{***} (0.77-0.90)
Income (Poverty Multiple)		0.71 ^{***} (0.68 - 0.78)	0.88 (0.77-1.0)	0.71 ^{***} (0.68-0.75)
Confounders				
Stability			1.08 (0.92-1.3)	
Stigmatization			4.10 ^{***} (3.5-4.8)	
Parent SPD			2.62 ^{***} (2.1-3.2)	
Biological parentage				2.14 ^{***} (2.0-2.3)
N	111,437	86,160	10,423	84,924
Model Fit F (p)	1.0	0.59	.79	.59

Numbers in parentheses report the 95% confidence interval. *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001.
†.05 < P <= .10

The final piece of evidence directly compares studies which use large, random samples with studies that use small, non-random “convenience” samples. This is a study of studies. (24) It looks at papers which have used the Strengths and Difficulties Test and asks, “Is there a correlation between the type of sampling procedure a study used and whether that study found that children of same sex couples are advantaged?”

The answer is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Correspondence between sample type (random or recruited) and comparison type (favorable or unfavorable)

Study/analysis	Same-sex sample type	Measure	Percent favorable SS comparisons
US NHIS (2000-2004)	Random (Statistically representative)	SDQ	0
Golombok 2003	Random (Statistically Representative)	SDQ	0
Bos 2010	Recruited (Non-representative)	SDQ	75
Golombok 2013	Recruited (Non-representative)	SDQ	80
Mellor/ACHESS 2014	Recruited (Non-representative)	SDQ	83

The studies which find that the children of same sex couples are better off emotionally than the children of opposite sex couples are studies which use non-random, convenience samples. The studies which use large random samples drawn from the whole population all show either no difference in emotional

functioning or that children of same sex couples are disadvantaged compared with the children of biological parents married to each other.

D. The New Family Structures Study (19)

The New Family Structures Study is one of the highest quality studies. While this study has generated enormous controversy, it meets the requirements of good sample design. It has large, random sample with appropriate controls, asking significant questions of the adult children themselves. A professional survey company gathered data on 2,988 young adults, aged 18-39 at the time of the survey, and asked them a variety of questions on their experiences growing up, and their current lives. This summary includes the most important tables from this study, so that you can judge for yourselves how best to interpret the results.

The study separates the young adults into these 8 types of family structures: (“R” stands for “Respondent.”)

1. IBF: Lived in intact biological family (with mother and father) from 0 to 18, and parents are still married at present (N = 919).
2. LM: R reported R’s mother had a same-sex romantic (lesbian) relationship with a woman, regardless of any other household transitions (N = 163).
3. GF: R reported R’s father had a same-sex romantic (gay) relationship with a man, regardless of any other household transitions (N = 73).
4. Adopted: R was adopted by one or two strangers at birth or before age 2 (N = 101).
5. Divorced later or had joint custody: R reported living with biological mother and father from birth to age 18, but parents are not married at present (N = 116).
6. Stepfamily: Biological parents were either never married or else divorced, and R’s primary custodial parent was married to someone else before R turned 18 (N = 394).
7. Single parent: Biological parents were either never married or else divorced, and R’s primary custodial parent did not marry (or remarry) before R turned 18 (N = 816).
8. All others: Includes all other family structure/event

In the Tables shown below, **Bold** indicates the mean scores displayed are statistically-significantly different from IBFs (currently intact, bio mother/father household, column 1), without additional controls.

An asterisk * next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group’s coefficient and that of IBF’s, controlling for respondent’s age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of mother’s education, perceived household income while growing up, experience being bullied as a youth, and state’s legislative gay-friendliness, derived from logistic regression models (not shown).

A caret (^) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group’s mean and the mean of LM (column 2), without additional controls.

Table 2

Mean scores on select dichotomous outcome variables, NFSS (can read as percentage: as in, 0.42 = 42%).

	IBF (intact bio family)	LM (lesbian mother)	GF (gay father)	Adopted by strangers	Divorced late (>18)	Stepfamily	Single-parent	All other
Currently married	0.43	0.36	0.35	0.41	0.36*	0.41	0.37	0.39
Currently cohabiting	0.09	0.24*	0.21	0.07 [^]	0.31*	0.19*	0.19*	0.13
Family received welfare growing up	0.17	0.69*	0.57*	0.12 [^]	0.47**	0.53**	0.48**	0.35*
Currently on public assistance	0.10	0.38*	0.23	0.27*	0.31*	0.30*	0.30*	0.23*
Currently employed full-time	0.49	0.26*	0.34	0.41	0.42	0.47 [^]	0.43 [^]	0.39
Currently unemployed	0.08	0.28*	0.20	0.22 [^]	0.15	0.14	0.13*	0.15
Voted in last presidential election	0.57	0.41	0.73**	0.58	0.63 [^]	0.57 [^]	0.51	0.48
Thought recently about suicide	0.05	0.12	0.24*	0.07	0.08	0.10	0.05	0.09
Recently or currently in therapy	0.08	0.19*	0.19	0.22*	0.12	0.17*	0.13*	0.09
Identifies as entirely heterosexual	0.90	0.61*	0.71*	0.82 [^]	0.83 [^]	0.81**	0.83**	0.82**
Is in a same-sex romantic relationship	0.04	0.07	0.12	0.23	0.05	0.13*	0.03	0.02
Had affair while married/cohabiting	0.13	0.40*	0.25	0.20	0.12 [^]	0.32*	0.19 [^]	0.16 [^]
Has ever had an STI	0.08	0.20*	0.25*	0.16	0.12	0.16*	0.14*	0.08
Ever touched sexually by parent/adult	0.02	0.23*	0.06 [^]	0.03 [^]	0.10 [^]	0.12*	0.10*	0.08**
Ever forced to have sex against will	0.08	0.31*	0.25*	0.23*	0.24*	0.16*	0.16**	0.11 [^]

Bold indicates the mean scores displayed are statistically-significantly different from IBFs (currently intact, bio mother/father household, column 1), without additional controls.

An asterisk (*) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's coefficient and that of IBFs, controlling for respondent's age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of mother's education, perceived household income while growing up, experience being bullied as a youth, and state's legislative gay-friendliness, derived from logistic regression models (not shown).

A caret (^) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's mean and the mean of LM (column 2), without additional controls.

Psychological measures:

“Attachment scale (depend)” → a higher number denotes less comfort depending on others

CES-D Depression index → a higher number denotes greater tendency toward depression

The controversy over this study concerns the proper interpretation of the category labeled in these tables as “lesbian mother” and “gay father.” The young adults were classified into this category if they reported that one of their parents had a same sex relationship while they were growing up. We do not know if their parents self-identify as gay or lesbian. Of the children whose mother had a same sex relationship, only (23%) said they had spent at least 3 years living in the same household with their mother's romantic partner.

Advocates for same sex parenting argued that the remaining 77% would not be representative of the children planned by a lesbian couple and raised jointly by them for their entire childhood. However, an equally valid inference to draw is that we cannot be sure of how representative the convenience samples of lesbian families recruited from gay bookstores and coffee house bulletin boards really are. Most of those studies, such as Patterson's 1995 alluded to in the presentation, (17) are snapshots of children's functioning at a particular moment in time. Advocates create the impression of stable lifelong unions as normative. But we do not know how stable the same sex unions observed in these studies ultimately proved to be.

The children whose mothers had a same sex relationship seem to look most like the children called “single parents” and “stepfamilies,” family forms we already know to be problematic for children. With these caveats in mind, however, we can still observe some differences in the severity of the experiences reported by these children whose mothers had a same sex relationship while the child was growing up.

Table 3
Mean scores on select continuous outcome variables, NFSS.

	IBF (intact bio family)	LM (lesbian mother)	GF (gay father)	Adopted by strangers	Divorced late (>18)	Stepfamily	Single-parent	All other
Educational attainment	3.19	2.39*	2.64*	3.21 [^]	2.88[^]	2.64*	2.66*	2.54*
Family-of-origin safety/security	4.13	3.12*	3.25*	3.77 [^]	3.52*	3.52[^]	3.58[^]	3.77[^]
Family-of-origin negative impact	2.30	3.13*	2.90*	2.83*	2.96*	2.76*	2.78*	2.64[^]
Closeness to biological mother	4.17	4.05	3.71*	3.58	3.95	4.03	3.85*	3.97
Closeness to biological father	3.87	3.16	3.43	-	3.29*	3.65	3.24*	3.61
Self-reported physical health	3.75	3.38	3.58	3.53	3.46	3.49	3.43*	3.41
Self-reported overall happiness	4.16	3.89	3.72	3.92	4.02	3.87*	3.93	3.83
CES-D depression index	1.83	2.20*	2.18*	1.95	2.01	1.91 [^]	1.89 [^]	1.94 [^]
Attachment scale (depend)	2.82	3.43*	3.14	3.12*	3.08[^]	3.10[^]	3.05[^]	3.02[^]
Attachment scale (anxiety)	2.46	2.67	2.66	2.66	2.71	2.53	2.51	2.56
Impulsivity scale	1.90	2.03	2.02	1.85	1.94	1.86 [^]	1.82 [^]	1.89
Level of household income	8.27	6.08	7.15	7.93 [^]	7.42 [^]	7.04	6.96	6.19*
Current relationship quality index	4.11	3.83	3.63*	3.79	3.95	3.80*	3.95	3.94
Current relationship is in trouble	2.04	2.35	2.55*	2.35	2.43	2.35*	2.26*	2.15

Bold indicates the mean scores displayed are statistically-significantly different from IBFs (currently intact, bio mother/father household, column 1) without additional controls.

An asterisk (*) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's coefficient and that of IBFs, controlling for respondent's age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of mother's education, perceived household income while growing up, experience being bullied as a youth, and state's legislative gay-friendliness, derived from OLS regression models (not shown).

A caret (^) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's mean and the mean of LM (column 2), without additional controls.

Table 4
Mean scores on select event-count outcome variables, NFSS.

	IBF (intact bio family)	LM (lesbian mother)	GF (gay father)	Adopted by strangers	Divorced late (>18)	Stepfamily	Single-parent	All other
Frequency of marijuana use	1.32	1.84*	1.61	1.33 [^]	2.00*	1.47	1.73*	1.49
Frequency of alcohol use	2.70	2.37	2.70	2.74	2.55	2.50	2.66	2.44
Frequency of drinking to get drunk	1.68	1.77	2.14	1.73	1.90	1.68	1.74	1.64
Frequency of smoking	1.79	2.76*	2.61*	2.34*	2.44*	2.31*	2.18*	1.91 [^]
Frequency of watching TV	3.01	3.70*	3.49	3.31	3.33	3.43*	3.25	2.95 [^]
Frequency of having been arrested	1.18	1.68*	1.75*	1.31 [^]	1.38	1.38[^]	1.35[^]	1.34[^]
Frequency pled guilty to non-minor offense	1.10	1.36*	1.41*	1.19	1.30	1.21*	1.17[^]	1.17 [^]
N of female sex partners (among women)	0.22	1.04*	1.47*	0.47 [^]	0.96*	0.47 [^]	0.52[^]	0.33 [^]
N of female sex partners (among men)	2.70	3.46	4.17	3.24	3.66	3.85*	3.23	3.37
N of male sex partners (among women)	2.79	4.02*	5.92*	3.49	3.97*	4.57*	4.04*	2.91 [^]
N of male sex partners (among men)	0.20	1.48*	1.47*	0.27	0.98*	0.55	0.42	0.44

Bold indicates the mean scores displayed are statistically-significantly different from IBFs (currently intact, bio mother/father household, column 1) without additional controls.

An asterisk (*) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's coefficient and that of IBFs, controlling for respondent's age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of mother's education, perceived household income while growing up, experience being bullied as a youth, and state's legislative gay-friendliness, derived from Poisson or negative binomial regression models (not shown).

A caret (^) next to the estimate indicates a statistically-significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the group's mean and the mean of LM (column 2), without additional controls.

Variables with a caret ^ indicate that the children in question are significantly different from those with "lesbian mothers." Listing these, and only these outcomes we have still compiled a troubling list. Compared with children of single mothers or stepparents, children whose mothers had a lesbian relationship reported:

- likely to have received welfare growing up
- less likely to be employed full-time and more likely to be unemployed
- less likely to identify as entirely heterosexual
- more likely to have had an affair while married or cohabiting
- more likely to have been forced to have sex against their will
- less likely to say that their family of origin provided them with safety and security
- more likely to be depressed

- more likely to have difficulty trusting others or depending on others
- more likely to have been arrested or plead guilty to a non-minor offense
- women are more likely to report a larger number of sex partners

The Ruth Institute and the upcoming Synod are both concerned about the impact of divorce on children as well as the impact of same sex parenting. The New Family Structures Survey reports information of interest. The “divorced” category does not really interest us, as these are people who lived with both parents of their entire childhood. But the Step and Single parents both capture situations of interest to us: the child’s parents were divorced and remarried, or the child’s parent were not married to each other or to anyone else.

Looking at these tables, we can conclude that the 6 “step family” and 7 “single parent” families are very similar to each other. Compared with IBF: the single parent/ stepfamily category is more likely to:

- had an affair while married or cohabiting
- had an Sexually Transmitted Infection
- been touched sexually by parent or other adult
- been forced to have sex against their will
- identify as something other than entirely heterosexual
- in an unmarried cohabiting relationship
- receiving welfare
- have lower income
- in therapy
- family received welfare growing up
- uneasy depending on or trusting others
- say that their current relationship is in trouble
- report a lower overall level of happiness

This study could be considered a contribution to the literature on the impact of alternative family forms on children. In that light, these results are well within line of the very large body of literature showing negative outcomes for children for children living in stepfamilies and children of never married mothers.

Self-reports by children of same sex couples

Before we leave the discussion of the data, we should take a moment to listen to the voices of the adult children of same sex parents themselves. The following quotes have been compiled from Lopez. (12)

- “I experienced the loss of my father as an amputation.” Jean-Dominique Bunel, -- 66 year old French humanitarian, raised by his mother and her female partner.
- “I felt it was better to be a gay male, or even a transgender male, that it was to be a little girl growing up. I always felt that I wasn’t lovable because I did not see the men in my life loving women.” Dawn S. ---Canadian woman raised by her gay father, and a series of his partners.
- “I just didn’t have a dad there... I filled that gap sexually. From the age of 13 on, I was extremely promiscuous and sleeping with a lot of older men.” Bobby L. -- Puerto Rican-Philippine-American man, raised by his mother and her female partner.
- “After my parents’ separation, my sister and I began spending every other weekend with my father in the city. He shared a condo with a man who had also left his wife and children. Those

weekends were a nightmare for my sister and me. Children are forced to live in a lifestyle they did not choose.” Jeremy D. --- American man, raised by his gay father.

- “When growing up, I always had the feeling of being something unnatural.... I had the feeling I was a lab experiment.” Bronaugh C. -- an American woman created by artificial insemination by her mother and her female partner.

4. Studies looking at other situations in which children have been separated from a parent, for instance, through divorce, show convincingly that the children of divorce face elevated risks for a variety of serious negative outcomes.

A. Children of Divorce

A thorough discussion of the data on alternative family structures is well beyond the scope of this review. The Children of Divorce have been extensively studied, with literally hundreds of scholarly books and articles on the subject. Likewise, children of cohabiting couples and single parents have been extensively studied. I reproduce here the table from the talk, with a few readily accessible general references. (4, 7, 8) In addition, the Ruth Institute’s on-line story collective Kids Divorce Stories (21) allows Children of Divorce to speak for themselves about their experiences. Many of those who contribute to that site are writing about their parents’ divorces from 30 years before.

Compared to children raised with their own married biological parents, children of divorce are at elevated risks for the following:

Getting sick	Dying at a younger age
Falling behind in math	Fewer close friends
Smoking	Suffering academically
Needing Ritalin	Not finishing high school
Losing contact with grandparents	Having a stroke
Engaging in drug or alcohol abuse	Engaging in early sexual activity
Engaging in criminal activities	Having sleep problems
Getting divorced as an adult	Having less parental supervision
Not finishing college	Not attending church
Doubting parents’ religious beliefs	Feeling a lack of compassion from their church
Persistent feelings of loneliness	Thoughts of suicide or violence

B. Donor Conceived Persons

Likewise, a full treatment of the impact of being Donor Conceived is beyond the scope of this report. The study of Donor Conceived Persons is hampered by many of the same problems hampering the study of children of same sex couples: difficulty in finding large numbers of people who would be truly representative of the experience of donor conception, and the impossibility of drawing firm conclusions about its long-term impact.

However, a few preliminary findings have emerged. One study (14) found that Donor Conceived Persons:

- Experience profound struggles with their origins and identities
- Experience tension, loss and confusion in their family relationships
- Have concerns about inadvertently forming intimate unions with unknown blood relatives
- Support the right of Donor Conceived Persons to know the truth about their origins

The Anonymous Us Story Collective (15) allows all persons who have been affected by Third Party Reproduction to tell their stories. These stories broadly support the results of the more systematic study. Further, the stories in the Collective reflect a profound discomfort with the economic transactions that formed the basis of their conception. And some Donor Conceived Persons report experiences similar to those of stepchildren: feeling that they were treated differently by their biological parent and that parent's spouse.

5. Studies looking at the stability of unions show that same sex unions are less stable than opposite sex unions.

Based on available evidence, same sex relationships appear to be less stable than married heterosexual relationships. For instance, in a US study (6) explaining the propensity of couples' relationships to endure more than 5 years, same-sex relationships were found to be less stable than opposite-sex married couples. Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less than 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.

In another US study, (10) purporting to show the higher quality of same-sex relationships, gay and lesbian couples were more likely to have dissolved at the end of 10 years (27% and 26% respectively), compared with heterosexual couples without and with children (19% and 13% respectively.) This result was found, in spite of the fact that individuals in the same-sex couples had higher levels of income and education than the members of the married opposite-sex couples.

In a study of Dutch data, (9) same-sex couples had a 3.15 times greater dissolution rate than opposite-sex cohabiting couples, and a 3.15 x 3.66, or 11.5 times greater, dissolution rate than opposite-sex married couples. Similar results were found for both Norway and Sweden: female partnerships have the highest dissolution rate (3). And including possibly confounding factors increased the gap between female divorce rates and both male divorce rates and heterosexual couples' divorce rates.

All in all, we have good reason to be concerned about the ongoing social experiment of same sex parenting.

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