ADOPTION, GENDER, AND SAME-SEX COUPLES: A STUDY OF ATTITUDES

By

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A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Humboldt State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Psychology: Counseling

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May 2015
Abstract

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The current study sought to investigate the relationship between 1) gender and bias towards lesbian and gay couples adopting, 2) gender and bias towards gay couples adopting a boy or a girl, and 3) gender and bias towards lesbian couples adopting a boy or a girl. Research questions investigated a) the relationship between gender and adoption bias and b) the relationship between gender and bias towards gay men and lesbian women. The Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP) assessed for bias towards lesbian and gay couples adopting. Lesbian Couples Sub-scale (LCS) measured bias towards lesbian couples adopting, and the Gay Couples Sub-scale (GCS) measured bias towards gay couples adopting. The Adoption Belief Scale (ABS) measured bias towards adoption and was used to rule out participants with greater bias towards adoption. The Modern Homonegativity Towards Gay Men (MHS-G) and Lesbians (MHS-L) measured bias towards gay and lesbian individuals. A total of 92 valid responses were used for this study (59 females and 33 males). In this study we found no statistical differences between the aforementioned hypotheses. The only statistical difference found in this study occurred between gender and the MHS-G and MHS-L. Men reported greater bias than women towards gay and lesbian individuals. Independent sample t-test(s) were used to test the above hypotheses. Implications of the results, limitations and directions for future research are presented.
Acknowledgements

I am greatly appreciative of those people who supported me through this eventful process. The staff and faculty that shared their wisdom and knowledge, thank you for being patient; my friends and colleagues, thank you for listening and understanding; Carlos I am in eternal debt with you. Finally, my charismatic, at times overbearing, but inimitable family… Diaz members you give me the most profound sense of meaning and purpose. Los quiero muchisimo!
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Adoption has long been a connecting service for parents and children who desire to create a family. The first laws of adoption can be traced back to 1851 by the state of Massachusetts. For a long time adoption was a means to provide a family for children who were poor and orphaned and couples of white, middle class, protestant and unable to bare children of their own (Brodzinsky, and Pinderhughes, 2002). The philosophy of adoption shifted from the best interest of the parents to the “best interest of the child”. The purpose was to regulate conditions under which a child was adopted and to assure the child would be placed in the best environment possible. Placement expectations valued homes where the child would receive the best psychological and sociological care. Centering around the new philosophy and the use of adoption agency systems the ideal goal was to place the child with the best potential parent(s) and therefore in the best setting possible. These expectations have reflected the values of those in socially dominant positions.

Since the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASF) of 1997, permanency for a child adopted (through foster care, or other means) has been a central focus (Scott, 2006). Finding a permanent, stable, and nurturing home for any child adopted supersedes the importance of placing children in a home based on the formation of the adopting family. Despite the obvious priorities of placing children in safe, continuous, and loving homes, preferences for excluding potential parents such as lesbian and gay couples due to their
lifestyle choices (i.e. their sexual orientation preferences) has gathered attention from the public and policy makers (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, and Chambers 2007; Scott, 2006; Allen and Burrell, 1997; Raymond, 1992).

Studies have looked into beliefs affecting lesbian and gay couples who want to adopt. Highly popular beliefs about children adopted into gay and lesbian homes include the fear of children developing a lesbian or gay orientation, the lack of role models from the opposite sex, and greater discrimination from peers (Clark, 2001; Raymond, 1992). While current studies disprove any significant differences indicating better psychosocial development when comparing children raised in heterosexual parent led homes as opposed to same-sex parent led homes (Brodinsky and Pinderhughes, 2003; Scott, 2006; Perrin, 2002; Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler and Lash-Esau, 2000; Allen, 1997), ambivalence for equalizing rights to all qualified parents persists.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

History of Adoption

The demographics of adopted children and adopting parents have changed drastically. The idea of typical homes consisting of two parents, heterosexual, white, middle class, between the age of thirty and forty, including infertile women and often times adopting white young/infant children has transformed over the years (Brodzinsky et al., 2003; Miall,1996). The value in placing adoptive children with parents according to their physical attributes and characteristics has also changed with time. According to Grotevant et. al, 2000, adoption is composed of a wider variety in arrangements both for the children adopted and the parent(s) adopting. Literature on adoption encompass the diverse demographics of children such as international, domestic, transracial, special needs, foster care, older age as well as the type of adoption including open adoption, closed adoption, and a combination of other forms (Brodzinsky et al., 2003; Grotevant et al., 2000; Javier, Baden, Biafora, and Camacho-Gingerich,2007). Parent(s) considered for adoption now include parents of lower socioeconomic status, single parent, lesbian/ gay otherwise known as same-sex couples, step-parents and grandparents.

Adoption literature has focused around the adjustment of the adopted child, their sense of identity, and issues pertaining to the social, emotional, and psychological development in comparison to non-adopted children (Brodzinsky et al., 2002; Javier et al., 2007). Of the many issues adopted children may face, societies biased perceptions
and stigmatized views on adoption may affect adopted children directly (Javier et al., 2007; Miall, 1996). Adoptions by gay men or lesbian women/same-sex parents (although not all same-sex couples have to be from an LG orientation) are included in the stigmatization of adoption. According to Gates et. al, 2007, adopted children of lesbian and gay couples are more likely to be younger and foreign born. Although a large number of children are adopted by lesbian and gay couples the legalization of adoption by lesbian and gay couples is not permitted in every state around the country.

Contemporary adoption can be considered an evolving service that has changed in many ways. The supply of children and demand of parents involved in adoption has transformed in time adapting to medical and societal changes. Infant children relinquished by parents has largely decreased. Teenage pregnancy has significantly decreased in the last thirty years, and with teenage mothers representing the highest amount of relinquishing parents the number of infant children up for adoption has highly reduced (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). On the other hand the demand that prospective parents have for the adoption service continues to remain the same considering one of the most common motives for adoption is due to infertility mainly by couples but also by single parent(s). Given that the number of domestic children decreased, women and couples have resorted to adopting internationally. It was estimated that international adoptions increased threefold between (5%) 1992 and (15%) 2001 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

Adoption as an overarching social service is viewed favorably by most Americans. Approximately four in ten Americans, or 81.5 million adults have considered
adopting at some point in their lives (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002). Positive opinions as well as familiarity with adoption was highly reported in the survey. Americans reported the need for adoption to be more encouraged nationwide.

**Attitudes Towards Adoption**

Recent studies have examined perceived and internalized stigmas about adoption among recently adoptive parents such as heterosexual and same-sex couples (Goldberg, Kinkler and Hines, 2011). In this study heteronormative notions of traditional adoptive couples were addressed. Other studies have reported that same-sex couples (lesbian and gay) have desired to adopt at some point in their life. Gates et al., 2007, found that almost half of lesbian and bisexual women have considered adopting in comparison to one third of their heterosexual counterparts. In addition gender roles associated with adoption beliefs were also investigated in current research, where women had more positive beliefs of adoption than men in general including transracial adoption (Gibbons, Ruefener, and Wilson, 2012; Whatley et al., 2003). Women’s more positive attitudes towards adoption have been correlated with their the idea of motherhood as a part of a woman’s identity. They also display more positive attitudes toward adopting, given their “flexible” notions of family constructions (Goldberg et al, 2011).

Attitudes about adoption have also been measured over time in an attempt to understand the perceived motives for adoption. The Evan. B. Donaldson Institute (2002) found that 63% of Americans think most parents adopt young children primarily to create a family for themselves, opposed to 20% who think they are motivated to provide a good home for a child who needs one. Given that reasons for adopting children may have
shifted from the couple’s inability to reproduce due to infertility, more recent research has looked into attitudes and perceptions towards different types of adoptions such as adoption by lesbian and gay couples.

**Adoption by Lesbian and Gay people**

Among many of the considerable challenges that prospective adopting parents may endure to adopt, including legal and financial responsibilities, lesbian and gay adoptive parents also have to account for the likelihood of experiencing various forms of discrimination. Parenting for lesbian and gay couples happens in a variety of ways, most often by having to go through legal channels either by having children through a previous (heterosexual/traditional) marriage and acquiring for custody thereafter, through adoption, fostering, through the use of artificial insemination or surrogacy, or by becoming a partner to someone with children and therefore a co-parent (Clarke, 2001; Perrin, 1997).

Societal ideologies of the traditional nuclear family including the values of heterosexual marriage and biological parenthood are highly challenged when same-sex parenting occurs. Above the stigma for non-biological ideas of adopting is also the component of the sexual orientation of same-sex couples. Even decades after the gay political movements since the 1960’s, sexual prejudice also known as homophobia (Herek, 2000) still occurs. Sexual prejudice is characterized (Herek, 2000) as heterosexual’s negative attitudes towards homosexual behavior, people of a homosexual orientation and their communities.
Past research has reported that potential lesbian and gay applicants are found less suitable for adopting (Gates et al., 2007). Negative attitudes of directors from adoption agencies toward lesbian and gay couples were also correlated with their belief that lesbian and gay couples (as applicants) required more evaluation. In a national survey, (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002) most Americans reported unfavorably to adoption by lesbian and gay couples. In this survey, younger people particularly under the age of thirty were more accepting of adoption by lesbian and/or gay couples than older people. Considering the timing of the study it is important to note that attitudes and opinions may shift rapidly with other factors affecting opinion such as policy ad law.

**Age Differences**

Generational differences have been studied within public opinion. It has been noted that younger generations may report more positive attitudes about lesbian women and gay men (Morrision, 2008). In a comparison study about people’s tolerance of homosexuality, from 1981-2000 the United States and Canada were compared (Andersen and Fetner, 2008). Canadians were more liberal than Americans and also more tolerant of homosexuality. In both the U.S. and Canada younger cohorts of participants were more in favor of social change for same-sex couples/ gay men and lesbian women. Other national studies have gathered similar results from younger respondents (Evan B. Donaldson, 2002; Gates, 2007).

Past studies that have yielded positive attitudes of younger populations include studies of college students. These studies included questions about transracial adoption and perceived family satisfaction (Bonds-Racke, 2009; Whatley, Jahandgardi, Ross, and
Knox, 2003). While research with college students may suggest that their attitudes toward lesbian and gay adopters may be more favorable since college students typically fall into a “younger” aged population, other research has investigated arguments of college students against gay and lesbian parenting (Clarke, 2001).

**Gender and Homophobic Attitudes**

Past research has found that heterosexual women have more favorable attitudes toward homosexuals than heterosexual men, and men tend to have less favorable attitudes toward gay men than lesbian women (Herek, 2000; Herek, 2002; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; Yang, 1997). Probable explanations supporting this line of research indicate that the differences are associated with the sex of the participant/respondent and the sex of the target, as heterosexual individuals tend to express less favorable to homosexual individuals of their same sex with notable differences between men and women.

**Myths about Same-Sex parenting**

Common arguments against lesbian and gay parents included the idea that same-sex parenting is sinful, unnatural, and selfish. Negative effects on the children from same-sex parents centered on psychological and sociological disadvantages. In the research by Clarke, 2001, opinions of lesbian and gay parenting were unfavorable because many of the respondents in this study thought that there was no gender balance in same-sex coupled families and therefore the children would lack positive role models. Respondents were concerned for the identity formation of children of a particular sex, i.e., a female would identify with the opposite sex if raised by two gay males and produce
a “tomboy” like identity. In the case of a male child growing up in a lesbian household a child may have been thought to develop an “effeminate” type of identity.

**Bias Towards Same-Sex Parenting**

Since Civil Rights movements from the 1960’s, people have long attempted to fight for the justice of people who are of a lesbian and gay orientation and for a country’s ability to accept freedom of sexual expression. Unfortunately sexual prejudice persists and denies fair treatment to those who deviate from the rigid norms and standards our society has long adhered to. Underlying motivators for sexual prejudice/ homophobia have long been studied. For some heterosexual individuals prejudice against homosexual individuals is influenced by whether or not the heterosexual individuals have had positive experiences with lesbian/gay individuals. Other sexual prejudice is thought to be rooted in fears about homosexuality, gender conformity and an in-group out-group mindset, which reinforces the lack of flexibility and acceptance to anything other than a binary system. (Herek, 2002)

In addition to direct hate, discrimination and prejudice toward individuals in relationships with those of their same-sex, families created by lesbian and gay couples are also highly discriminated. Laws and opinions directly and indirectly affecting family formation have been accounted for in previous literature. Parents from a lesbian and gay orientation are thought to be selfish when adopting (Clarke, 2002; Raymond, 1992). Reasons behind the idea that lesbian and gay parents are selfish lies in the belief that same-sex parents lack the ability to make the personal sacrifice not to expose a child to their lifestyle.
From the lens of a homophobic society, the idea that gay men and lesbian women choose to build a family (in a same-sex relationship) is undesirable. Beliefs that children would also develop to be homosexuals was a high public concern. Other public concerns were established around whether the child would be bullied at school for having two mothers or fathers and if the child would have enough role models displaying gender roles matching their own. Nonetheless there are preferences between same-sex parenting groups. For lesbians the culture of being a woman comes with high values for potential motherhood as a part of a woman’s identity. For gay men, views about parenting are influenced by bias that gay men are hedonistic implying that parenting only fulfills a need in their favor and not that of the child (Raymond, D., 1992; Golombok, Mellish, Jennings, Casey, Lamb, and Tasker, 2013; Tasker, 2005).

Many same sex couples experience more challenges than their heterosexual counterparts when they go through the adoption process (Gates et al, 2007; Evan B. Donaldson, 2002). Past studies have noted that when lesbian and gay couples are given a choice about the gender of the prospective adoptive child they initially tend to choose a child of their same gender, but ultimately are comfortable with adopting a child of any gender, possibly because they experience more difficulties in adopting overall (Goldberg, 2009).

The present research focuses on the current perceived attitudes toward adoption involving lesbian and gay couples, and lesbian and gay couples when they adopt a child of their matched sex/gender, or adopting a child of their opposite sex/gender. This study intends to yield results that will be useful to understand beliefs about same-sex/lesbian
and gay couples adopting. Given that there is a high demand for adopting and parenting for those who may consider adopting at some point, information about beliefs and biases regarding same-sex parents adopting may be useful in understanding this social service. In this current research gender differences of respondents will be the central focus to predict bias towards adoption by lesbian and gay couples. An administered survey comprising questionnaires on adoption, sexual prejudice and parenting are followed.
CHAPTER III

Statement of the Problem

Attitudes towards lesbian and gay people (including individuals and couples) have long been studied. Much of the research investigating attitudes towards the lesbian and gay community covers participants’ demographics that have contributed information about differences in attitudes, such as educational level, ethnicity, gender/sex, age, socio-economic status, religious affiliation and political orientation (Herek, 2000; Herek, 2002; Steffens, 2005; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; Yang, 1997).

Attitudes toward lesbian and gay people have been noted to be more favorable in more recent studies, preferably among younger people, i.e., individuals in their thirties or younger, as opposed to older people (Steffens & Wagner 2004). Past research has indicated that despite the more favorable attitudes towards lesbian and gay individuals in current time, people still tend to have an opinion of the “rights” they should be granted, such as employment rights, marital rights, and adopting a child (Herek, 2002). Current research has focused in on issues regarding lesbian and gay couples adopting children. One particular problem with adopting children is the absence of warranted recognition for same-sex marriage across the board nationally. The lack of recognition for same-sex marriage also impedes these couples of the ability to legally adopt in some states.

The amount of children that are adopted by lesbian and gay couples yearly is not clear. Adoptions for lesbian and gay parents may occur through an agency, by foster care and or by becoming a second parent (Gates et. al, 2007). If 33% of children adopted
through foster care are placed with single parents and single parents adopt at the same rate as lesbian and gay parents, then it is estimated that approximately an annual rate of 65,500 adopted children are living with a lesbian or gay parent. Most adoptions to lesbian and gay parents have happened by them reporting as single parents. For that reason it is unclear if children adopted by lesbian and gay parents are being raised in two parent households (Gates, 2007; Ryan, 2006). The Human Rights Campaign, 2007 estimated that around four percent of all adopted children are being raised by lesbian and gay families across the United States.

It is worth noting that research investigating adoption by lesbian and gay parents is occurring at different times and is comprised of different variables. For example some research may be comprised of only lesbian, gay and bisexual couples adopting while others may combine lesbian, gay and bisexual single parents and couples (Gates, 2007; Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002; Ryan, 2006)

While thousands of children are adopted by lesbian and gay couples annually, the legalization of adoption by same-sex couples is not permitted in every state around the country. Despite removing homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1974, discrimination against individuals and couples based on sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation still exists, and often times is used as a precursor to deny lesbian and gay couples the opportunities to become adoptive parents (Herek, 2000; Scott, 2006). Discrimination in states such as Florida explicitly ban same sex couples from adopting jointly. Both Florida and Mississippi laws allow a single unmarried LGBT adult to adopt but prohibit couples of the same gender to adopt jointly. Conversely other states’ policies such as California,
Maryland, and Massachusetts cannot ban people from adopting solely based on their sexual orientation (Gates et al., 2007; Human Rights Campaign, 2007; Marks, N., 2012). However, the National Center for Lesbian Rights has pointed out that laws advocating for individuals of a lesbian and/or gay orientation are also subjected to discrimination on a state by state basis when fighting for custody or other parental rights (such as individuals that are parents from previous marriages with children). In determining the “best interest” of the child, the court may introduce the issue of the parent(s) “sexual practices” lifestyle as a potential harm to the child. Virginia, Mississippi, Missouri, North and South Dakota, along with Oklahoma are recognized states known to engage in practices where sexual orientation has been used to determine the best environment for the child based on the aforementioned lifestyle preferences of the parent(s) (Allen, M., and Burrell, N., 2008; Marks, N., 2012).

National projects such as the “All children-All families” campaign have worked towards training agencies in cultural competency for the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) communities. They attempt to maximize awareness and availability for LGBT prospective parents, but also to reduce bias and discrimination against these potential families (Human Rights Campaign, 2007). In addition, other projects such as the National Adoption Attitudes Survey (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002) as well as other studies (Herek, 2002; Yang, 1997) have focused on general opinions, views, and attitudes about adoption (and specific types of adoptions such as adoption by same-sex couples).
Previous research has presented consistent findings that participants’ demographics influence their attitudes. Younger people (under the age of thirty) are more accepting than older people of lesbian and gay people adopting (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002; Steffens & Wagner, 2004). Empirical research has also found that heterosexual women have more favorable attitudes towards lesbian and gay people than heterosexual men, and men tend to have less favorable attitudes toward gay men than lesbian women (Herek, 2000; Herek, 2002; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; Yang, 1997). Past research has noted beliefs of heterosexual men about gay men where they believed that at least half of gay men are child molesters, twice as much as they believed of lesbians (Clark, 2001; Yang, 1997).

Probable explanations supporting this line of research indicate that the differences are associated with the sex of the participant/respondent and the sex of the target. Another potential explanation for stigma towards lesbian and gay people lies in their violation of gender roles, with more discrimination against gay men because they are perceived as giving up the privileged status of being a male (Herek, 2002).

Attitudes about gender roles have been known to influence attitudes about homosexuality which could also influence attitudes about same-sex couples parenting. Attitudes about lesbian women and gay men parenting have yet to be sufficiently researched (Steffens, 2004). It is unclear whether people view lesbian and gay parents equally or if there may be differences in perception that favor one family formation over the other. This study will assess participants’ attitudes towards lesbian and gay couples adopting especially when they adopt a child of their same or opposite sex (gender).
Hypothesis 1a.

Men will be more biased than women towards gay couples adopting. Greater bias was measured by lower scores on the GCS.

Hypothesis 1b.

Men will be more biased than women towards lesbian couples adopting. Greater bias will be measured by lower scores on the LCS.

Hypothesis 2a.

Men will be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a boy than a girl. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a boy versus a girl was measured with lower scores on item 14a.

Hypothesis 2b.

Men will be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a girl versus a boy. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a girl versus a boy was measured with lower scores on item 15a.

Hypothesis 3a.

Men will be more biased than women towards lesbian couples when they adopt/raise a boy versus girl. Greater bias towards lesbian couples adopting a boy versus a girl was determined by lower scores on item 14b.

Hypothesis 3b.

We hypothesized men will be more biased than women towards lesbian couples when they adopt/raise a girl versus a boy. Greater bias towards lesbian couples adopting a girl versus a boy was measured by lower scores on item 15b.
Research Question 1.

Are there gender related differences in bias towards adoption? We predicted men will have higher bias than women as represented by lower scores on the ABS.
CHAPTER IV

Method

Participants

Participants were at least 18 years of age and provided consent to participate. Participants were recruited mainly through internet advertisements such as Facebook, Google and email links. Survey Monkey © web database was used to provide the questionnaires and scales necessary to complete the study. A total of 109 participants were collected for this study, one participant was excluded using the Adoption Belief Scale (ABS) cut-off score requirements (see Instrumentation), and 17 were missing demographic information and were excluded from the study. A final total of 92 participant responses were used for this study (see Results section for demographics)

Instrumentation

An informed consent was administered prior to other measures (Appendix A). Participants consented by answering “yes” to an informed consent and followed up with the questionnaires. Those who answered “no” were directed to the end of study page followed by a list of resources (Appendix G). Five additional questionnaires followed the informed consent. Questionnaires were presented in the following order: Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive parents Scale (Appendix B), Adoption Beliefs Scale (Appendix C), Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Lesbians (Appendix D) and Modern Homonegativity Scale Towards Gay men (Appendix E), and finally a demographics questionnaire (Appendix F) comprising the following: gender, age,
ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP) assesses for attitudes toward lesbian and gay couples adopting (Spivey, 2006). The ATSCAP is an unpublished scale first designed to assess social workers’ attitudes about lesbian and gay couples adopting and their likelihood of placement. The ATSCAP is a 13 item Likert scale ranging from 1= “strongly agree” to 6= “strongly disagree”. Scores range from 25 to 150, with the higher scores indicating more favorable attitudes toward lesbian and gay parenting. The ATSCAP yielded a reliability coefficient of .96 in its pilot study, indicating excellent reliability. The ATSCAP is comprised of two subscales, the Gay Couple Sub-scale (GCS) comprising items 2a through 13a, and the Lesbian Couple Sub-scale (LCS) comprising items 2b through 13b; scores on the subscales ranged from 12 – 72, higher scores indicating more favorable attitudes. Two additional items were added to the ATSCAP, each include two subsections. Items 14a and 15a were designed to assess for differences in bias towards gay male couples adopting a boy or a girl (14a. “I believe gay male couples would be more suitable to raise a boy than a girl”, and 15a. “I believe gay male couples would be more suitable to raise a girl than a boy”). Items 14b and 15b were designed to assess bias towards lesbian couples adopting a boy or a girl (14b. “I believe lesbian couples would be more suitable to raise a boy than a girl”, 15b. “I believe lesbian couples would be more suitable to raise a girl than a boy”). Scores for these items were consistent with the ATSCAP scoring ranging from 1= “strongly agree” to 6= “strongly disagree. Items 14a, 14b, 15a and 15b were scored separately to avoid psychometric errors pertaining to the initial design of the ATSCAP scale. The Adoption Belief Scale (ABS) is an 11-item scale
where participants respond to a 4 point scale ranging from 1 “strongly agree” to 4 “strongly disagree”, higher scores indicate greater acceptance of adoption”. An analysis of internal reliability yielded an acceptable score $\alpha = .70$ (Gibbons, Wilson, & Rufener, 2006). This scale was be used as a manipulation tool to rule out data from participants who may have negative attitudes towards adoption which in turn could affect the results of the study. Cut-off scores for the ABS were not provided by the author of the scale but were set by this researcher as follows: 11-21 = unfavorable towards adoption, 22 = neutral, 23-44 = favorable towards adoption. Scores of 21 or lower will be omitted from this study. The Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS) is a scale assessing for contemporary attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women (Morrison and Morrison, 2008). This instrument will be used as a tool for measuring current attitudes of lesbian women and gay men in this sampled population. There are two forms of this measure MHS-G (with questions specifically pertaining to gay men i.e. “gay men have all the rights they need”), and the MHS-L (with questions pertaining to lesbian women i.e. “lesbian women have all the rights they need”). Both versions use a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), scores range from 19-95 with higher scores indicating greater negative attitudes. The Demographics Questionnaire included four questions regarding age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

**Procedure**

To promote anonymity participants were not asked to give their name, last name, or any other information that will trace them to this study. Participants were asked to fill out an informed consent and were described the general intent of the study. They were
given instructions on the procedures of the questionnaires. When they finished the survey participants were debriefed via an electronic form thanking them for their participation and describing the true intention of the study. Participants were welcomed to ask any questions related to the study and were provided with an email and phone number to contact someone if they needed extra support.

**Data Analysis**

Statistics for this study were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 22. For hypotheses one through three an independent sample t-test was used to investigate differences between groups. For research question one an independent sample t-test was also used to analyze differences between groups.
CHAPTER V

Results

Demographics

From the total 92 participants, 59 (54.1%) were female, 33 (30.3 %) were male, and 17 (15.5 %) were missing from the data set. One participant was excluded from the study due to a cut-off score below 21 on the Adoption Belief Scale (see Instrumentation section) (Table 1).

A total of 93 participants identified their age group. Of those 93, 21 respondents (19.3%) were between the ages of 18-24, 52 respondents (47.7%) between the ages of 25-34, 10 respondents (9.2%) between the ages of 35-44, 6 respondents (5.5 %) between the ages of 45-54, and 3 respondents (2.8%) between the ages of 55-64. 17 (15.5%) were missing/unknown and excluded from the data (Table 2).

Total 93 responses were collected for the demographic question on sexual orientation, and divided into the following categories: Bisexual 9 (8.2%), Gay 3 (2.7%), Straight/heterosexual (73 66.4%), Questioning 4 (3.6%), or Prefer not to answer 4 (3.6 %). 17 (15.5%) were missing/unknown and excluded from the data. (Table 3).

A total of 93 responses were collected and divided into the following seven categories: Asian or Pacific Islander 6 (5.5 %), Black or African American 5 (4.5%), Hispanic or Latino 28 (25.5 %), White/ Caucasian 37 (33.6%), Mixed 10 (9.1%), Prefer not to answer 4 (3.6%), Other 3 (2.7%). 17 (15.5%) were missing/unknown and excluded from the data (Table 4).
Table 1

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Sexual orientation for total sample

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<th>Sexual orientation</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight (heterosexual)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Ethnicity for total sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 1a

We hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards gay couples adopting. Greater bias was measured by lower scores on the GCS.

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/males) and bias towards gay couples adopting (GCS). There was no significant difference between females \((M = 58.85, SD = 12.34)\) and males \((M = 54.29, SD = 13.31)\) in their level of bias towards gay male couples adopting \(t(86) = 1.61, p = .110, d = 0.35.\)
Table 5

Differences between gender groups and GCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58.85</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54.29</td>
<td>13.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCS= Gay Couple Sub-scale, gender groups = Female/ Male
**Hypothesis 1b**

*We hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards lesbian couples adopting. Greater bias will be measured by lower scores on the LCS.*

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/ males) and bias towards lesbian couples adopting (LCS). There was no significant difference between females ($M = 59.74, SD = 11.33$) and males ($M = 55.96, SD = 11.91$) in their level of bias towards lesbian couples adopting $t (82) = 1.43, p = .155$, $d = 0.32$. 
Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LCS</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>59.74</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55.96</td>
<td>11.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

gender groups = Female/ Male
Hypothesis 2a

We hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a boy than a girl. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a boy versus a girl was measured by lower scores on item 14a.

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/males) and bias towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a boy than a girl (item 14a: “I believe gay male couples are more suitable to raise a boy than a girl”). There was no significant difference between females ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.30$) and males ($M = 4.87, SD = 1.12$) in their level of bias towards gay male couples adopting a boy than a girl $t(89) = -0.224, p = .823, d = -0.04$. 
Table 7

Differences between gender groups and Question 14a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 14a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14a = “I believe gay male couples are more suitable to raise a boy than a girl”.
Hypothesis 2b

We hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a girl than a boy. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a girl versus a boy was measured with lower scores on item 15a.

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/males) and bias towards gay couples adopting a girl than a boy. There was no significant difference between females ($M = 4.91, SD = 1.29$) and males ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.26$) in their level of bias towards gay couples adopting a girl versus a boy $t(90) = .349, p = .728, d = 0.07$. 
Table 8

Differences between gender groups and Question 15a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 15a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15a = “I believe gay male couples are more suitable to raise a girl than a boy”.
**Hypothesis 3a**

*We hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards lesbian couples when they adopt/raise a boy than a girl. Greater bias towards lesbian couples adopting a boy versus a girl was measured by lower scores on item 14b.*

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/males) and bias towards lesbian couples adopting/raising a boy than a girl. There was no significant difference between females ($M = 5.05, SD =1.26$) and males ($M = 5.00, SD =1.06$) in their level of bias towards lesbian couples adopting a boy versus a girl $t(90) = .195, p = .845, d =0.04$. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 14b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14b = “I believe lesbian couples are more suitable to raise a boy than a girl”.
**Hypothesis 3b.**

*Men will be more biased than women towards lesbian couples adopting/raising a girl than a boy? Greater bias towards lesbian couples adopting a girl versus a boy was measured by lower scores on item 15b.*

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/ males) and bias towards lesbian couples adopting a girl than a boy. There was no significant difference between females ($M = 4.96, SD = 1.32$) and males ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.11$) in their level of bias towards lesbian couples adopting a girl versus a boy $t$ (89) = .651, $p = .517$, $d = 0.14$. 
Table 10

Differences between gender groups and Question 15b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 15b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15b = “I believe lesbian couples are more suitable to raise a girl than a boy”. 
Research Question

*Are there gender related differences in bias towards adoption? We predicted men will have higher bias than women as represented by lower scores on the ABS.*

Using an independent sample t-test we measured differences between gender groups (females/males) and bias towards adoption (ABS). There was no significant difference between females ($M = 36.58, SD = 4.47$) and males ($M = 36.54, SD = 4.34$) in their level of bias towards gay male couples adopting $t(87) = .038$, $p = .969$, $d = 0.009$. 
Table 11

Differences between gender groups and ABS total sample scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.54</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABS = Adoption Belief Scale, gender groups = Female/ Male
Supplemental Analyses

*Are there gender related differences in bias towards lesbian and gay people such that men will have higher bias than women towards lesbian and gay people as represented by higher scores on the MHS-L and MHS-G?*

This supplemental analysis was used to determine whether the sample population in this study was consistent with findings in other studies such that there would be gender differences in bias towards gay and lesbian people, with men reporting scores representative of more biased attitudes than women towards gay and lesbian people.

Using an independent sample *t*-test we found statistically significant differences between gender (female/ male) and bias towards lesbian and gay people. For differences between bias towards lesbians (MHS-L) and gender (female/ male) the results are as follows: females (*M* = 38.14, *SD* = 15.48) and males (*M* = 48.13, *SD* = 14.89), *t*(85) = -2.89, *p* < .05, *d* = -0.65. For differences gender (female/male) and bias towards gay people (MHS-G) the results are as follows: females (*M* = 38.68, *SD* = 16.56) and males (*M* = 50.32, *SD* = 16.12), *t*(77) = -3.01, *p* < .05, *d* = -0.71 (Table 12 and 13).
Table 12

Differences between gender groups, MHS-L

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHS-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.898*</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38.14</td>
<td>15.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48.13</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MHS-L = Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Lesbians and gender groups = Female/ Male. *p<.05
Table 13

Differences between gender groups and MHS-G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHS-G</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.014*</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38.68</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50.32</td>
<td>16.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Gay Men = MHS-G and gender groups = Female/ Male. *p<.05
The Cronbach’s alpha levels for the scales and subscales were the following: the ATSCAP had an alpha level of .951, subscale GLS (questions 2a-13a) alpha level was .902, subscale LCS (questions 2b-13b) alpha level was .885. The ABS alpha level was .795, the MHS-G alpha level was .958 and MHS-L alpha level was .935 (Table 14).
Table 14

Cronbach’s Alphas for the Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP), its subscales Gay Couple Sub-scale (GCS) and Lesbian Couple Sub-scale (LCS), Adoption Belief Scale (ABS), Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Gay Men (MHS-G), and Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Lesbians (MHS-L).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATSCAP</td>
<td>.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCS</td>
<td>.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHS-G</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHS-L</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATSCAP = Total score for the ATSCAP scale, GCS = Gay Couple Sub-scale (ATSCAP subscale), LCS = Lesbian Couple Sub-scale (ATSCAP subscale), ABS = Total score for the Adoption Belief Scale, MHS-G = Total score for the Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Gay Men, MHS-L = Modern Homonegativity Scale Toward Lesbians.
The ATSCAP showed statistically significant relationships with all scales. For subscales LCS and GCS the correlations are as follows: ATSCAP and the LCS ($r = .978$, $p < .01$), ATSCAP and GCS ($r = .985$, $p < .01$), indicating that as scores on the ATSCAP increase the scores on the GCS and LCS subscales also increase. The ATSCAP and the ABS yielded positive significant results ($r = .329$, $p < .01$), such that when scores on ATSCAP increase scores on ABS also increase. The ATSCAP and the MHS-L and MHS-G yielded significant negative correlations. The correlations are as follows: The ATSCAP and MHS-L ($r = -.477$, $p = .01$), ATSCAP and MHS-G ($r = -.574$, $p < .01$) such that when scores on the ATSCAP increase scores on the MHS-L and MHS-G decrease. Between subscales the LCS and the GCS yielded a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .931$, $p < .01$) indicating that when scores on one scale increase they also increase in the other. Subscales LCS and GCS also had a positive correlation with ABS. The correlations are as follows: ABS and LCS ($r = .358$, $p < .01$), ABS and GCS ($r = .353$, $p < .01$). The MHS-L had a statistically positive correlation with MHS-G ($r = .933$, $p < .01$) such that when the scores on MHS-L increase the scores on MHS-G also increase. The MHS-G and MHS-L did not yield statistically significant results with the ABS. The MHS-L and ABS ($r = -.162$) and the MHS-G and ABS ($r = -.095$) (Table 15).
Table 15

Pearson correlations between Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP) and its subscales [LCS and GCS], Adoption Belief Scale (ABS), Modern Homonegativity Toward Lesbians (MHS-L) and Modern Homonegativity Toward Gay Men (MHS-G)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ATSCAP</th>
<th>LCS</th>
<th>GCS</th>
<th>ABS</th>
<th>MHS-L</th>
<th>MHS-G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATSCAP</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCS</td>
<td>.978**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>.985**</td>
<td>.931**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>.329**</td>
<td>.358**</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHS-L</td>
<td>- .477**</td>
<td>- .477**</td>
<td>- .474**</td>
<td>- .162</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHS-G</td>
<td>- .574**</td>
<td>- .565**</td>
<td>- .539**</td>
<td>- .095</td>
<td>.933**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATSCAP = Total Score for the ATSCAP scale, LCS = Lesbian Couples Sub-scale (ATSCAP subscale), GCS = Gay Couple Sub-scale (ATSCAP subscale), ABS = Total Score for the ABS scale, MHS-L = Total Score for the MHS-L scale and MHS-G = Total Score for the MHS-G scale. ATSCAP n = 96, LCS n = 101, GCS n = 105, ABS n = 102, MHS-L n = 90, and MHS-G n = 79. **p<.01
CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate public bias towards same-sex couples who adopt. The main area of focus was on differences between gender groups. The hypotheses were based on variables supported by past research. This study failed to find statistically significant differences in the predicted hypotheses. It was predicted that participant’s gender would be a contributing factor for differences in bias towards gay adopting couples and lesbian adopting couples, with more bias from male than female respondents. It was predicted that participant’s gender would account for differences in bias towards gay adopting couples when gay couples adopted a boy versus a girl, and a girl versus a boy, with more bias from men than women respondents. It was hypothesized that for lesbian couples adopting, men would be more biased than women when lesbian couples adopted a boy than a girl. For research question one participant’s gender did not account for significant differences in bias towards lesbian couples adopted a girl rather a boy. In the supplemental analyses differences between participant’s gender and bias towards lesbian and gay individuals, we found that gender did have a significant effect, with men accounting for more bias than women and more bias towards gay men than lesbians as supported by past research ((Herek, 2000; Herek, 2002; Steffens & Wgner, 2004; Yang, 1997).

In hypothesis one (a) we hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards gay couples adopting but mean scores between female ($M = 58.85$, $SD = 12.34$)
and male \((M=54.29, \, SD=13.31)\) respondents did not statistically differ. To test this hypothesis we used an independent sample \(t\)-test to account for differences between participants’ gender (female/male) and greater bias (lower scores on the GCS) towards gay couples adopting. In hypothesis one (b) we predicted men would be more biased than women towards lesbian couples adopting but mean scores between female \((M=59.74, \, SD=11.33)\) and male \((M=55.96, \, SD=11.91)\) respondents did not statistically differ. To test this hypothesis we used a \(t\)-test to account for differences between gender (female/male) and greater bias (lower scores on the LCS) towards lesbian couples adopting.

We also failed to statistically support the prediction in hypothesis two (a,b). For hypothesis two (a) we hypothesized men would be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a boy versus a girl. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a boy versus a girl was measured with lower scores on item 14a. Scores between female \((M=4.81, \, SD=1.30)\) and male \((M=4.87, \, SD=1.12)\) respondents did not significantly differ. A \(t\)-test was used to test for differences between gender groups (female/male) and greater bias towards gay couples adopting a boy versus a girl (lower scores on item 14a). In hypothesis two (b) we predicted men would be more biased than women towards gay couples when they adopt/raise a girl versus a boy. Scores between female \((M=4.91, \, SD=1.29)\) and male \((M=4.81, \, SD=1.26)\) did not statistically differ.

For hypothesis three (a) we predicted men would be more biased than women towards lesbian couples when they adopt/raise a boy versus a girl. Greater bias towards gay couples adopting a boy versus a girl was measured with lower scores on item 15a. To
test hypothesis three we used an independent sample t-test but scores between female 
\(M=5.05, \text{SD}=1.26\) and male \(M=5.00, \text{SD}=1.06\) respondents did not statistically differ.  
Hypothesis three (b) we investigated bias in gender differences towards lesbian couples 
adopting a girl versus a boy (item 15b). We speculated that consistent with the previous 
hypotheses we would find that men would be more bias than women towards lesbian 
couples adopting a girl versus a boy. To test this question we used an independent sample 
t-test between gender and item 15b but scores between female \(M=4.96, \text{SD}=1.32\) and 
male \(M=4.78, \text{SD}=1.11\) did not statistically differ.

The research question intended to investigate the differences between 
participants’ gender and attitudes towards adoption. We also failed to support significant 
differences with gender and bias towards adoption in the research question, such that men 
and women did not significantly differ in bias towards adoption (lower scores on ABS). 
In fact scores between groups were very close with females \(M=36.58, \text{SD}=36.54\) and 
males \(M=36.54, \text{SD}=4.34\). An independent sample t-test was also used to test between 
groups and the ABS.

Finally, in our supplemental analyses we investigated differences between gender 
and bias towards lesbian women and gay men and found significant differences. We 
found that men \(M=48.13, \text{SD}=14.89\) are more biased than women \(M=38.14, \text{SD}=15.48\) 
towards lesbians. We also found that men \(M=50.32, \text{SD}=16.12\) are more biased than 
women \(M=38.68, \text{SD}=16.56\) towards gay men. Past research supports that men 
compared to women are less favorable towards lesbian women and gay men but also less 
favorable to gay men than lesbian women.
In sum, this study intended to investigate differences between gender groups: men and women, such that men would report a succession of higher bias towards adoption by same sex couples: gay couples and lesbian couples adopting. In retrospect it is unclear as to why differences were only found in bias towards gay men and lesbian women but not gay men and lesbian couples adopting. It may be that while the general concept of homosexuality is less favored by men than women, the specific circumstance of gay and lesbian adoption pulls for a different perception. Because perception in adoption plays a role in policy and implementation of policy in adoption for same-sex couples, it is important to tease out this distinction. Anti-bias training for social workers and therapists may not warrant a specific focus on the gender of the professional as might have been assumed from previous data that indicates men have more bias than women about homosexuality in general.

Limitations

General limitations of this study need to be discussed as a caveat for the results gathered. First and foremost, the sample size was far below expected. The initial number of responses reported from Survey Monkey was nearly threefold before the data cleansing. The sample size for male responses was not representative of the general population.

While the scales used in this study showed excellent validity (see Table 2) several limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. The Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP) was an unpublished scale formerly designed to assess attitudes of social workers and students in a social work related field.
Questions related to *placement* of a child with a lesbian or gay couple could have been mildly confusing to some respondents. This is a term used in the field of adoption and social work that may not be familiar to the lay population. The Gay Couple Subscale (GCS) and the Lesbian Couple Subscale (LCS) were subscales within the ATSCAP. Items on both scales were mirroring questions of each other which could have allowed for participants to figure out the intent of the study and answer desirably.

It is necessary to mention that items 14 a/b and items 15 a/b were created by this researcher. The wording of these four questions asked about *raising* a child (boy or girl) and not adopting. Once again participants could have misinterpreted the question. The fact that hypotheses two (a/b), hypothesis three, and research question one were tested using a single item rather than a whole measure/scale, yields suggestions for future research in this area.

**Implications of study**

If the sample size collected in this study is generalizable to the U.S. population, results found in the data suggest that there are no gender differences that account for bias against gay and lesbian couples adopting, or even a preference favoring one group over another, gay or lesbian couples adopting. It is unclear as to what other factors could have contributed to the absence of significant results given that same-sex marriage and same-sex parenting has governed a great deal of attention and controversy in the last two decades. It is possible that people may feel more empathy or favorable towards lesbian and gay parents rather than as individuals or couples, but more research is necessary to investigate further.
Other explanations could be the legalization of same-sex marriage in California and several other states, potentially normalizing stigma against same-sex couples. It is unclear as to what degree the general public supports families led by same-sex couples, or if the general public is in favor of adoption by all means supporting placement of children in permanent homes.

**Future Research**

Future studies in this area may also need to specify the kind of adoption occurring by same-sex couples, whether joint, second parent, foster care, international, or domestic. Assuming that people have the same opinion about all adoptions is a risk that could be prevented. Future research in this area may include a larger sample size equally representative of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and perhaps even account for other factors known to influence attitudes such as religious affiliation, education and familiarity with adoption.

A possible way to account for that would be the use of a more descriptive adoption measure. The area of research investigating adoption by same-sex couples has yet to gather more evidence as to whether the gender of the child adopted by a same-sex couple is an area of interest.
References


Urban Institute.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J145v09n02_06


https://ezproxy.memphis.edu:3343/login?url=http://heinon...


http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp


http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/109/2/341.full.html


doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01306.x


Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Consent

*Parenting and Family Structure*

You are invited to join a research study to look at parenting and family structure. Please take whatever time you need to decide if you would like to participate, the decision to join, or not to join is up to you. In this research study, we are investigating family structures and different kinds of parenting. If you decide to participate you will be asked to answer a series of questions. We think this will take you approximately 30-45 minutes.

You can stop participating at any time. Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty.

This study is of minimal risk; however some questions may elicit thoughts that could result in temporary emotional and/or psychological discomfort. There may also be other risks that we cannot predict. We can’t guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study, but your participation will provide useful information that can be used for future research, policy, and/or social services.

We will take the following steps to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage: you will be assigned a number at the beginning of the study and will be referenced as the assigned number to protect your identity and ensure anonymity.

**CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?**

If you have questions about the study, any problems, unexpected discomforts, or think that something unusual or unexpected is happening please contact

The Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Dr. Ethan Gahtan, at eg51@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-4545.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, report them to the Humboldt State University Dean of Research, Dr. Rhea Williamson, at Rhea.Williamson@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5169.

Please print this informed consent form now and retain it for your future reference. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research as described, please check the box below to begin the online survey. Thank you for your participation in this research.
☐ I have read and understood this consent information, and agree to participate in the survey.
Appendix B

Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Couples as Adoptive Parents Scale (ATSCAP)

This Questionnaire is designed to measure your feelings and beliefs regarding same-sex couples as adoptive parents. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as honestly as you can by placing a number beside each statement as follows. (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Slightly Agree, (4) Slightly Disagree, (5) Disagree, (6) Strongly Disagree

1.____ I believe the best interests of children are served by placement with heterosexual couples.

2.____ (a) I would feel uncomfortable placing a child in a home where he/ she would have two male parents. 
   ____ (b) I would feel uncomfortable placing a child in a home where he/she would have two female parents.

3.____ (a) I would feel nervous placing children with gay male couples. 
   ____ (b) I would feel nervous placing children with lesbian couples.

4.____ (a) I would feel angry if a child were placed with a gay male couple instead of a heterosexual couple. 
   ____ (b) I would feel angry if a child were placed with a lesbian couple instead of a heterosexual couple.

5.____ (a) I do not believe children raised by gay male couples are more likely to be sexually abused than children raised by heterosexual couples. 
   ____ (b) I do not believe children raised by lesbian couples are more likely to be sexually abused than children raised by heterosexual couples.

6.____ (a) I believe children raised by gay male couples are no more likely to experience significant developmental differences than children raised by heterosexual couples. 
   ____ (b) I believe children raised by lesbian couples are no more likely to experience significant developmental differences than children raised by heterosexual couples.

7.____ (a) I would feel confident in placing a child in the care of a gay male couple. 
   ____ (b) I would feel confident in placing a child in the care of a lesbian couple.

8.____ (a) I believe children raised by gay male couples are more likely to be teased by their peers.
(b) I believe children raised by lesbian couples are more likely to be teased by their peers.

9. (a) I would feel comfortable interacting with gay male couples that are interested in adopting.  
(b) I would feel comfortable interacting with lesbian couples that are interested in adopting.

10. (a) I fear children raised by gay male couples are more likely to become homosexual.  
(b) I would feel comfortable interacting with lesbian couples that are interested in adopting.

11. (a) I feel the lifestyle of gay male couples makes them unsuitable as parents.  
(b) I feel the lifestyle of lesbian couples makes them unsuitable as parents.

12. (a) I believe gay male couples do not have suitable relationships.  
(b) I believe lesbian couples do not have suitable relationships.

13. (a) I would allow my children to play with children raised by gay male couples.  
(b) I would allow my children to play with children raised by lesbian couples.

14. (a) I believe gay male couples would be more suitable to raise a boy than a girl.  
(b) I believe lesbian couples would be more suitable to raise a boy than a girl.

15. (a) I believe gay male couples would be more suitable to raise a girl than a boy.  
(b) I believe lesbian couples would be more suitable to raise a girl than a boy.
Appendix C

Adoption Belief Scale (ABS)

Please read each item carefully and consider how you feel about each statement. There are no answers that are better than others, so please give your honest reactions and opinions. We want you to tell us your honest opinion about each of these statements; indicate whether you: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, (4) strongly disagree.

____ Adoption can interfere with a child’s well-being.

____ Adoption should not be allowed.
   I would never adopt a child of another race or another color.

____ Both the birthparents and adoptive parents are real parents (reverse scored).

____ Adopted children feel as though they are not part of the family.

____ Children adopted by families from other countries will suffer from loss of their birth culture.

____ Adoption should only occur between certain races or people of the same color.

____ A person has to be desperate to adopt a child (that is not of the same blood line, race, or skin color).

____ Birthparents don’t want their children after they are put up for adoption.

____ Adoptive parents love their adopted children as if they were birth children (reverse scored).

____ The main reason that a birthmother gives up her child for adoption is because she is of poor character and lacks education.
Appendix D

Modern and Old-Fashioned Homonegativity Toward Lesbians (MHS-L)

This questionnaire is designed to measure your beliefs about gay men. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and honestly as you can by placing a number next to each statement. Indicate whether you (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree

___ Many lesbians use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.

___ Lesbians seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.

___ Lesbians do not have all the rights they need.

___ The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.

___ The media devote far too much attention to the topic of homosexuality.

___ Celebrations such as “Gay Pride Day” are ridiculous because they assume that an individual’s sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.

___ Lesbians still need to protest for equal rights.

___ Lesbians should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people’s throats.

___ If lesbians want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.

___ Just because a woman is a lesbian does not mean that she has a mental disorder.
Lesbians should have the same rights as straight (heterosexual) women.

Lesbians should not be allowed to work with children.

Lesbians are immoral.

Lesbians who are “out of the closet” should be admired for their courage.

Lesbians should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.

Those who support the rights of lesbians are probably gay themselves.

In today’s tough economic times, Americans’ tax dollars shouldn’t be used to support lesbian organizations.

Lesbians should be avoided whenever possible.

Lesbians have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.
Appendix E

Modern and Old-Fashioned Homonegativity Toward Gay men (MHS-G)

This questionnaire is designed to measure your beliefs about gay men. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and honestly as you can by placing a number next to each statement. Indicate whether you (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree

____ Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.

____ Gay men seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.

____ Gay men do not have all the rights they need.
   The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.

____ The media devote far too much attention to the topic of homosexuality.

____ Celebrations such as “Gay Pride Day” are ridiculous because they assume that an individual’s sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.

____ Gay men still need to protest for equal rights

____ Gay men should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people’s throats.

____ If gay men want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.

____ Just because a man is gay does not mean that he has a mental disorder.

____ Gay men should have the same rights as straight
(heterosexual) men.

____ Gay men should not be allowed to work with children.

____ Gay men are immoral.

____ Gay men who are “out of the closet” should be admired for their courage.

____ Gay men should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.

____ Those who support the rights of gay men are probably gay themselves.

____ In today’s tough economic times, Americans’ tax dollars shouldn’t be used to support gay men’s organizations.

____ Gay men should be avoided whenever possible.

____ Gay men have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal right
Appendix F

Demographics Questionnaire

Instructions: Read each question and mark the answer that represents you the best. There is no right or wrong answer, try to mark only one answer per question.

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?
   □ Female
   □ Male
   Other: ________________________

3. How would you classify yourself as?
   □ Arab
   □ Asian
   □ Black/African- American
   □ Caucasian/White
   □ Hispanic/Latino
   □ Indigenous/Native American
   □ Multiethnic
   □ Pacific Islander
   □ Would rather not answer
   □ Other: _____________

4. What is your sexual orientation?
   □ Bisexual
   □ Gay
   □ Lesbian
☐ Straight

☐ Questioning

☐ Would rather not answer

☐ Other: ________________
Appendix G

List of Resources

Thank You for participating in this survey!!!!!
The purpose of this study is to assess public attitudes towards lesbian and gay couples adopting.

If you are experiencing any discomfort and would like to talk with someone at this time please choose one of the hotlines listed.

You can contact...
National Crisis Hotlines at 1-800-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

General Crisis Support by Text:
Crisis Text Line Text SUPPORT to 741-741 (24/7)

General Crisis Support by Phone:
Crisis Call Center Call 1-800-273-8255 (24/7) Text ANSWER to 839863 (24/7)

Specific issues:
Depression & Suicide
The Trevor Project Call 866-488-7386 (24/7) Live Chat with the Trevor Project (Fridays 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST)

Dating Abuse & Domestic Violence
loveisrespect Call 1-866-331-9474 (24/7)
Chat Online with loveisrespect (7 days/week, 5:00 PM to 3:00 AM EST) or text loveis to 22522 National Domestic Violence Hotline Call 1-800-799-7233 (24/7) Email the National Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)