I. Assignment

1. I have been asked to provide an assessment of adult outcomes among children whose parents were reported to have had same-sex romantic relationships, based on my survey data collection project entitled the New Family Structures Study, and its accompanying publications.

II. Qualifications

2. I am an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, where I am also a research associate at the university’s Population Research Center. I am also a senior fellow at the Austin Institute for the Study of Family and Culture.

3. All of my degrees are in sociology, including my Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I was an assistant professor of sociology at Calvin College from 2001-2002, and director of its Center for Social Research, after which I joined the sociology department at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2007 I was promoted to the rank of associate professor, with tenure.
4. I have published on romantic relationship behavior and sexual decision-making since 2005, including two books,\(^1\) both of which earned numerous positive published reviews by peers.

5. I am being compensated $250 per hour for my time spent preparing this report. My compensation does not depend on the outcome of the case or the opinions or testimony that I provide. I have not previously testified as an expert at trial or by deposition.

6. I was the principal investigator of the New Family Structures Study (“NFSS”), a survey data collection project that screened over 15,000 young adults about their childhood household structure, and collected complete surveys from just under 3,000 of them, including 248 respondents who reported a parental same-sex romantic relationship.

III. Summary of Findings

7. A persistent claim by those supporting same-sex marriage is that there is “no difference” in the outcomes of children raised by a biological mother and father and those who have been raised by two women or two men. That claim has been made by associations like the American Psychological Association (“APA”), although the APA report on same-sex parenting was largely written by only one scholar, Dr. Charlotte Patterson of the University of Virginia.\(^2\) Such a claim, however, has been based largely on studies involving non-random, non-representative samples, often with relatively few participants, or employs comparison groups of reduced kinship, such as stepfamilies. Comparisons have seldom been made with children growing up in stably-intact households consisting of a married mother and father, long understood to constitute an optimal child development setting.\(^3\)

8. So the claim that another parenting relationship—one consisting of both a solitary gender of parent and at least one source of diminished kinship—produces child outcomes just as good as (or even better than) intact biological parents is a surprising proposition,\(^4\) one that must be rigorously tested, and until then, viewed with healthy skepticism.

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\(^1\) Mark Regnerus, Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers (Oxford University Press, 2007); Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying (Oxford University Press, 2011).


9. After all, kinship reduction has long been associated with less-optimal outcomes among children. A recent examination of the benefits of monogamous unions noted, among other things, that, “(l)iving in the same household with genetically unrelated adults is the single biggest risk factor for abuse, neglect and homicide of children. Stepmothers are 2.4 times more likely to kill their stepchildren than birth mothers, and children living with an unrelated parent are between 15 and 77 times more likely to die ‘accidentally.’” One should not read such statements as a blanket indictment of step-parenting or adoption, whether gay or straight, since most such arrangements are and remain peaceable. Nevertheless, on average genetically-related parents pose a lower risk to their children than those parents or guardians who are not genetically related to the children in their care.

10. Conducting high-quality empirical studies on this topic, however, is challenging for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the comparatively small population we seek to locate (randomly) and study, and the lack of settled protocols about how to identify parental sexual orientation. In large, population-based datasets, the share of Americans who identify as experiencing same-sex attractions is larger than that share that has reported same-sex sexual behavior, which is in turn larger than that share which identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

11. Research in this area is further complicated by the political climate surrounding this subject matter. The late family sociologist Dr. Norval Glenn remarked, “Given the widespread support for same-sex marriage among social and behavioral scientists, it is becoming politically incorrect in academic circles even to suggest that arguments being used in support of same-sex marriage might be wrong.” In other words, few scholars dare to tread here, and those who do risk professional hostility if they raise standard methodological concerns. Editors publish critical research at their peril. It is not an optimal environment for the conduct of science.

12. Despite the challenges noted above, the hallmark of a rigorous study is a large, representative pool of participants drawn from a population-based random sample. I conducted a large, population-based study of

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young adults called the New Family Structures Study ("NFSS"), which included survey information from 248 respondents who reported that a parent of theirs had been in a romantic relationship with someone of the same sex while they (the children) were growing up. A total of 2,988 young adults completed the survey, providing ample opportunity for comparisons.

13. The initial published study based on the NFSS data looked at social behaviors, health behaviors, and relationships comparing 40 different outcomes (as reported by the adult children in the study rather than by those who raised them) across various groups, including respondents who spent their childhood with their married biological parents, those who spent most time in step-parenting arrangements, with single parents, as well those respondents who reported that a parent had been in a same-sex romantic relationship (among other types of household arrangements and experiences).

14. When compared with children who grew up in biologically (still) intact, mother-father families, the children of women who reported a same-sex relationship—and spent time living with her mother’s partner—report markedly different outcomes across a variety of domains (19 out of 40 outcomes are statistically significantly different, after controls). The latter attained less education, are less apt to be employed full-time, more apt to be currently unemployed and on public assistance, more likely to have experienced sexual violence against them, more apt to have had an affair, and more likely to smoke and to have been arrested, among other outcomes. Some specific examples of the differences between the two groups are:

- Received public assistance (i.e., welfare) while growing up: 17% vs. 70%
- Currently receiving public assistance: 10% vs. 49%
- Currently employed full-time: 49% vs. 17%
- Currently unemployed: 8% vs. 40%
- Had been forced to have sex against their will: 8% vs. 27%
- Had an affair while married or cohabiting: 13% vs. 38%

Perhaps because of the smaller sample size for fathers who have had gay relationships, there were not as many significant findings as compared to mothers who have had lesbian relationships. However, adult children of fathers who are or have been in a same-sex relationship are more apt (than adult children raised by intact biological parents) to smoke, have been arrested, pled guilty to non-minor offenses, and report more numerous sex partners.
15. Those children who identified a parent as having had a same-sex relationship self-reported outcomes that were consistently less optimal than those respondents whose biological parents were—and remain—married. The outcome patterns among those children who lived for some duration with their mother in a residential relationship that included her same-sex partner compare most favorably with never-married single mothers. This may be due in part to the comparative brevity of their mother’s (residential) relationship with her partner.

16. The NFSS data is not longitudinal, and not conducive to making strong claims about direct influences of parenting. As a result, I did not make claims about causation in the study. My analytic intention was more modest than this: to test for the presence of simple group differences, and—with the addition of several control variables—to assess just how robust any between-group differences were. Thus any suboptimal outcomes may not be due to the sexual orientation of the parent, which was not measured. The exact sources of group differences would be difficult if not impossible to adequately sequester.

17. In fact, no existing study yet bears the ability to randomly locate, track, and compare large numbers of children—thousands, or even hundreds—raised continuously by gay couples with the same among heterosexual couples over many years. The science here remains young.

18. The publication of this study in the July 2012 issue of *Social Science Research* was met with considerable hostility, primarily located in gay and lesbian interest groups. An effort led by Dr. Gary Gates, expert witness for the plaintiff in this case, called for the journal to retract the study. Retractions, however, are historically appropriate only when egregious errors or outright fabrication has occurred. Neither is true with respect to this study, and the original article remains in print. The ad hominem attacks aimed at me, as well as the editor of the journal *Social Science Research*, continue unabated.

19. The NFSS enjoys a variety of strengths as well as important limitations, the latter of which skeptics and critics have focused on since the publication of the study. Nevertheless, there is much that scholars can learn from it, regardless of their sentiments on the subject matter of same-sex parents or same-sex marriage.

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20. How was the NFSS conducted, and how and why are the findings from my NFSS-based study distinctive from so much research on same-sex parenting? The NFSS survey data collection, which screened over 15,000 Americans between ages 18 and 39 about their childhood household structure and experiences, and then completed full interviews with 3,000 of them, was underwritten by two private organizations—the Witherspoon Institute and (joined later by) the Bradley Foundation—known for their political conservatism. Witherspoon’s support was declared to potential consultants (including two of plaintiff’s expert witnesses, Gary Gates and Michael Rosenfeld, who each declined), as well as in the study text itself.

21. The data collection was undertaken by the research firm Knowledge Networks (“KN”), with whom the University of Texas at Austin subcontracted. KN maintains an active panel of around 50,000 adults whom interested researchers can contract to survey.\(^8\) Plaintiff’s expert witness Michael Rosenfeld has conducted his own survey project using KN’s KnowledgePanel\(^8\), as have hundreds of other academic and government survey researchers.

22. I uploaded the NFSS survey data to a data repository at the University of Michigan in November 2012\(^9\), thus freely opening it to re-analyses and criticism. The same practice, however, has not been displayed by the National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (“NLLFS”) and other privately-funded datasets on sexuality (including the 2009 National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior, or “NSSHB”) that remain securely away from public and scholarly peer scrutiny. I released the data because I said I would, and because it is a scientific value, not because of political pressure to do so.

23. It is a challenging matter to discern how best to screen a generation (ages 18-39) whose parents may not have self-identified as gay or lesbian. In coordination with several academic consultants, our project team decided to privilege the measurement of the romantic relationship behavior of the young-adult respondents’ parents rather than the respondent’s perceptions of their parent(s)’ sexual orientation (stated or otherwise).

24. The study surveyed adults ages 18-39 who reflected on their parent(s)’ past same-sex romantic relationship behavior, which conceivably occurred as recently as a few years ago or as far back as 30 or more years. The NFSS thus captures what might be called an “earlier

\(^8\) http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/knpanel/
\(^9\) http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/34392?q=nfss&searchSource=icpsr-landing
generation” of children of same-sex parents, and includes among them many who witnessed a failed heterosexual union. We screened over 15,000 Americans with a short sequence of questions about their households while growing up. Among that sample, 175 people reported that their mother had had a same-sex romantic relationship at some point in their growing-up years; 73 reported the same about their father.

25. I noted in my November 2012 response to critics that my use of the acronyms “LM” (lesbian mother, for those respondents whose mother had a same-sex relationship) and “GF” (gay father, for those whose father had a same-sex relationship) were unfortunately prone to conflating sexual orientation—which the NFSS did not measure—with same-sex relationship behavior, which it did measure. The original study, indeed the entire data collection effort, was always focused on the respondents’ awareness of parental same-sex relationship behavior rather than their own assessment of parental sexual orientation, which may have differed from how their parent would describe it.

26. This measurement approach was intended to capture a combination of same-sex households, ones in which two men or two women had (1) adopted a child (that is, the survey respondent), (2) conceived via artificial reproductive technology (ART), or (3) brought with them into a same-sex relationship a child conceived in a heterosexual union. We found the latter of these, a failed heterosexual union, to constitute around 55 percent of such respondents’ origins. Another 30 percent reported no father or mother’s same-sex partner in the first year of their life.

27. In other words, few young-adult children in the NFSS appear to be the product of what might be labeled the “ideal type” same-sex couple portrayed in media narratives and that scholars have privileged as an optimal comparison group: two men or two women in a stable relationship who agree to pursue a child by ART. Just how much more commonly children conceived by ART are today among same-sex households is unknown. (In the United States, however, just about one percent of all successful pregnancies begin by ART, and statistically the majority of them are believed to be infertile opposite-sex couples.) Given its costs, however, ART is out of reach of couples—gay or straight—who lack the resources to afford it.

28. Yet every child born to a couple via ART (a “planned” gay or lesbian family) retains at least one non-biological “step” parent, suggesting the
more favorable comparison group would not be the biologically-intact, mother-father households but heterosexual stepfamilies.

29. On the other hand, half of all US pregnancies are unplanned. No ART birth is unplanned.

30. The demographic characteristics (e.g., race, income) of the NFSS’s sample of children of men and women who have had same-sex relationships are very similar to estimates of those same-sex couples in the 2000 US Census’s 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Plaintiff’s expert witness Rosenfeld reported that 37% and 42% of children from female and male same-sex (coupled) households in the PUMS sample are Black and Hispanic, respectively. Rosenfeld also noted that same-sex couples with children have, on average, less education and lower household incomes than both heterosexual couples with children and same-sex couples without children. Plaintiff’s expert witness Gary Gates notes the same—that African American and Latino same-sex couples are more likely than white same-sex couples to be raising children. The NFSS found similarly: 43% of respondents who reported a maternal same-sex relationship were either Black or Hispanic. In a recent publication based on the NLLFS, however, only 12% of the NLLFS sample is nonwhite. Moreover, 94% reported college-educated parents, a figure dramatically higher than the national average (which is just over 30%).

31. This means that the sample-selection bias problem in many studies of gay and lesbian parenting—including the 19 published NLLFS-based studies—is not minor or incidental, but likely profound, rendering the ability of non-population-based research to offer valid interpretations of average household experiences of children with a lesbian or gay parent suspect. In other words, most snowball-sample-based research has shed light only on above-average or privileged gay and lesbian households. What it cannot do is tell us much about the lives of lesbian parents across the country, because it is decidedly not a population-based data collection effort, but has been widely interpreted as such in

13 http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2012/tables.html
scholarly and media outlets. It is not.

32. Gay and lesbian parents are, in reality, economically, racially, and socially far more diverse than data collection efforts like the NLLFS imply. Dr. Charlotte Patterson, author of the APA report on same-sex parenting, notes this decided lack of diversity in studies: “Despite the diversity of gay and lesbian communities, both in the United States and abroad, samples of children [and parents] have been relatively homogenous....Samples for which demographic information was reported have been described as predominantly Caucasian, well-educated, and middle to upper class.”

33. What the social science of gay parenting based on nonprobability samples has taught us is that it is possible for children raised in same-sex households to develop normally and competently across a variety of domains, but not whether it is probable that they will. Only studies based on probability samples can do that. Very few data collection efforts employing probability samples are able to address this subject. Indeed, publications featuring the three largest North American probability samples on this topic—Census-based studies in the US and Canada, and the NFSS—have emerged only in the past three years.

34. Other published research—including those based on the NLLFS—featured sample sizes too small to provide ample statistical power to detect genuine between-group differences that exist in social reality (i.e., making a Type II error). That is, the sample may be too small for inferential statistics to detect differences that actually exist in the population. But that shortcoming did not curb the publication of numerous such studies making claims about “no differences” employing inferential statistics on samples whose underlying biases cannot be discerned.

35. Source bias is also a common problem in many comparative studies. One scholar notes that “parental self-report, of course, may be biased. It is plausible to argue that, in a prejudiced social climate, lesbian and gay parents may have more at stake in presenting a positive picture,” such that “future studies need to consider using additional sophisticated measures to rule out potential biases.” The NFSS avoids source bias by asking young adults ages 18-39 to report on their own life situations as well as their reflections on their childhood,

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rather than parents talking about their children, bringing needed source diversity to studies in this area.

36. As noted above, scholars have leveled numerous criticisms at my published study based on the NFSS. Some of the questions directed at my study based on the NFSS are fair and legitimate, and were welcomed and addressed in a follow-up response to critics in the November 2012 issue of Social Science Research.¹⁶

37. One likely reason for the heightened criticism of my NFSS-based study is its emphasis on general description rather than skipping description and moving rapidly toward explanation. Indeed, the study’s analyses present average between-group differences across 40 different outcomes, assessing first their simple statistical differences and then whether between-group differences remain statistically significant after controlling for the respondent’s current age, race/ethnicity, gender, their mother’s level of education, and their perceptions of family-of-origin income while growing up. I also controlled for a retrospective measure of having experienced bullying—something believed to be a common experience among children with gay or lesbian parents—and a measure of the gay-friendliness of the respondent’s current state of residence, a measure thought to be positively correlated with better outcomes among gay and lesbian adults and their children.

38. A common approach in studies of gay parenting outcomes is to avoid the display of—and any discussion around—average differences between groups, and instead to move immediately to more complex, regression-based analyses where simple differences are not noted. This is not inherently a problem, but rather a different approach to analyses. I elected to privilege the description of social reality rather than skipping quickly to explaining, since explanations seem best as following mapping and description rather than preceding or replacing them. Description is also a plausible, reasonable goal for a new data collection project’s first publication: such has been the case in the past with other nationally-representative studies.¹⁷


39. My study did not seek to assess the magnitude of effects (of having a parent in a same-sex relationship). Its stated purpose was more narrow: to test for between-group differences, and in so doing evaluate the popular claims being made about their being “no differences” among those raised in same-sex households (however measured).

40. Some criticisms concern my subjective measurement decisions made possible by the very comprehensive information that the NFSS afforded to scholars, including household “calendars” that asked respondents to document who lived in their household each year from the time the respondent was born until the present. This enables analysts to document the arrival and departure of parental romantic partners, including those of the same sex. However, the calendars revealed that household histories are often messy, meaning that respondents noted that some parental (residential) romantic relationships were brief and/or numerous. This reality of many American households, however, creates a challenge for NFSS data analysts with respect to parental same-sex relationships.

41. According to the household calendar data, just over half (90) of the 175 respondents whose mother had a lesbian relationship reported that they did not live with both their mother and her same-sex partner at the same time. How long those same-sex relationships lasted is undiscernible. Do such maternal same-sex relationships matter, given the respondent didn’t live with the mother’s partner? Should analysts only pay attention to those 51 children whose mothers spent only a year or two in a residential same-sex relationship, or stick to the even smaller minority of respondents whose mothers appeared to be in more stable relationships, who spent 5, 10, or 15 years in such a relationship? (This would create a statistical power problem—too few cases to analyze with confidence that one could detect statistical differences that in fact existed.)

42. The two respondents who lived with their mother and her partner for all 18 years of their childhood did indeed appear comparatively well-adjusted on most developmental and contemporary outcomes. But two out of 175 respondents—or out of 248 if you also include those respondents whose fathers had a same-sex relationship—suggests very tall odds against enjoying a stable same-sex household for the duration of one’s childhood in the NFSS. And what about those children who did not live in the same household with the parent who was in a same-sex relationship (a far more common scenario where fathers were in such relationships)? Does a non-residential parent still influence a child?
Unless they play no part in their lives— which we do not know — it is rational to assert that non-residential parents may still influence their children, as they do in very many stepfamily and single-parent situations.

43. Simply put, those NFSS respondents who reported a parental same-sex relationship were far more likely to also report household instability and parental relationship “dynamism.” One can “control for” such instability in evaluating between-group differences, but it was a very common experience among such respondents in the NFSS. Whether such household instability and parental relationship upheaval remains true today is not clear.

44. The tendency to overlook “pathways” in favor of control variables more broadly reflects a common pattern in social science research to search for “independent” effects of variables, thereby missing the ability to explain how social phenomena actually operate in the real world. If, for example, most men smoked, but few women did, it is entirely unhelpful to declare that— controlling for smoking— there is no effect of gender on lung cancer. In that case, men’s predilection for smoking would merit close scrutiny and concern. In the same way, parental same-sex relationships, household instability, and more problematic young-adult life outcomes are quite possibly connected, and a key purpose of social science here is not only to document such pathways but to figure out why they exist.

45. If stability was comparatively rarer in the parents who had same-sex relationships decades ago when stigma was more pronounced and social support for lesbian and gay parents far more modest than it is today, is it a safe assumption that the NFSS study is a “dated” one by definition? That is, if the study could be replicated among same-sex parents of younger children today that the troubling outcomes that were more likely to appear among them in the NFSS would very likely disappear or fail to materialize? Perhaps, but this conclusion is hardly certain. What is known about the comparative relationship stability of gay and lesbian adults in general?

46. Other research on gay and lesbian adults— including but not limited to parents— has noted the comparative volatility of lesbian relationships. A study of Norwegian and Swedish same-sex relationships notes that divorce risk is higher in same-sex marriages and that the “risk of divorce for female partnerships actually is more than twice that for
male unions.” Moreover, early same-sex marriages—those occurring shortly after a shift in marriage law—exhibited a similar risk of divorce as did more recent marriages, suggesting no notable variation in instability over time as a function of new law or pent-up demand among more stable, longstanding relationships. The study authors estimate that in Sweden, 30% of female marriages are likely to end in divorce within 6 years of formation, compared with 20% for male marriages and 13% for heterosexual ones.

47. A follow-up assessment of more recent Norwegian statistics, presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA), found no evidence that the gender gap in same-sex divorce has closed. An October 2013 release from the UK’s Office for National Statistics revealed that in the seven years since civil unions were recognized in Britain, the lesbian break-up rate was nearly twice that seen among gay male couples.

48. Michael Rosenfeld, expert witness for the plaintiff in this case, detected the same pattern in a study of nationally-representative data on American relationships presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. Lesbian couples reported higher relationship satisfaction alongside higher break-up rates. The data source for Rosenfeld’s study is the same as that for the NFSS: KN’s KnowledgePanel®.

49. In that study, the highest stability rates appear among heterosexual married couples, while notably better stability is located among married gay and lesbian couples than among those in civil unions (as would be expected). Yet Rosenfeld’s analysis also detects greater instability among lesbian couples in general, a finding that persists even after a lengthy series of control variables are included. While lesbian couples in the study are more apt to be raising children, the presence of children does not appear to be a factor in the diminished relationship stability evident among them.

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50. While gay men’s relationships appear more stable than lesbian relationships, but are less likely to be sexually monogamous when compared with lesbian or heterosexual relationships, as attested to in analyses of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health’s Wave IV data, collected during respondents’ mid-20s and early 30s. While the effect of relationship stability on child health and development is well-documented, the effect on children of parental nonmonogamy is not well understood.

51. Respondents from stably-coupled same-sex households were simply rare in the NFSS. Some critics have suggested that stable same-sex households were genuinely undercounted in the study. The study’s screening protocol, however, did not prevent stably-coupled same-sex households from appearing. They were simply uncommon in the experience of respondents in an earlier era.

52. If stability is a key asset for households with children, then it is sensible to use stably-intact biological families in any comparative assessment, as my NFSS-based study did.

53. An argument for “no differences” or “few differences” in the NFSS could more readily be made when the children of parents who’ve had same-sex relationships are compared with the children of opposite-sex parents who display a notable degree of genetic dissimilarity, such as children who largely grew up in stepfamilies or with single mothers.

54. My study joins two other peer-reviewed publications in the past two years in which child outcomes are assessed and compared using data from large, population-based probability samples, revealing suboptimal outcomes of children from same-sex relationships when contrasted with biologically-intact households. One was a re-analysis of US Census data conclusions first reached by plaintiff’s expert witness Rosenfeld and the other an analysis of Canadian census data. Each of the three datasets measures parental same-sex experience differently. The US Census estimates same-sex parental households by gender, without any knowledge of parents’ sexual identity, orientation, or behavior, while the Canadian census asked young-adult children living at home whether their parents were currently in a same-sex

relationship. In other words, there is no established social science norm concerning how exactly to measure same-sex households with children.

55. Nevertheless, a probability sample like these—including the NFSS—is required whenever a researcher wishes to make claims about the larger population from which the sample was drawn. If one of the goals of social-science research on same-sex households is to make claims about children living, or who have lived, in such households, then a probability sample must be drawn from the larger population of same-sex parents, couples, or households with children. Without a probability sample, there is no way to discern just how biased or unbiased a sample of respondents is; that is, how “unusual” or “normal” the sample of a particular population is. Without a probability sample, inferential statistics make little sense to employ, since the employment of inferential statistics assumes a real-world population “behind” a sample, and it is those real-world population “parameters” that we are estimating when employing statistics.

56. There is no alternative to using a probability sample if the goal is to generalize from a sample to a larger population, which is a very sensible goal when analyzing data whose results may have significant consequences for social policy debates such as this one.

57. Much published research on same-sex parenting, however, has not employed probability samples. Indeed, 19 peer-reviewed publications have emerged from just one nonprobability “snowball” study—the National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study. Thus it is possible (and even correct) to state that the vast majority of social science until very recently has confirmed the “no differences” (or very few differences) conclusion. Unfortunately, the NLLFS subjects were allowed to select themselves into the study, creating bias of unknowable magnitudes and disabling the ability of scholars to generalize from its sample to the population of lesbian families as a whole. I don’t wish to impugn smaller studies simply because their research methods involved small or nonrandom samples. Such is often the case in exploratory studies of small populations. My criticism rather concerns the confident declarations about “no differences” often made based upon them. It ought to raise concern when they are used to support broad public policy changes, like those at issue in this case. In short, it is faulty to credibly, much less confidently, claim “no difference” with such thin support.

25 http://www.nllfs.org/publications/
IV. Conclusions

58. The NFSS, which cannot definitively assess causation but rather simply documents associations, reveals that to be stably rooted in your married mother and father’s household is to foster the greatest chance at lifelong flourishing. It is neither necessary nor is it a guarantee. It just displays the best odds. Adoption commonly remains a next-best option for many children, though it too is understood as a concession, an accommodation to circumstances in which a child is unable to remain in the custody of his/her biological parents.

59. Of course, such kinship ties are often broken, sometimes with intention (by mutual divorce, sperm donation, and some instances of surrogacy), sometimes by accident (as through the death of a parent), and sometimes by necessity (in the case of seeking protection from domestic violence). Prudent government seeks to discourage broken kinship ties, and to wrestle over how to manage situations in which brokenness seems unavoidable, but they should not respond by declaring biological bonds to be irrelevant or such brokenness and its consequences only imagined.

60. Certainly same-sex couples, like other parenting structures, can make quality and successful efforts in raising children. That is not in question. In social reality there may genuinely be two “gold standards” of family stability and context for children’s flourishing—a stably-coupled heterosexual household and a stably-coupled homosexual household, but no population-based sample analyses have yet been able to consistently confirm wide evidence of the latter.

61. No existing study yet bears the ability to randomly compare large numbers of children raised by gay couples with the same among heterosexual couples over a long period of time. The social science of same-sex parenting structures remains young, and subject to significant limitations about what can be known, given that the influence of household structures and experiences on child outcomes is not a topic for experimental research design.

62. As a result, social scientists are unable to document with any degree of certainty that no developmental harm is done to children growing up in households wherein parents are in (or have been in) same-sex relationships. Additionally, the past three years have witnessed the publication of three peer-reviewed studies that assess children’s outcomes of having lived in a same-sex household or having witnessed the same-sex romantic relationship of a parent using data from large,
population-based samples: my NFSS-based study, a re-analysis of US Census data, and an analysis of Canadian census data. All three raise concerns, suggesting that any consensus about “no differences” is premature at best, and may well be inaccurate.

63. With so many significant outstanding questions about whether children develop as well in same-sex households as in opposite-sex households, it remains prudent for government to continue to recognize marriage as a union of a man and a woman, thereby promoting what is known to be an ideal environment for raising children.

Date: December 20, 2013

By: /s/ Mark D. Regnerus, Ph. D.
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2001–2002: Assistant Professor of Sociology and Director, Center for Social Research, Calvin College.


PUBLICATIONS

Books


New York: Oxford University Press.

Articles

Regnerus, Mark and David Gordon. 2013. “Social, Emotional, and Relational Distinctions in Patterns of Recent Masturbation among Young Adults.” [Under review]


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Stokes, Charles and Mark D. Regnerus. 2009. “When Faith Divides Family: Religious Discord and


**Book Chapters**

[Chapter in preparation for submission.]


**Select Other Publications**


Regnerus, Mark. “Sex is Cheap.” *Slate*, February 25, 2011. (9th-most read *Slate* article of 2011).


**BOOK REVIEWS**


**FUNDING AND GRANTS**

Principal Investigator, “The New Family Structures Study." $640,000 grant from the Witherspoon Institute, May 2011-August 2013. (Approved, 100% under PI’s supervision)

Principal Investigator, “The New Family Structures Study (supplementary assistance).” $90,000 grant from the Bradley Foundation, Nov 2011-Nov 2012. (Approved, 100% under PI’s supervision)

Principal Investigator, “The New Family Structures Study.” $55,000 planning grant from the Witherspoon Institute, Oct 2010- June 2011. (Approved, 100% under PI’s supervision)
Principal Investigator, “The New Pentecostals and Political and Social Activism.” $9,565 grant from the National Science Foundation (Dissertation Improvement Grant, for Nicolette Manglos), 2010-11. (Approved but returned).

Principal Investigator, “Testing Differences: The Transfer and Transformation of HIV Testing from the West to Sub-Saharan Africa.” $7,500 grant from the National Science Foundation (Dissertation Improvement Grant, for Nicole Angotti), 2008-2009.

Seed grant for “Sex and Emotional Health in Emerging Adulthood.” $4,000 grant from the Population Research Center and $2,000 grant from the College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin, 2007.

Co-Investigator, “Developing Health Behaviors in Middle Adolescence” (Lynn Rew, PI, University of Texas School of Nursing). National Institute of Nursing Research, 2006-2011. (Approved, <5% under my supervision)

Research Internship (Mentor), $22,333. Office of Graduate Studies, University of Texas at Austin; 2006-2007 (for graduate student Nicolette Manglos).

Dean’s Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin, Spring 2006.

Co-Investigator, “Religious Organizations, Local Norms, and HIV in Africa” (Susan Watkins, PI, University of Pennsylvania). $864,000 grant from the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development; June 2005 – May 2008; (Regnerus is PI of $279,000 sub-contract to UT-Austin). R01-HD050142-01.

Principal Investigator, “Race, Religion, and Adolescent Sexual Norms and Conduct.” $148,650 grant from the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development; December 2004 – November 2006. R03-HD048899-01.

Co-Investigator, “Project on Religion and Economic Change” (Robert D. Woodberry, PI). $500,000 grant from the Metanexus Institute (with the support of the John Templeton Foundation). March 2005-
September 2007 (<5% under my supervision)

Principal Investigator, “Religious Organizations, Local Norms, and HIV in Africa.”
$6,000 grant from UT-Austin, Office of the Vice President for Research. September 2004 – August 2005.

Principal Investigator, “Contexts and Consequences of Spiritual Transformation.”
$131,206 grant from the Metanexus Institute (with the support the John Templeton Foundation). May 2003–April 2005.


Seed Grant for participation in the Malawi Diffusion and Ideational Change Project Survey Wave III,
March-April 2004. $2,000 grant from the PRC Mellon Center Grant on Urbanization and Internal Migration in Developing Countries.


SELECT INVITED PRESENTATIONS

“Premarital Sex in America,” Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,
Chapel Hill, NC, January 2012.

Book discussion session on *Premarital Sex in America,* Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood,
Providence, October 2011.

“The Future of Sex and Marriage in American Evangelicalism.” National Association of Evangelicals,
Heyer Lecture, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, September 2011.


“Marital Realities, Current Mindsets, and Possible Futures.” Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, Ottawa, May 2011.


Introduction and Chapter 1 to “Great Expectations: Culture, Emotion, and Disenchantment in the Sexual Worlds of Young Americans,” to the Bay Area Colloquium on Population, Berkeley, California, September 2007.


“Sex and Emotional Health in Emerging Adulthood.” Department of Sociology, Penn State University, March 2007.
“Suboptimal Sex or Healthy Expressions? Heterosexual Practice among American Adolescents.”
  Department of Sociology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, January 2007.

“Trends in American Adolescent Sexual Behavior.” Department of Health and Human Services Abstinence

“An Illness or a Judgment? Interpreting the African HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Malawi and the US.”

“Religion and Adolescent Sexual Practice,” Conference on Religious Effects Research, jointly sponsored

“New Approaches to Understanding Religious Influence.” Georgia Institute of Technology School of
  Public Policy, Atlanta, Georgia, October 2005.

“Living up to Expectations: How Religion alters the Delinquent Behavior of Low-Risk Adolescents.” Sixth
  Annual Spirituality Research Symposium: The Role of Religion in Understanding Risk and Protective
  Factors for Adolescents.” Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, May 2003.

Invited presentation on Adult and Juvenile Crime & Delinquency to “Integrating Research on Spirituality
  and Health and Well-Being into Service Delivery: A Research Conference. National Institutes of Health,
  Bethesda, MD, April 2003.

“Talking and Knowing about Sex: Are Religious Parents Communicating with their Adolescent
  Children?” Educational and Counseling Psychology Colloquium, University of Kentucky, February
  2002.

Invited presentation to panel discussion “Can Churches save the American Family? What New
  Research shows about Religion’s Effect on Fatherhood and Academic Achievement.” National Press

Invited session on Peer Influences on Adolescent Behavior. Add Health User’s Conference, NIH,
  Bethesda, MD, August 2001.
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (SINCE 2000)

“Gender and Heterosexual Sex.” Panel discussion at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 2013.


“Talking and Knowing about Sex: Are Religious Parents Communicating with their Adolescent


**ADVISING**

Ph.D. Committees (* Co-Chair/Co-Supervisor, ** Chair/Supervisor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Catherine McNamee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Nicolette Manglos</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Charles Stokes</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Nicole Angotti</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Jeremy Uecker</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Viviana Salinas</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Ana Paula Verona</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Georgina Martínez Canizales</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Sara Yeatman</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Margaret Vaaler</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Jenny Trinitapoli</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Amy Burdette</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Elisa Zhai</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Bryan Shepherd</td>
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</tbody>
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M.A. Committees (* Co-Chair/Co-Supervisor, ** Chair/Supervisor)
2013       Ellyn Arevalo*
2012       Kristen Redford **
2011       David McClendon **
2010       Aida Ramos Wada
2008       Nicolette Manglos **
2007       Andrea Henderson
2006       Jeremy Uecker **
2004       J. Matthew Bradshaw
2004       Jenny Trinitapoli **
2004       Margaret Vaaler
2004       Brian Coleman
2003       Elisa Zhai
2003       Heather Powell

Undergraduate Thesis Advisor (Honors or Plan II)

2011       Mary Lingwall
2008       Hong Nguyen

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Member, COLA Undergraduate Research Award selection committee, 2010-12
Member, Executive committee, Sociology, 2004-06, 2009-11, 2012-13
Member, Department promotions & tenure review committee, 2010-11, 2012-13
Member, Department Graduate Steering committee, 2007-09, 2010-11
Presenter, TEDxUT, Spring 2010
Presenter, Tejas House, Fall 2009 (Sexual Health Panel), Spring 2011 (Orange Jackets’ Week of Women)
Guest presenter, UT Peer Sexual Health Educator courses, 2008-12
Member, Population Research Center governing board, 2009-10
Member, Graduate admissions committee, Sociology, 2004-05; 2009-10, 2012-13
Chair, Department of Sociology religion search committee, Fall 2008
Participant and presenter, UT Faculty Fellows Program, 2007-09
Member, Department of Sociology population junior search committee, Fall 2007
Member, Department Speaker Colloquium committee, Fall 2007
Presenter, Explore UT, 2006
Supervisor, UT Sociology Undergraduate Research Assistance Program, Spring and Fall 2006
Reviewer, Award application, Office of the Vice President for Research, 2005
Faculty Overseer, Department of Sociology website, 2004-05
Member, Research Experience for Undergraduates program admissions committee, PRC, 2003-05

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Distinguished Article Award Committee member, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 2009-2010.
  • Committee chair, 2010
Distinguished Article Award Committee member, American Sociological Association (Religion Section), 2010-2011.
  • Committee chair, 2011
Ad-hoc reviewer for: National Institutes of Health, 2007; National Science Foundation, 2001 (one review), 2004 (one review), 2010 (one review); United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation, 2003 (one review); William T. Grant Foundation, 2004 (one review).
FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, & AWARDS

Best Article Award, ASA Religion Section, 2001, for “The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art” (with Brian Steensland, Jerry Park, Lynn Robinson, Brad Wilcox, and Robert Woodberry).


Runner-up (2nd place), Best Student Paper Award, ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Section, 2000, for “The Overestimation of Peer Group Traits and Behaviors on Adolescent Delinquency.”

Runner-up (Honorable Mention), Best Student Paper Award, ASA Religion Section, 2000, for “Moral Communities and Adolescent Delinquency: Subcultural Aspects of Social Disorganization.”


Best Article Award, ASA Religion Section, 1999, for “Selective Deprivatization among American Religious traditions: The Reversal of the Great Reversal.”

Runner-up (Honorable Mention), Best Student Paper Award, ASA Religion Section, 1999, for “Re-Interpreting Religious Effects on Adolescent Educational Expectations and Achievement.”