Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents Under the Microscope: Representations in Research and their Self-Representations

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses how children of lesbian and gay parents are represented in the multi-disciplinary research on their health and well-being and how they represent themselves. This research is utilised widely in public and political debate, specifically regarding lesbian and gay family law reform. Those who oppose same-sex parenting contest the research, despite a research consensus that children do not suffer adverse effects from having lesbian and gay parents. I move beyond the boundaries of this debate and challenge the positioning of these children as passive objects of knowledge. I separate the research studies into quantitative and qualitative methodologies and analyse how both these bodies of research literature represent their objects of knowledge. Then I turn to accounts by Australian children of lesbian and gay parents who publicly claim this speaking position and ‘talk back’. I argue that children with lesbian and gay parents experience pressure to present themselves as well-adjusted and prospering to counter homophobic accusations. This pressure especially manifests regarding expectations about (hetero)normative sexuality and gender development as representations of children of lesbian and gay parents are constrained within heteronormative discourse.
DECLARATION

‘I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.’

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

A group of 150 Australian medical doctors calling themselves Doctors for the Family, are currently campaigning against same-sex marriage on the basis of their concerns about the health of children raised by same-sex parents. They say that marriage needs to remain exclusively heterosexual to “enhance and preserve the health and future of our nation” (Doctors for the Family 2012). Spokesperson for Doctors for the Family, Lachlan Dunjey, claims that the research that concludes children raised in same-sex families are well-adjusted is flawed and that:

A growing and increasingly sophisticated body of research indicates that children with married parents, both a mother and a father, have more healthful measures of thriving as infants, physical and mental health, educational attainment, protection from poverty, protection from antisocial behaviour and protection from physical abuse (Radio National Breakfast 2012).¹

They argue through the rhetoric of child protectionism that legalising same-sex marriage will be detrimental to the future health of our nation as homosexuality will be normalised and more children will grow up without a mother and a father.

¹ABC Radio National did not make an official transcript of the program available so I transcribed the interview myself from the online podcast.
In response to the emergence of Doctors for the Family a counter group has formed called Doctors for Marriage Equality and they are collecting signatures from medical professionals in support of same-sex parenting (Doctors for Marriage Equality 2012). Former Australian Medical Association president and gay activist Professor Kerryn Phelps responded to Doctor Dunjey on national radio commenting that his assertion shows “a breathtaking lack of reason” (Radio National Breakfast 2012). She contended that:

   every major medical association and psychological and psychiatric association now worldwide, in the English-speaking world certainly, has position statements in support of marriage equality, and certainly have positions based on research, that say children raised in same-sex households where the parents are the same gender have at least equivalent outcomes to children raised in heterosexual families (Radio National Breakfast 2012).

The Australian Medical Association and Australian Psychological Society have both responded to the claims by Doctors for the Family by saying the evidence shows there is no difference between children raised in same-sex families and children raised in heterosexual families (Zilberpriver 2012).

Children have become the discursive site for the expression of anxieties around legitimising lesbian and gay relationships. Feminist scholar Judith Butler observes that arguments against same-sex marriage focus on fears regarding

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2 As this thesis goes to print they have 752 signatures on their petition to be sent to Federal MPs from registered medical doctors and another 311 signatures from medical students (Doctors for Marriage Equality 2012).
reproductive relations and “what happens to the child, the child, the poor child, the martyred figure of an ostensibly selfish or dogged social progressivism” (Butler 2002, p.22). The well-being of the children of lesbian and gay parents has been positioned at the centre of this debate through the continued discursive association of non-heterosexual parenting with harm to both individual children and to ‘the child’ as the signifier of the nation’s future.

Children of lesbian and gay parents are emptied of agency as they become the abstract figure of ‘the child’ who symbolises the reproduction of culture and nationhood across generations. Thus they are easily categorised as symbolic evidence for or against same-sex marriage. In this thesis I use the term ‘children of’ with a sense of irony to refer to children with lesbian or gay parents whose existence is used symbolically. Children with lesbian and gay parents are denied individual agency and an identity separate from that of their parents because whatever a child does is read as resulting from their parent’s non-normative sexuality.

Lachlan Dunjey, convenor of Doctors for the Family, articulates the standard child protectionism discourse of the Christian Right. He is a former President of Baptist Churches in Western Australian and a former Senate candidate for the Christian Democratic Party. Hicks (2003) observes that the “Christian homophobic discourse” regarding lesbian and gay parenting is characterised by the claim of impartiality on the part of the author. When asked if his views were judgemental or homophobic Dunjey replied “we are speaking as doctors, we are
saying because the evidence is there, it has nothing to do with not respecting gays or allowing their lifestyle, we are not about that kind of judgement… no definitely not homophobic” (on Radio National Breakfast 2012). However in his reasoning a gay ‘lifestyle’ is one that precludes parenting for fear of ‘damage’ to the child. Kerryn Phelps also denied a hidden agenda and instead based her claims on the authority of research.

Research on the health and well-being of children of lesbian and gay parents is a multi-disciplinary body of research. As explored in this thesis, Kerryn Phelps is correct regarding the dominant conclusions of the research. But even so, both Dunjey and Phelps participate in a wider debate about the validity and reliability of the medical and psychological research evidence regarding the health and well-being of children raised by lesbian or gay parents. In doing so they continue to privilege authoritative knowledge accounts and silence the objects of knowledge, the children. In this thesis I refuse to engage in the authoritative game and instead ask where are the actual children in this debate? I want to know what they have to say for themselves.

My desire to undertake this research is motivated by personal experience. I was conceived via donor insemination and born to two mothers in country New South Wales in 1987. I have first-hand experience of living as a ‘child of’. Every time the debate on the psychological well-being of children raised by lesbian and gay parents emerges I am troubled by the stagnation of this debate and also about the ways in which the children are constructed. This thesis is not
specifically about me personally, but my experiences and subject positions do shape my ways of knowing. I proudly embrace of queer sexualities and am myself a lesbian.³ While I have never had access to heterosexual privilege I do experience other forms of privilege, including white privilege and financial security. I am not entirely able-bodied but my disability is not visible from the outside. I also manage a mental illness. I first spoke in a public forum about having two mothers at age eight during a Lesbian Mothers conference held in Canberra in 1995. I have continued to speak and write on these matters.

In this thesis I analyse how the children of lesbian and gay parents are represented in scientific research and consider how the children themselves negotiate these representations. I argue that the quantitative research, and to a lesser degree the qualitative research, is constrained within heteronormative discourse. Moreover the nature of the research authorises a discourse that children of lesbian and gay parents are at risk. I further argue that children of lesbian and gay parents experience pressure to present themselves as well-adjusted and prospering to counter homophobic accusations.

In the next chapter I outline the feminist poststructural theory that frames the thesis and describe the research method utilised. Chapter three provides an overview of the historical, social and political context in which children of lesbian and gay parents became an object of inquiry and traces the development of this body of research. In chapter four, I examine the quantitative studies, providing a

³I use the term queer here and throughout the thesis as an umbrella term to refer to diverse non-heteronormative gender and sexual identity or practice.
critical overview of this body of literature and a more detailed investigation of
the representations of children with lesbian and gay parents. Chapter five
focuses in depth on the qualitative studies that allow for a greater exploration of
the children’s subjective experiences. In chapter six I look at Australian
examples of children publicly claiming the speaking position of a ‘child of’ and
explore how they negotiate their identity within the contextual constraints of
heteronormative discourse. The final chapter offers concluding thoughts on this
thesis and the future direction of research on children with lesbian and gay
parents.
Chapter 2
Theory and Method

To analyse representations of children of lesbian and gay parents I take a poststructuralist approach, informed by feminist and Foucauldian theory. I reject biological determinism and maintain that reality is socially constructed. The political implications of this framework are that hierarchies of sex, sexualities, race and bodies, can no longer be considered natural and as social constructs they can be destabilised with the possibility of generating equality.

This chapter describes the theoretical framework of the thesis. I begin by explaining what a poststructural framework entails and in particular how power is conceptualised and authoritative knowledge produced. Next I offer a poststructuralist and feminist critique of scientific knowledge production. Moving from this broad framework, I explore heteronormativity as a key discourse that lesbian and gay subjects, and their children, negotiate. The final section of the chapter outlines the research methods, detailing the selection and analysis of texts used to investigate representations.

Foucault challenges traditional liberal sovereign understandings of power as repressive and hierarchical and adopts a relational and productive model of power. He observes that modern power does not repress, “in fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault in Feder 2011, p.63). Power produces the knowledge through which we learn about the world. We are trained to see, understand and know. This
model of power is strikingly different from the liberal sovereign model which understands that power is possessed by particular people, flows from the top down and is characterised through its repressive nature (Sawicki 1991). Instead within modern power relations the population is governed under the guise of free choice; “if… I’m not forcing you at all and I’m leaving you completely free – that’s when I begin to exercise power” (Foucault in Taylor 2011, p.5). It is the free subject that acts and is acted upon.

Poststructuralism maintains that the world, and our experience of it, is constructed through language. Language is not, and can never be, neutral. It is also not fixed, but a product of historical, social and cultural specificities. In this approach, irrefutable truth and fact do not exist, instead there are ‘regimes of truth’ established through discourse. Foucault uses the term discourse to refer to historically and socially situated bodies of knowledge and practices. In simplistic terms a discourse is a set way of thinking about an issue that reflects and regulates social norms. A discourse defines the boundaries of a topic, establishing viable perspectives, determining what theories are considered authoritative, and who can speak in a particular context on that topic:

Discursive practices are characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories (Foucault in Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, p.93).
At any time there are multiple discourses about a topic, some carry more authority and some less. All subjects are constituted in and through discourses as we negotiate, resist or enact them.

Discourses of gender and sexuality are paramount to Women’s Studies. Feminist scholar Gayle Rubin comments: “Like gender, sexuality is political. It is organized into systems of power, which reward and encourage some individuals and activities, while punishing and suppressing others” (1993, p.34). Writing originally in 1984, Rubin (1993) observed that Western countries have no notion of benign sexual variation, instead sexual acts are organised hierarchically. Almost thirty years later this observation remains apt. Heterosexuality remains the privileged expression of sexuality and sexual behaviour. Heteronormative discourse refers to the many ways in which heterosexuality is normalised and naturalised as the assumed default sexuality from which others deviate. Cranny-Francis et al, observe that in a heteronormative society, heterosexuality acts as a specific form of coercive and regulatory power (2003, p.20). Sexuality is also involved in the construction of gendered categories. Bryant observes that “some forms of homophobia endorse gayness as long as it manifests as gender conformity” (2008, p.456). Thus sexuality and gender are entwined systems of power, organised hierarchically, that produce and regulate individual subjectivity.

Discourses are simultaneously an effect of power and the means of authenticating the knowledge that legitimises that power:
Power produces knowledge...there is no power relation without the correlation of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault in Smart 1985 p.76).

Knowledge and power are intrinsically linked, both implemented in the production of the other. Power, exercised through discourses of truth, claims its authority on the basis of knowledge. Knowledge is produced within, not outside, the relations of power that constitutes the social body. Knowledge claims, sustained by relations of power, persuade ‘free’ subjects to voluntarily take them up and enact them, thereby creating cohesion in the social body. In this way power is productive as subjects regulate themselves through divisionary practices and the establishment of norms informed by authoritative knowledge.

I am focusing on representations of children of lesbian and gay parents as discursive practices that produce and shape shared meaning. As with all discursive practices, representations are neither politically neutral, nor reflective of an essential truth, but influence how the people represented are perceived, interpreted and understood by themselves and others.

The majority of research on children with lesbian and gay parents comes from the human sciences including psychology, psychiatry and medicine. The Enlightenment, a significant period of European science, philosophy and politics, positioned rationality as central to the modern thought that poststructuralism opposes (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). It was claimed
that if proper objective, scientific methodology was followed, then the subsequent knowledge produced could be considered factual and beyond dispute. Other ways of knowing, such as folklore, spiritual knowledge and subjective experience, were positioned as less credible. Thus the most authoritative claimants are those who can claim rational science credentials. For example, Doctors for the Family claim an authoritative voice not on the basis of theology or morality, but on objective science.

Discourses of science hold great power as bearers of truth because of their perceived objectivity. Foucault identified one of his central concerns as “the political status of science and the ideological functions which it could serve” (1980b, p.109). Feminist theory also challenges the notion that science is dedicated to an “objective pursuit of truth” (Humm 1992, p.304). Feminists refute the value-free ideology of science and argue that science as a discipline was founded on the fixation of ‘rationality’ that undervalues all that is considered not rational including women. The philosophy of science rests on the construction of hierarchical binary pairs such as man/woman, culture/nature, mind/body and rationality/emotionality. The first terms in the dichotomy are assumed to be interconnected and are privileged over the second terms. Hence science is at the heart of disavowing the feminine, natural, embodied, emotional and experiential.

4 For examples of how ‘knowledge’ has been influenced by cultural theories of gender see Martin (1991) and Fausto-Sterling (1992).
Binary categories, along with discourses of normalisation, create a hierarchy of subjects. As Sawicki observes:

Disciplinary practices create the divisions healthy/ill, sane/mad, legal/delinquent, which by virtue of their authoritative status, can be used as effective means of normalisation and social control (Sawicki 1991 p.22).

The practice of segmenting the population through incarceration or institutionalisation produces strong adherence to what is deemed normal. The norm establishes the figure of the normal as a “principle of coercion” for the abnormal (Foucault in Hoffman 2011, p.32). This coercion manifests not as force but rather motivation for conformity, as the label of abnormal carries with it subordination and shame.

We become subjects, with a sense of individuality, by taking up subject positions. Subjectivity is not imposed externally but rather “we take up and occupy the subject positions that our sociohistorical context makes available to us: subjects are not only made, we make ourselves” (Taylor 2011, p.7). Subject positions come complete with specific ways of acting and interacting, within networks of relations of power. A condition of being a subject is that one is always constrained by this subject position.

It is fundamental principle of Foucault’s approach that resistance is inextricable from power. Foucault asserts that where there is power there is resistance: “as soon as there is a relation of power there is a possibility of resistance. We’re
never trapped by power; it’s always possible to modify its hold” (in Sawicki 1991, p.24). The body, as a site of power, is also a site of resistance. It can resist its classification, speak out from its subjugated position and challenge the established order through oppositional discourse (Pini 2004, p.163). Foucault states that “as soon as people have trouble thinking the way they have been taught, transformation becomes at the same time, very urgent, very difficult and entirely possible” (in Davies et al. 2006, p.89). Claiming the right to speak from one’s subordinated subject position can only have limited effect though, as individuals exist within the same system that they wish to challenge.

**Method**

My approach to the methodology draws on the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson (1998). She challenges authoritative representations of Australian Aboriginal women with their own representations of self through personal narratives. The problem that Moreton-Robinson has with the anthropology literature is that the people being studied did not "set the terms of reference for the investigation, nor are they the intended audience of this literature" (1998, p.278). So while "they are the subject of analysis, they remain objects marginalized within the text... The literature is written about them, not by them, for them or with them" (1998, p.278). This is problematic as the agenda of white researchers is an unacknowledged influence on what is ‘found’ to be the concerns of Indigenous women. This expert/outsider ‘knowledge’ is then
privileged as an authoritative account and becomes the dominant understanding in academic communities and beyond. Further the participants are denied agency, thus contributing to the continuation of their positioning as marginalised and subjugated peoples. In this thesis I show how ‘children of’ are also positioned as objects within the text rather than active agents. Moreover rather than participating in the research, they are studied according to a pre-set research agenda.

The methodology utilised within any research works to enable or disable participants’ voice and agency. Moreton-Robinson comments that "any methodology that is based on a system of closures that define what is the object of study and what methods will be used to obtain the data will produce a distorted representation which requires interrogation" (1998, p.284). In my investigation I show the majority of the research consists of quantitative, comparative studies that reduce the rich complexities of life to numbers and standard deviations from the norm.

Two sets of texts are drawn upon for this thesis; studies of children with one or more lesbian or gay parent within human and social sciences and narratives of Australian children with lesbian or gay parents.5 The research occurs across multiple disciplines but takes a similar approach of investigating the outcomes and experiences of children with lesbian and gay parents and then using these findings to comment on the ability of lesbians and gay men to parent. So

5 ‘Children of’ are forever considered children regardless of their age so when I use the word child I do not mean persons under the age of 18.
although it is multi-disciplinary it does form a cohesive body of research. The research focuses on lesbian and gay parents (also categorised as same-sex or homosexual parents). Children with bisexual or transgender parents were occasionally included in these studies but under the conflated heading of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) parented families. I offer this point as a critique of the research and also a reason for the focus on children of specifically lesbian or gay parents in this thesis.

To obtain the research texts I originally searched through the psychological academic databases, *PsychInfo, Proquest* and *Journals@Ovid*. I explored the websites of major Western psychological and medical bodies such as the Australian Psychological Society and the American Psychological Association. I referred to the bibliographies of the texts collected to find other texts. Finally I searched Google Scholar for any articles otherwise missed. As I am referring to authoritative scientific knowledge the texts had to have been published in an academic journal or by a professional body. Research published in books or private research institutes was not included. The earliest study I found was published in 1972 and I collected studies published up to, and including, 2011.

I framed the search around the terms children (or child* or kid*) AND gay or lesbian (or homosexual or same-sex) AND parent* or mother or father. To be eligible for selection the articles needed to engage directly with the health and well-being of children through research based studies. Studies that only

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6 The symbol '*' after a word indicates a search for any possible ending to that word.
addressed lesbian and gay parents, for example, parenting style or division of labour, were not included in the set of texts.

This procedure yielded 70 research texts that I separated according to methodology utilised. As explained earlier, methodologies based on a “system of closures” produce “distorted representations requiring interrogation” (Moreton-Robinson 1998, p.284). Within the texts there were 64 quantitative studies (discussed in chapter three) and six qualitative studies (discussed in chapter four). Appendix A provides a full list of the quantitative studies included and Appendix B provides a list of the qualitative texts.

I conducted a discourse analysis of the texts as informed by feminist and poststructural methodology. Feminist sociologist Marjorie DeVault observes that feminist methodology in the social sciences is not a precise set of procedures but rather a philosophical approach rooted in feminist activism and a critique of the standard methodological procedure (1996). Ramazanoglu and Holland, writing on feminist methodology, remarks that deconstructing binary thinking and oppositional categories are a key part of poststructural feminist methodology (2002, p.88). Consequently I searched for binary constructions within the texts.

Within poststructuralism it is important to contextual knowledge in an attempt to distinguish the networks of power from which it was created and position it as a discourse rather than a truth. To investigate the historical and social context in
which the texts were produced I explored the background of the authors and speakers, seeking to contextualise the knowledge that they produced. Within the texts I investigated which aspects of the children’s lives were studied, what was identified as a problem, what was used as evidence and what conclusions were drawn. A list of the questions used to analyse the texts is provided in Appendix D. These questions allowed me to explore how the children were being represented. I then proceeded to an in-depth analysis of the six qualitative studies, using the same questions as a beginning point but also looking for if, and how, the qualitative research changed or challenged representations of the ‘children of’ found in the quantitative research.

I used the Internet to obtain instances where ‘children of’ spoke for themselves in any media. I used multiple search terms including: lesbian mum*; lesbian mother*; lesbian parent*; two(2) mums/mothers/dads/fathers; gay dad*; gay father*; gay parent*; same-sex parent*; same-sex family; gayby; queerspawn; children of and rainbow baby. I found three video clips, two speeches given at public rallies, another speech written for school and a written personal reflection. I have also included three journalistic articles that reflect self-presentation through extensive quoting. The time frame I set for the stories was ten years, including 2012. I do not claim that these stories represent all that exists but publicly available Australian content is scarce. Fifteen children, aged from 3-27, spoke from the position of a ‘child of’ across these texts (see Appendix C for full list).
I transcribed any video or audio footage and conducted a discourse analysis. Initially I examined who spoke, why they went public and what they had to say. I investigated the speaker’s age, gender and family composition (number of parents, parental gender and sexuality, siblings and means of conception). I documented the context and location in which they spoke and the reasons they gave for speaking (if any). Following this I specifically investigated the relationship between the representations from authoritative science research and the children’s narrative, asking what parts of the research they responded to, and how. This allowed me to begin to speculate on how the subjectivity of ‘children of’ may have been shaped by representations from the research literature.
Chapter 3
A New Object of Inquiry

The first article on children with lesbian or gay parents to be published in an academic journal, *Family Process*, was ‘My Step Father is a She’ (Osman 1972). Osman, a social worker from Southern California, critically reflects on the experience of working with a lesbian couple and their son. She concludes that the issues the family faced were very similar to those a heterosexual family might experience following a relationship break-up and the addition of a step-parent. Three years later Weeks et al (1975) from the University of Virginia published a case study on two children of homosexual parents in the journal *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*. These two articles represent the emergence of a new object of inquiry: the child of lesbian or gay parents. This chapter provides an overview of the historical, political and social context in which the research first emerged and then gives a historical overview of the body of research from 1972 to 2011. I outline the critical commentary already directed at research on lesbian and gay parents and observe that the construction of children in the research literature have yet to be investigated.

Before the 1970s lesbian motherhood as we know it today, and indeed gay fatherhood, was beyond the realm of possibility. Children were raised outside of heterosexual relationships before this time but the consolidation of a lesbian and gay identity politics only emerged through the liberation movements starting in North America in the late 1960s and spreading to Australia by the 1970s.
(Willett 2000). This period produced the language, identity and subject positions based on sexual orientation for people to publicly embrace the identity of lesbian or gay and subsequently that of lesbian and gay parents. Once named and known, lesbian and gay parents, and their children, became objects of knowledge to be studied, categorised, classified, regulated and disciplined (Foucault 1990).

In 1972, when the first study on children with lesbian or gay parents was published, homosexuality was classified by the World Health Organisation as a mental disorder and was said to cause unnatural and perverse desire. In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality as a mental illness from the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III) (Silverstein 2009). However anti-sodomy statutes remained in some American states until 2003. In Australia, male homosexuality was first decriminalised in South Australia in 1975, with all other states following (Willett 2000, p.96). Tasmania was the last state to decriminalise consensual sex between men in 1997, after a successful appeal to the United Nations. The World Health Organisation did not remove homosexuality as a listed mental disorder until 1990.

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7 In 2003, while deciding *Lawrence v. Texas* the US Supreme Court voted 6-3 that that statues criminalising consensual homosexual acts violated the fourteenth amendment (Smith 2003, p.1799-1800).
8 Amendments to the law in South Australia first took place 1972 but homosexuality was not completely decriminalised until 1975.
9 This occurred on May 17th and this date marks the annual International Day Against HOMophobia (IDAHO) (National LGBTI Health Alliance 2012).
The number of studies on the health and well-being of the children of lesbian and gay parents expanded in the USA throughout the 1980s in response to the systematic denial of custody and visitation purely on the basis of sexual orientation. Benkov argues that in the USA by 1975 lesbians mothers had begun “losing custody in near-epidemic proportions” (1994, p.34). Decision making in the courts was informed by historical discourses of homosexuality associating it with sin, moral failing, disease and crime (Weeks 1989; Foucault 1990). Heterosexuality, on the other hand, has been discursively positioned as a biologically and spiritually ‘natural’ and normal desire (Katz 1995). Sex between men was criminalised in England in 1533 and Australia inherited these laws in 1788 via colonisation (Crozier 2001). In the first 13 colonies of America men engaging in sex with men faced the death penalty (Crompton 1976). Sex between women has never been criminalised in these countries but this does not mean that lesbians did not face persecution. Rather Australian feminist Anne Summers commented in 1975 that the absence of lesbian legal prosecution was “a tactic of annihilation by non-recognition” (Summers 1975, p.159). Authorities sought to keep lesbianism invisible due to fear of exposing women to the notion.10

10 Lesbian, feminist scholar Sheila Jeffreys reports that in Britain an attempt to make female homosexuality illegal in 1921 failed because to make lesbianism visible was to “spread its offence” and corrupt “innocent” women who were too “weak” to resist the temptation (Jeffreys 1985, p.113).
The practice of removing children from lesbian or gay parents in the courts was also influenced by Christian homophobic discourses that positioned homosexuals as dangers to children. Media coverage of homosexuals in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s conflated the term with child molesters (Willett 2000, p.ix). Christian homophobic discourse, making claims to common sense, stressed the unnatural, sinful and perverse nature of homosexuality to be at best incompatible with children and at worst harmful to them. In the USA, Anita Bryant rose from starring in orange juice commercials to being a key figure in foregrounding a rhetoric of child protectionism in attacks on homosexuality. In 1977 she founded Save Our Children From Homosexuality Inc to speak out against allowing gay teachers in schools. Bryant never spoke of the children of lesbian and gay parents but famously asserted that, “as homosexuals cannot reproduce – so they must recruit and to freshen their ranks, they must recruit the youth of America” (in McCreery 2008, p.191). As the Save Our Children campaign spread across the USA a discursive link strengthened which positioned lesbian and gay men as child molesters with the presumption that child sexual abuse is the cause of homosexuality. Thus gay men were said to be filling out the ranks of homosexuals by molesting children. This (il)logic was later extended to suggest that lesbians and gay men aimed to reproduce themselves through their children and would raise sexually deviant and gender confused children.

Research began against this backdrop and sought to investigate the hypothesis that lesbian and gay parenting harms children. Comparative family studies,
where the children of lesbian and gay parents were compared to the children of heterosexual parents began with vigour from 1978. Beginning with the publication of Green (1978) in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Lesbian psychologist Victoria Clarke comments that the primary research question shaping this field was: are lesbian families (and later gay fathers) the same as heterosexual families and thus are lesbians and gays fit to parent? (Clarke 2000a, p.273). This research was essentially anti-homophobic.

The early research, and indeed the majority of this body of literature, was produced in the USA.\(^{11}\) The first studies came from California, Virginia and New York and these continue to be centres of academic inquiry on children with lesbian and gay parents. In 1983, the Family and Child Psychology Research Centre from London’s City University also began publishing on non-traditional families. The centre, established by Susan Golombok, has been conducting longitudinal research on lesbian and gay parents and their children in the UK since its inception. A similar longitudinal study has run in the USA since 1986. Led by Nanette Gartrell and Henny Bos, the American National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) has published 16 peer-reviewed articles and has been instrumental in supporting legal and policy change. Australia has contributed two data studies (Sarantakos 1996; Ray and Gregory 2001) and two review studies (Millbank 2003; Short et al. 2007) to this body of research.

\(^{11}\) See Appendix E.
Independent homophobic research institutes also emerged in the 1980s, producing research to challenge pro-gay findings. In 1982, Psychologist Paul Cameron established the Family Research Institute in America to investigate issues that he claims “threaten the traditional family” (Family Research Institute 2012). The gay press at the time described Cameron as “the most dangerous anti-gay voice in the United States” (Herek 1991, p.9). Cameron and his team are still producing research, including two texts included in this thesis. Clarke observes that the Family Research Institute is a conservative Christian organisation dedicated solely to anti-gay activities (2000b, p.153). The year after Cameron set up the institute he was expelled from the American Psychological Association for breaching ethics and grossly misrepresenting his own and others research. In 1985 he was also expelled from the American Sociological Association; “Dr. Paul Cameron has consistently misinterpreted and misrepresented research on sexuality, homosexuality and lesbianism” to further his [homophobic] agenda” (The American Sociological Association in Herek 1991, p.9).

The samples used in the research studies have shifted with changing family demographics. The early studies focused on children born into a heterosexual union where one parent later came out. From the late 1970s studies on ‘planned’ lesbian families emerged as new discourses and material possibilities emerged for ‘doing’ family.12 Women’s access to work, legal changes making divorce easier and the introduction of the single mothers pension in Australia

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12 Claire Ralfs comments that “family is a verb… a series of actions” and conceptualizing family in this way resists conferring privilege to the named nuclear family (Ralfs 2002, p.11).
gave women independent access to finances. Meanwhile the emergence of communities based on ‘non-normative’ sexual identity provided alternative networks of support. Donor insemination, whether done through a medical clinic or done informally at home, provided the opportunity for women to conceive without heterosex. Throughout the 1980s planned lesbian families rapidly arose – a period sometimes referred to as the ‘lesbian baby boom’ or the ‘gayby boom’ (Short et al. 2007, p.4). Studies then began on lesbian families formed using donor insemination.

More recently studies have been conducted on children adopted by lesbian and gay parents. Interestingly very few studies exist on the experiences of children fostered by lesbian or gay parents. Riggs (2009) comments that foster children are often seen as already ‘damaged goods’, perhaps this assumption negates the ‘risk’ of further harm done by lesbian or gay parents.

The majority of scholars writing on lesbian and gay families are women, and lesbian mothers have received far more scholarly attention than gay fathers and planned gay families. I imagine that early researchers in the area had personal experiences with lesbian and gay parents through either their work or private lives. Lesbians and gay men researchers are accused of being biased and promoting an agenda, however the heterosexuality of researchers opposing same-sex parenting is not problematised. Psychologist Charlotte Patterson, for example, is a lesbian who has published over 45 articles about lesbian and gay parenting (Patterson 2012). In an article, titled ‘When Propaganda is Disguised
as Research’ published by NARTH (National Association for the Research and Treatment of Homosexuality) Patterson was accused of being a propagandist producing biased research (Schoenewolf 2005).

Considering the political contentiousness of the issue most researchers had a political agenda based on their opinions of homosexuality. Anti-gay scholars were, and still are, trying to prove the children will be damaged or disadvantaged by having a lesbian or gay parent (alternatively expressed as the need for both a mother and a father). In response pro-gay scholars challenge the accusations made against lesbian and gay parents by attempting to disprove the hypothesis that lesbian and gay parenting is harmful. Heterosexual discourse, along with institutional and epistemological frames, constructed the boundaries of the research. But it is not, and never has been, an equally weighted debate with the vast majority of academic research supporting lesbian and gay parenting.

The contemporary political use of this research in Australia is widespread as existing state and national legislation that discriminates against lesbian and gay parenting is being challenged. The conservative Christian Right utilises the rhetoric of child protection to oppose legal and policy reform and deploys the representation of a child damaged through having lesbian or gay parents. Bryant observes that “in an era of increasing tolerance toward gays and lesbians, the ways in which antigay sentiments are expressed have been transformed” (2008, p.469). Accordingly the concern over children having
lesbian or gay parents is more commonly expressed as the denial of both a mother and a father.

Doctors for the Family indicated that growing up without a mother and a father will have adverse health effects for children and that the children will suffer physical abuse, mental disturbance and physical ill health (Radio National Breakfast 2012). They were also said to experience poverty, display anti-social behaviour and perform poorly at school. The Salt Shakers, another Australian fundamental Christian lobby group, maintains that homosexual parenting is not in the best interests of the child and one of their key arguments for this is that “children raised by homosexuals are 4-10 times more likely to be homosexual” (Salt Shakers 2010). Children and young people becoming/being homosexual is equated to harm being done to them.

The body of research often conflates lesbians and gay men as a combined category of inquiry (occasionally with bisexual and transgender parents also included), generally failing to acknowledge that neither category represents a homogeneous group with uniform concerns and experiences. Although lesbians and gay men have the shared experience of the denial of heterosexual privilege, gay men have mediated access to male privilege. Other factors including skin colour, gender, body form, socio-economic status, religion, culture and ethnicity may contribute more to experiences of discrimination and marginalisation than sexuality.
Hicks (2005) cautions against assuming that the categories of lesbian or gay refer to distinct types of people with definable sets of characteristics (that can be transmitted to children). Neither constitutes a homogenous group and the categories are based simply on one aspect of a person: their sexual orientation. Hicks maintains that there is nothing innately different about lesbians and gay men and their families, but that they experience differential treatment due to the discursive practices that maintain a heteronormative hierarchy of family forms. Continuing to construct them as a group uniquely different from others contributes to the construction of their otherness.

The construction of lesbian and gay parents in research, specifically psychological research, has already been critiqued. Australian psychologists Short et al (2007, p.5) observe that early concerns expressed over the fitness of lesbian and gay men to parent were framed as a legitimate research concern rather than a reflection of heterosexism. Fear and prejudice has framed the research agenda and structured the research findings. Clarke (2000a) observes that typically there are heterosexist assumptions behind the research questions that are not always acknowledged. Consequently trying to disprove heterosexist assumptions places these concerns central to the research. The research proceeded from the assumption that lesbian and gay parents are second rate and scientific evidence is needed to prove they are capable parents.

Comparative family research reinforces the heterosexual nuclear family as the gold standard for good parenting (Clarke 2003). The wider ramification of
scientific justification through comparative research is that lesbian and gay parents are forced to position themselves as ‘just like’ heterosexual parents in order to be accepted as good parents (see, for example, Clarke and Kitzinger 2004; Riggs 2007). This discursive response of positioning themselves as ‘just like’ heterosexual families, has functioned to create new homonormative hierarchies of family forms.\(^13\) Furthermore the majority of research on lesbian and gay families has been conducted with white, middle-class, coupled parents. As a result this somewhat privileged group of non-normative parents have been rendered provisionally acceptable parents. But as Riggs (2010) observes, this means that solo parents, working class parents and parents of colour, regardless of their sexuality, are further relegated to the position of ‘bad’ parents.

The impact of heteronormative discourse on research on lesbian and gay parents has been investigated. But representations of children in this research, and the discourses that utilise this research, have yet to be explored or critiqued. Research on children with lesbian and gay parents in general is narrowly focused. Initially, when looking for texts, I did not limit my search to studies that analysed behaviour, development and mental functioning to measure health and well-being, but this was all I found. Children of lesbian and gay parents have been constructed as a pathologised object needing inquiry. In the following two chapters I analyse how children of lesbian and gay parents are represented in authoritative research from the human and social sciences.

\(^{13}\) Homonormativity is a conservative form of homosexuality based on adherence to heteronormative principles (see Duggan 2002; Bryant 2008; Rosenfeld 2009).
Then I explore the impact these representations may have had on the children’s’ lives by investigating their self-presentations.
Chapter 4
Representations of Children with Lesbian and Gay Parents in the Quantitative Research

In this chapter I analyse quantitative texts on children with lesbian and gay parents. Within the 64 texts I make a distinction between 38 ‘data studies’ in which the authors have conducted their own original studies (including case studies) and 26 ‘review studies’ where authors comment on the collated findings of already published studies. After providing a brief overview of the quantitative texts I begin my analysis of the studies, focusing on how the children are represented. I show that an imagined ‘child at risk’ is implicit behind the research. I finish by reflecting on contemporary political uses of the research in Australia and argue that the research is constantly misrepresented.

The 64 texts analysed here were published across a range of journals. The majority appeared in academic psychology and psychiatry journals (named psych journals for the purpose of this research).\textsuperscript{14} The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry was the most frequent publisher of studies.\textsuperscript{15} This is significant as orthopsychiatry is the branch of psychiatry concerned with the study and prevention of mental or behavioural disorders in children (Oxford English

\textsuperscript{14} Psychology journals published 12 of the data studies and eight of the review studies. Psychiatry journals published nine of the data studies and two of the review studies. The remaining three data studies and one review study were published in combined psychology and psychiatry journals.

\textsuperscript{15} Official Journal of the American Orthopsychiatry Association.
Dictionary 2012). Thus the assumptions underlying the discipline itself already indicates an alleged harm to the child’s well being. The remaining studies were published in medical journals, journals with a focus on lesbian, gay or queer subject matter (named queer journals for the purpose of this analysis), social work journals, and journals concerned with marriage and the family, see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of quantitative texts by journal discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psych</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Queer</th>
<th>Social Work</th>
<th>Marriage/Family</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Studies</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Studies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Studies</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tabulation of quantitative texts.

Reviews of this area of research began to appear in the late 1980s across a range of disciplines including law, paediatrics, social policy, social work, counselling, nursing, sex research and education. The reviews generally concluded by challenging practitioners and policy makers to be aware of their own personal prejudice after presenting scientific evidence challenging the discursive link between homosexual parenting and harm to children.
The object of these studies was the health and well-being of children with lesbian or gay parents. Data for the quantitative studies was collected through a range of measures from parents, teachers and the children themselves. Only seven of the 38 data studies relied solely on parents or teachers to provide data on the children.\textsuperscript{16} Over half of the studies used interviews and questionnaires to examine children's experiences. In the remaining studies, the children were part of the data collection only to the extent of being studied through psychological assessments. Typically though, when children were involved in interviews or questionnaires this was via a predetermined schedule where the main ‘concerns’ where already mapped out by the researcher. Thus the research was carried out on, rather than with, the participants. The ‘children of’ were allowed to comment on particular issues of concern but not to critique the questions or offer their own concerns.

The most studied domains from 1972 to 2011 were, in order: sexual identity and orientation (14x), gender development and identity (13x), social adjustment and development (12x), stigma (9x), emotional adjustment and development (7x), psychological adjustment (7x), behavioural adjustment (5x) and cognitive functioning (4x), see Figure 1. See Appendix F for a breakdown of specific outcomes studied within each domain.

\textsuperscript{16}(Bailey et al. 1995; Sarantakos 1996; Gartrell et al. 2000; Bos et al. 2007; Bos et al. 2008; Farr et al. 2010)
As research is not conducted in a cultural vacuum and usually responds to a desire to produce more authoritative knowledge on an area of concern I posit that the outcomes being studied represent the characteristics of the perceived child at risk. The children will be assumed damaged if they are measured to show disproportionately negative adjustment and development. Adjustment is a measure that assumes difficulties or challenges being present in the environment: “adjustment in psychology is a behavioural process by which people maintain an equilibrium between their needs and the obstacles of their environment” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2012, italics added). This framing reveals an assumption that children with lesbian or gay parents will inherently be at a disadvantage. Across the 64 studies the children were checked to see if they displayed unsociability, problem behaviours, emotional instability, poor life satisfaction, low self-esteem, proper autonomy, high stress levels, poor moral
development, low IQ, poor academic achievement, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse or delinquent behaviour. The children’s attitudes, behaviours, fantasies, drawings and play were scrutinised for any sign of abnormalities.

A major concern was the development of ‘appropriate’ development regarding sexuality and gender, appropriate being defined as heteronormative. This suggests concern that homosexuals will reproduce themselves through their children. Seventeen of the first 20 data studies, published from 1972 to 1997, investigated sexuality and/or gender development. From 1998 the focus on heteronormative development shifts to a research focus on stigmatisation, but sexuality and gender are still regularly studied. The first two decades of studies generally conflated sexual identity/orientation and gender development or gender role behaviour to be indicators of future sexuality. Children showing ‘atypical’ gender development were assumed to develop as homosexuals. Gender identification was not considered a separate issue. Thus in the studies it is difficult to separate concerns over potential sexual orientation from concerns over potential gender non-conformity. Deviations from ‘normal’, in other words ‘heterosexual’, functioning were interpreted as an indicator of harm. Heteronormative development was checked through toy preference, clothing preference, vocational aspiration, peer group composition, roles assumed in play, the human figure drawing test, attitudes to marriage, sexual attraction, sexual behaviour and sexual fantasy.
Theories of sexual and gender development based on biology or socialisation are challenged by the children of lesbian and gay parents. Modelling theory is a form of psychological social learning theory that stipulates children learn their behaviours by watching and imitating the behaviours of others (Burton et al. 2006, p.242). Heterosexual children of lesbian and gay parents challenge this fundamental modelling theory, yet are celebrated as successes. While despite adherence to modelling theory, the existence of queer children of lesbian or gay parents is used against the campaign for legal reform. Modelling theory also fails to explain queer children of heterosexual parents but it remains a prevalent theory. Biological and genetic theories of sexual orientation are also problematised by this pattern. However challenges to both social and biological development theories is rarely commented on in the literature.

Almost half the review studies name homophobia and/or heterosexism as a problem for the ‘children of’. Children’s experience with, and relation to, homophobia was explored in Osman’s first study in 1972 but not again until 1999. Homophobia is a hatred, fear and abhorrence of the homosexual subject. The term heterosexism refers to discrimination against homosexuals and privileging of heterosexuality in a wider context of societal prejudice (operating similar to sexism and racism). In these instances homophobia or heterosexism was acknowledged to be behind the representations of the child at risk that these studies were challenging. The quantitative studies that then emerged were structured on the personal or individual level through the study of stigma.
Social stigma refers to a “personal characteristic that at least some other individuals perceive negativity” (Baron and Byrne 1999, p.266 italics added). This framing of the research concern positions the problem within the child, rather than within a heterosexist society. Children’s relationship to homophobia was constructed in an objectified manner whereby the children were passive victims to it. Absent from the discussion was the effects of parenting in a heterosexist environment or research on what causes homophobia and how to intervene. The parents were blamed and labelled as selfish for subjecting their children to stigmatisation while the heterosexist attitudes causing the discrimination were left unexamined.

Four of the 64 studies reported children were harmed by having lesbian and gay parents. Two of these studies are by Paul Cameron and another, a review by Wardle (1997), is based on his work. Cameron (2006) claims that children of homosexual parents show disproportionate homosexual tendencies caused through either a disease-like “contagion” via their parents or by sexual abuse perpetrated by their parents. Cameron and Cameron claim “homosexuality is a learned pathology passed from generation to generation by modelling and seduction” (1996, p.757). This study reports that five of the seventeen children in the randomised sample have experienced sexual relations with their homosexual parent. However as discussed earlier the integrity of his work is a

17 The fourth article that supports allegations of harm is that of Belcastro et al (1993). The authors challenged the validity of the previously published studies.
point of much contention and thus I find it interesting that his work is still being published in academic journals.\footnote{For a critical analysis of Cameron’s work please see Clarke (2001) and Herek (1991). Following the publication of Cameron’s article in the \textit{Journal of Biosocial Science} in 1996, academics from Germany and the USA wrote an open letter to the editors of the journal questioning the publication of the article, based on Cameron’s history of dubious scientific method and breach of ethics, and suggesting the journal retract the article (Hames and Hagen 2006).}

The overall conclusions of the research are that no statistically significant difference exists between children with one or more lesbian or gay parent and children with heterosexual parent(s). This finding is consistent regardless of study demographics and includes children from solo parent homes, children with lesbian or gay step-parents, children in planned same-sex families, adopted children and children born through donor insemination or other assisted reproductive technologies. Prominent researcher in this area, Professor Judith Stacey, comments that “rarely is there as much consensus in any area of social science as in the case of gay parenting” (in Short et al. 2007, p.7).

Thirty-six of the 38 data studies report no differences found in any of the outcomes studied. American Psychologist Charlotte Patterson observes that “more than two decades of research has failed to reveal important differences in the adjustment or development of children or adolescents raised by same-sex couples” (2006, p.241). Patterson goes on to remark “the findings suggest that parental sexual orientation is less important than the qualities of family
relationships” (2006, p.243). Psychology is gradually adopting the position that family processes, rather than family structures, are the key determinant of children’s well-being (Short et al. 2007, p.4).

Twenty-four of the 26 review studies report a ‘no difference’ conclusion. The reviews covered a range of outcomes, but without fail address gender and sexual development. British psychologist Fiona Tasker reviews 35 studies on children with lesbian or gay parents and observes that these children are “comparable with children with heterosexual parents on key psychosocial developmental outcomes” (2005, p.224). After reviewing 23 studies published from 1978 to 2000, Anderssen et al comment:

The present review did not reveal evidence that children of lesbian mothers differed from other children on emotional adjustment, sexual preference, stigmatization, gender role behaviour, behavioural functioning, gender identity, or cognitive functioning. The studies reported surprisingly similar finding despite the variety of conceptual and methodological approaches (2002, p.349).

The conclusions of the research are that of ‘no difference’; no measurable differences exist between children with lesbian or gay parents and children with heterosexual parents on a range of outcomes.

Interestingly Stacey and Biblarz (2001) argue in their review that differences do exist between children with lesbian or gay parents and children with heterosexual parents but these findings have been downplayed in the research
as difference is read by anti-gay campaigners as an indication of harm. Consequently potential areas of academic interest or challenges to existing heteronormative theories of development are restrained by the political weight of the findings.

Despite the overwhelming conclusions of the research, studies continue in an unchanging format. As researchers continue to look for problems this reinforces the belief that these findings cannot be right (valid or reliable). Just this year the Australian Study of Child Health in Same-Sex Families (ACHESS) was launched by the University of Melbourne and is aspiring to recruit 750 children. The study “aims to describe all the issues surrounding a child’s health and well-being, including - for the first time - physical aspects and health behaviours (including diet and exercise)” (Melbourne Alumni Enews 2012). The body of research conclusively shows that there is no harm but ‘common sense’, heterosexism and homophobia contribute to the research findings being constantly misrepresented and the championing of a limited, few suspect studies that support allegations of harm.

Sexual abuse, substance abuse and delinquent behaviour are central to representations of Christian Right’s damaged child but these characteristics were not generally responded to in the research. Aside from Cameron and Cameron (1996) only one of the 38 studies investigated occurrences of sexual abuse amongst children with lesbian or gay parents. Gartrell et al report from the National Lesbian Family Study that of the 78 families involved no child had
been physically abused but three girls had been sexually abused by unrelated males (2005, p.521). Wainright and Patterson (2006) investigated delinquent behaviour and substance abuse among adolescents with female same-sex parents. The research was constructed against an imagined child at risk but did not respond to all the features of the Christian Right’s representation of the damaged child.

Children with lesbian or gay parents have had many aspects of their lives quantified this research process. Quantitative methods are by nature, objectifying and reductionist as people, behaviours and experiences are reduced to numbers and norms (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). It must be noted though that this research has been exceedingly important in its time and has contributed to the removal of discrimination against lesbians and gay men in Australia’s legal system.

Children of lesbian and gay parents are represented in the quantitative research as ‘no different’ to children with heterosexual parents. Elements of the Christian Right’s damaged child were responded to but the research mainly responded to an imagined ‘child at risk’ of having their normative developmental outcomes disrupted. The child of lesbian and gay parents was represented as not at risk, as the opposite of damaged, as well adjusted and prospering. They were represented as the successful embodiment of normative development and heterosexuality. Children of lesbian and gay parents are socially, emotionally and psychologically well adjusted. Their cognitive functioning is unimpaired.
They may get teased or bullied as school but this does not have a measurable effect on self-esteem or academic performance. Their parents have not abused them. They do not have mental illness. They are not disadvantaged or damaged in any way by having lesbian or gay parents. Due to this ‘no difference’ finding, representative bodies such as the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Paediatrics and the British Psychological Association have all issued statements in support of lesbian and gay parenting and same-sex marriage.
Chapter 5
Representations of Children with Lesbian and Gay Parents in the Qualitative Research

In this chapter I analyse representations of children with lesbian and gay parents in the qualitative research. Firstly I examine the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods and the children’s relationship to these. Then I describe the six qualitative studies that form the basis of this chapter. In the texts ‘children of’ re-position the problem needing intervention from their families to homophobia. They express gratitude over learning to appreciate diversity and thinking deeper about gender and sexuality. The impact of heteronormativity, reinforced through the quantitative research, on the development of the ‘children of’ is highlighted through the voices of ‘second generation’ youth (queer youth with queer parents). I reveal how authoritative representations place pressure upon the ‘children of’ to enact the subject position of the prospering child.

Quantitative methods have been criticised for reducing the vast complexities of life to a set of numbers, correlations, scales and standard patterns. These methods do not allow for complex meanings and nuanced experiences to be captured. Furthermore, quantitative research positions some people outside of the norm, as outliers or abnormalities in the data. For Foucault, however, these

\[19\]The term ‘second generation’ was claimed by queer youth with queer parents in the American organization COLAGE (Children Of Lesbian And Gays Everywhere) and is used in these qualitative studies.
outliers indicate acts of resistance and possibilities for change warranting research attention.

Giving voice to the ‘children of’ through qualitative methods challenges objectifying practices. The ‘children of’ are repositioned recognised as experts on their own lives and as legitimate producers of information. Ramazanoglu and Holland comment “the voices of the researched have a critical part to play in the production of feminist knowledge” (2002, p.114). This notion contradicts the privileging of objective, scientific knowledge and recognises subjective experience as a legitimate contribution to knowledge.

Only six of the seventy texts used methodologies that privilege children’s agency and experience. Across the six studies 180 ‘Children of’ were given voice. The full list of texts is provided in Appendix B. Table 2 shows a brief summary of researchers discipline and location. Half the authors are social workers, one is a health writer outside of a university context, and another does family studies. Only one works in the psychology discipline.

Table 2: Summary of researchers academic and geographic location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Massachusetts, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Connell</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Massachusetts, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saffron</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Health Writer</td>
<td>Bristol, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Clark University (MA, USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairtlough</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>University of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuvalanka &amp; Goldberg</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Family Studies, Psychology</td>
<td>Miami University, Clark University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1980, Karen Lewis published in the journal *Social Work* the results of her interviews with twenty-one children with lesbian mothers. In response to the “dearth of information” she identified regarding lesbian mothers and their children she proceeded to interview the children “encouraging them to talk about the difficulties they experience in dealing with their mother’s life-style and the influence it has had on their lives” (1980, p.198). Lewis worked with children of lesbian mothers in a clinical setting and made the comment that a common theme among the children she counselled was an ambivalence between the children's facade of a liberal, intellectual acceptance of their mothers lesbianism, and their inner emotional turmoil over it.

In 1993, Ann O'Connell another social worker from Massachusetts, wrote about eleven children with lesbian mothers whose mother and father separated when they were aged 6-12. The children discussed the difficulties of parental separation and how their mother’s lesbianism affected this. O’Connell also explored the experiences of their mother’s coming out and how the mother’s lesbianism has impacted on them. Despite difficulties, expressed as feeling different and the need for secret keeping, O’Connell commented that “without exception, each subject heartfetly stated they wish that anyone reading this study should know that having a lesbian mother was a positive experience” (1993, p.293).

Lisa Saffron (1998), a lesbian mother and health writer from Bristol, set out to explore the potential advantages of having a lesbian mother. Her study,
published in the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, was the first that deliberately sought to uncover benefits and broke from the previous defensive stance of the research. Saffron argues that having a lesbian mother has a positive effect on moral and social development as the children she interviewed showed progressive values relating to homosexuality, women's independence, the concept of family and an acceptance of diversity.

Nine years later Abbie Goldberg (2007), the only author working in a university psychology department, challenged what she calls the "no-difference" mantra in research on children with lesbian and gay parents. She says her qualitative analysis revealed that adults of LGB parents felt they were more tolerant and open-minded and had more flexible views of sexuality and gender. Goldberg was published in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, a reputable journal that published much of the quantitative studies. New issues emerged from her open style interviews about “defending our parents”, the “pressure to ‘succeed’ as children of LGB parents” and the tension regarding membership of the queer community (2007, p.555-556).

In 2008 Anna Fairtlough, a lesbian mother and lecturer in social work at the University of London conducted a qualitative analysis of sixty-seven published accounts from the UK, USA and New Zealand of young people and adults reflecting on their experiences of growing up with one or more lesbian or gay parent. She focused on reactions to parent’s sexuality and experience of homophobia. She concluded that despite negative and positive experiences the
stories "converge in the conclusion that the children themselves do not feel they are damaged by having a lesbian or gay parent" (2008, p.526).

Kuvalanka and Goldberg (2009) explored the experience of being a queer youth with a lesbian or bisexual mother. This was groundbreaking work as previously the experiences of ‘second generation’ youth were silenced to maintain the position that lesbian and gay parents raise heterosexual children. Kuvalanka and Goldberg examine the experience of navigating social scrutiny and heterosexism and asked whether the young people experienced their parents as a source of support or not.

Half of the six studies sourced their participants from an American organisation called COLAGE (Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere) (Goldberg 2007; Fairtlough 2008; Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009). Author Katherine Kuvalanka is the co-chair of the COLAGE research board and Abbie Goldberg is a research committee member. COLAGE was established in 1988 and is run by and for children of queer parents. They call themselves Queerspawn, a politically contentious and edgy naming which reflects the questions posed about their existence. COLAGE runs advocacy and activism courses and its members have produced many resources such as anthologies, books, documentaries and political position statements. The existence of COLAGE represents a significant shift in the political landscape as children of lesbian and gay parents move from being passive objects of knowledge to becoming active subjects of power attempting to influence public representations of themselves. The existence of
COLAGE however, also skews the sample for studies such as these, because only those who are prepared to claim the public identity of ‘queerspawn’ will be involved with such an organisation. Moreover the organisational discourse will shape the subjectivity of those involved.

‘Children of’ articulate the feeling of objectification coming from being ‘studied on’. They report the feeling of growing up “under a microscope”, having their own behaviour and identity scrutinised as potential ammunition to be used against their parents (Goldberg 2007, p.556). For this group the panoptical gaze does not only reside in the background but shines a spotlight directly on them. ‘Children of’ are aware of the scrutiny over their development and the political consequences of resisting prescribed norms.

A strong theme emerging from the children’s voices was that prejudicial attitudes in society are the cause of any hardships they encounter. With the exception of Lewis’s 1980 article, the children in the remaining studies are supportive of non-normative sexuality and name homophobia as being the problem. O’Connell comments that post parental separation, the children in her study initially expressed anger, shock, disbelief, worry and confusion upon their mother’s disclosure (1993, p.288). This response pattern was evident across all the texts for children whose parents came out when they were teenagers. However following the initial reactions, the children begin to articulate any challenges of being a ‘child of’ in terms of homophobia and societal prejudice.
‘Children of’ are exposed to homophobia but are not just passive victims of it as the quantitative research implies. Instead many are motivated to ‘take a stand’ against homophobia and will actively challenge it (Goldberg 2007, p.555). One way this was enacted was by coming out about their parents in response to homophobic remarks, as a way to educate others. One child described the process as “a second coming out, first your mother comes out to you, and then you have to come out about your mother” (O’Connell 1993, p.289). By coming out as a ‘Child of’, the children challenge abstract homophobic rhetoric and make it an interpersonal issue. Many ‘children of’ frame the experience of having a lesbian or gay parent as a positive and beneficial one.

Saffron comments that the most valuable lesson children learn today, in “our age of diversity”, is “to be empathic with people who are oppressed and not to be afraid of difference” (1998, p.46). Many ‘children of’ expressed gratitude to their parents for giving them the opportunity to develop open-minded and non-judgemental attitudes through exposure to marginalised communities (see O’Connell 1993; Saffron 1998; Goldberg 2007; Faitlough 2008). Katrina, the seventeen year old daughter of a lesbian mother says “having a lesbian mother has enabled me to have a head start on everybody else emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, in every way” (in Saffron 1998, p.36). Similarly Jarad, who also has a lesbian mother, comments “my mom opened me up to the positive impact of differences in people” (in Goldberg 2007, p.555). Goldberg comments that the majority of participants in her study “spontaneously described themselves as open-minded, non-judgemental and
accepting of differences” (2007, p.554). Experiencing discrimination through heterosexism themselves lead to more consideration and empathy towards non-privileged groups: “I experienced a lot of prejudice towards my mother and myself and I want to never make judgements about people” (O’Connell 1993, p.293). The participants expressed that this was ultimately a positive experience, shaping them to be ‘better’ people.

Gratitude was also expressed over learning more complex understandings of the social construction of gender roles and sexual privilege. The quantitative research alludes that children with lesbian or gay parents develop more flexible and fluid notions about sexuality and gender (Stacey and Biblarz 2001). But this finding was often problematised. ‘Children of’ in the qualitative research reflected on how they thought more deeply about their sexual orientation, rather than assuming heterosexuality as a default, and this has made them more comfortable with their sexual identity (whatever it may be). This deeper thought has also opened up romantic and sexual possibilities for children with lesbian or gay parents. Daughters of lesbians speak of the insights gained through watching their mother’s financial and emotional independence from men (Saffron 1998, p.41). Sons of lesbian mothers speak of encouragement to be sensitive, resist hegemonic masculinity and value strength in their female partners and friends (Goldberg 2007, p.558).

The experiences of ‘children of’ who are transgender or not heterosexual were not explored until Kuvalanka and Goldberg (2009). Their study broke the
silence on this issue and investigated the experience of queer identified youth with lesbian or bisexual mothers. Kara, a bisexual woman with lesbian parents, comments that “no gay person would ever be angry at you for choosing one sexuality” (Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.912). However it is too simplistic to state that having a lesbian or bisexual mother makes the coming out process easier.

Interestingly, eleven of the eighteen second generation youth did not view their parents as a source of support regarding their own sexual/gender formation (Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009). One reason given for this was the existence of a ‘Queer Generation Gap’ in which the social and political context of the mothers and child’s coming out was so varied that commonality was difficult to find. Also if the parent’s were not honest and open regarding their own sexuality then this lack of communication made it harder for the children to approach the subject of their own identity. Second generation youth who identified as transgender or gender ambiguous recount how openness regarding sexual fluidity does not necessarily translate into an understanding or embracing of gender fluidity. Seven of the eighteen, second generation youth said their parent’s reacted negatively to their ‘coming out’. Generally this was via the expression of concern for their child having to “struggle with heterosexism and homophobia in their lives” (Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.914). The parents understood all too well how difficult being queer in a heteronormative society could be. The presence of internal homophobia with the parent’s identity formation impacted negatively on their reaction to their child’s disclosure.
Many ‘children of’ seek to protect themselves and their families from homophobia by being the embodied representation of a well-adjusted, prospering child. Through their representation of ‘normal’ development the figure of the child at risk and the damaged child lose their discursive strength to oppose lesbian and gay parenting. ‘Children of’ recount the “pressure or urgency to ‘set the record straight’ by standing up as ‘successful, well-adjusted children of gay parents’” (Goldberg 2007, p.556). Twenty-three year old Brian, who has a gay father, comments “as successful children of gay parents I feel like we have a social responsibility to come out” (Goldberg 2007, p.556). I believe this reflects an awareness of the political status of their existence. For some, the motivation is more personal, one boy observes, “I wanted to prove to my Dad… that my mom was a good person and that she wasn’t going to ruin me” (in O’Connell 1993, p.291). As ‘children of’ have been positioned as proof of the ability or inability of lesbians and gay men to parent, they stand as symbols greater than themselves.

Reflective of the research focus on sexual and gender development, presenting oneself as well adjusted and prospering was, in most cases, synonymous with presenting oneself as heterosexual and gender conformist. ‘Children of’ comment on the scrutiny over their sexuality; “since my mom was gay, I had to be very straight” (in Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.911). Some of those who identify as heterosexual speak of “the need to display it, for their own and the public’s benefit” (in Goldberg 2007, p.556). One young woman with a lesbian
mother tells of how she has stayed in “bad” heterosexual relationships because she did not want people to think she was gay and judge her and her mother because of it (in Goldberg 2007, p.556).

The prospering, well-adjusted child that has been used to endorse law reform is heterosexual. Implicit in this argument is that if lesbian and gay parents were ‘producing’ a disproportionate number of queer children then they would be judged unfit parents. This presents a complex position for ‘Children of’ who do identify as queer. Their authority to speak as prospering ‘children of’ is undermined by their non-normative sexuality and/or gender. Second generation youth reported feeling hesitant to disclose their sexuality, and even delayed their coming out, to avoid fuelling the stereotype that queer parents raise queer kids (and thus are not fit to parent) (Goldberg 2007, p.556). Amy, who identifies as queer and has a lesbian mother, recounts “feeling kind of bad sometimes that I’m not the perfect kid was hard…. I wanted to be like ‘see? Lesbian parents go good!’” (in Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.911). David, a bisexual man with lesbian parents, also speaks of how awareness of stereotypes influenced his identity formation; “I do feel to some extent that I didn’t want to be gay because that just proves the stereotype true that gay parents will raise a gay child and shouldn’t be allowed to have children” (in Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.911).
Terry who identifies as genderqueer and a tranny-dyke, alludes to the difficulties of the speaking position and the internal conflict experienced when he comments:

> for me one of the most difficult things was that, when I was born there was an article in the paper about it. The [name of the newspaper] did a big photo essay journalistic piece, and people wrote angry letters to the editor talking about how they were going to turn me gay, and I’d be confused about my gender. And I think the most difficult thing for me coming out was dealing with the fact that I was somehow proving them right (in Kuvalanka and Goldberg 2009, p.911).

Reflected in Terry’s comment is the scrutiny that ‘children of’ experience regarding their development, particularly sexuality and gender development. ‘Children of’ are aware of the pressure to be evidence of lesbian and gay parenting ability by enacting (hetero)normative development.

The ‘children of’ in the qualitative research challenge the representation of themselves as being no different from children with heterosexual parents. Any challenges the children encountered were attributed to homophobia and societal prejudice, not to their parents’ sexuality. Moreover they emphasise that these differences in their experiences are ultimately positive and beneficial. This claim is strengthened by the presentation of themselves as well-adjusted and prospering children whose experience with a lesbian or gay parent made them a ‘better person’. The authority of this speaking position is undermined if the child cannot fulfil the normative expectations of the prospering child. Second
generation youth expressed concern over how their sexuality and/or gender would reflect negatively on their family and the pressure they felt to be heterosexual. Most ‘children of’ reported feeling pressure to be well-adjusted and thus be the embodied representation of a prospering child.
Chapter 6
Australia ‘Children of’ Talk Back

In this chapter I present a snapshot of Australian children with lesbian or gay parents speaking outside of academic research. Publicly available first hand accounts from these children are sparse. I wish to begin the process of making the children’s own narratives more accessible and to investigate and document how they negotiate and resist dominant discourses in their self-representation. In doing so I thus acknowledge and respect their agency. The Internet, and social media sites in particular, has transformed possibilities for sharing stories in ways unmediated by gatekeepers. I wanted to know why are children with lesbian and gay parents speaking out and in what context are they claiming this speaking position. I investigated who was doing the speaking, what kinds of stories where being told and what was not being spoken about. The children’s narratives and subjectivities are formed in negotiation with the representations in the authoritative research. Foucault’s theory of disciplinary power posits how discourse influences the production and regulation of bodies and individuals.

A third party may not mediate the stories discussed in this chapter but they are mediated through self-monitoring and self-regulation. Foucault argues that society is governed by disciplinary power instilling a sense of permanent visibility in the population (Foucault 1979). The panopticon, a metaphor from prison architecture, is used by Foucault to explain his idea of the gaze. The panopticon is a circular prison in which the cells face a central tower, granting
guards full visibility. The prisoners cannot see the guards but are aware that surveillance could occur at any moment. Consequently the inmates develop a state of consciousness of permanent visibility and govern their own bodies and behaviour through self-surveillance to conform to acceptable norms. Docile bodies are produced as we govern and regulate our own behaviour; “our bodies themselves respond to the disciplinary framework set out for us” (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003 p.189). ‘Children of’, along with everyone else, are subject to disciplinary power. But in some areas of their lives this gaze is not so subtle, it is rather more like a spotlight shining bright upon them. The experience of growing up under this intensified psychosocial gaze had been described as “growing up under a microscope” (in Goldberg 2007, p.556).

Shifting positions from being a passive object of knowledge to an active speaking subject, children with lesbian and gay parents are claiming the right to speak for themselves. This has initially taken the form of a Foucauldian reverse discourse where subjects recapitulate the language of their pathologising discourse and using the same vocabulary and categories speak back to the discourse (Foucault 1990). While this is an act of power and resistance it also unwittingly reinforces the hierarchy that they seek to oppose. For example, as discussed in the last chapter, in the qualitative research children with lesbian and gay parents continually reiterate how ‘normal’ they are by announcing their heterosexuality and thus reinforcing the idea that raising ‘prosperous’ children is dependent on raising a heteronormative child. In the creation of our sense of
self, our subjectivity, we participate in the practice of naming, categorising and classifying, inevitably resulting in, and reinforcing, a hierarchy of subjects.

I collected stories from fifteen children and young adults with lesbian or gay parents. Four of the children were male and eleven were female. There ages ranged from three to 27. A breakdown of the speakers and their speaking contexts is presented in Table 3 below. There were slightly more children with lesbian parents than gay parents and some children had families consisting of both lesbian mothers and gay fathers. Four stories are videos of the children speaking made for forums on lesbian and gay activism through digital storytelling. A further two are speeches given at public rallies for same-sex relationships recognition and one is a web blog. There are also three newspaper feature articles, two from mainstream press and one from the Sydney lesbian magazine *Cherrie*, which contain extensive quoting. Appendix 3 provides a complete reference list of the materials consulted.

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20 The Rainbow Family Tree project, the Australian Marriage Equality campaign and the Gayby Baby Documentary.
Table 3: Summary of children of lesbian and gay parents speaking out in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Those Speaking</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Speaking Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boardman 2010</td>
<td>Akira Boardman</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lismore Equal Rights Rally Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns 2009</td>
<td>Kate Burns</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Rainbow Family Tree Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook 2012</td>
<td>Maeve Marsden; Maya Newell</td>
<td>27,23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cherrie Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadgraft 2011</td>
<td>Maeve Marsden; Maya Newell; Jocelyn de Groot</td>
<td>27,23,27</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Daily Telegraph Feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harding 2012</td>
<td>Brenna Harding</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australian Marriage Equality Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horin 2007</td>
<td>Eamon Waterford</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald Feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newell 2012</td>
<td>Maya Newell &amp; four others (names not given)</td>
<td>3-23</td>
<td>3 Females, 2 Males</td>
<td>Gayby Baby Documentary Teaser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Family Tree 2011</td>
<td>Name not given</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Rainbow Family Tree Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levett 2004</td>
<td>Tom Dunsford</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Tasmanian Rally for Relationship Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tryfell-Jones 2012</td>
<td>James Tyrell-Jones</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>ReachOut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tabulation of self-representation source material

Those that publicly claimed the subject position of ‘child of lesbian and gay parents’ were mainly white, heterosexual, middle-class and had coupled parents. One of the fifteen identified herself as a lesbian and the rest either identified as heterosexual or did not comment on their sexuality. Heterosexual privilege has been denied them early in life but other vectors of privilege have been experienced. Every person speaking had coupled same-sex parents. Many of them recount parental separation but explain how their parent’s new
lovers become parents to them. There is nothing innately unique about being a child of lesbian or gay parents, but current social and political discourse that reinforces a hierarchy of family formations creates a socially constructed experience of being marginalised. They are not a homogeneous group but are brought together by the shared experience of growing up outside of heterosexual privilege.

In Australia a response to the objectifying and silencing of the ‘children of’ is slowly growing. Australia has no national organisations, societies, groups or online communities for children with lesbian or gay parents. Thus it is not yet a co-ordinated or organised response, but pockets of activism and advocacy are emerging across the nation as children with lesbian or gay parents claim the right to speak for themselves. For example, Maya Newell, a self-described ‘gayby’ (person with gay parents), is in the process of filming a community-funded documentary about Australian children with lesbian or gay parents called *Gayby Baby* (Newell 2012). Newell, along with Maeve Marsden, hosted a forum at Sydney’s Mardi Gras 2012 called *Growing Up Other: Adult children of same-sex parents speak out* (Cook 2012). In Adelaide the 2010 Feast Queer Thinkers Festival included Kate Burns, Victoria Tregilgas and myself each speaking independently of each other about growing up in queer families (Feast 2010). In Victoria, government schools are currently introducing a program called *Resilient Rainbow Kids* for children with gay and lesbian parents (Rainbow Network Victoria 2012). These few examples represent a shifting
political landscape as children with lesbian and gay parents become subjects of power.

The timing of the emergence of these voices may be due to the age of the children. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw many children born and raised in lesbian and gay families. In 1984 Melbourne hosted Australia’s first national lesbian mothers conference (Baird 2012). In 1990 the National Lesbian Conference held a workshop on Lesbians and Conception, attended by over 60 women (Borthwick and Bloch 1993). By 1991 lesbian parenting and insemination was receiving mainstream media attention, circulating knowledge and ideas beyond those in the lesbian community. 1992 saw the inclusion of the first float in the Sydney Mardi Gras parade representing children of lesbian and gay parents (Borthwick and Bloch 1993). These children are now young adults. There are also older adult ‘children of’ who were born into a heterosexual union where one parent later came out however I believe, as explored later in this chapter, that it is a significantly different experience being born into a lesbian and gay family.

The nationwide campaign for legalising same-sex marriage has been another causal factor for children of lesbian and gay parents to speak out. The first bill to legalise same-sex marriage was introduced into Australian federal parliament in 2006 and remains unresolved.\textsuperscript{21} In 2009 another equal marriage bill was moved and rejected. Now in 2012, there are a further two bills before federal

\textsuperscript{21} This bill was introduced two years after the Howard government amended the marriage act in 2004 to restrict it to a man and a woman.
parliament. Children have historically been central to the arguments opposing same-sex marriage and are also increasingly becoming central to pro same-sex marriage arguments (See McCreery 2008; Hosking and Ripper 2012). Prior to campaigns around same-sex marriage, children were also placed at the centre of debates on law reform regarding lesbian and gay parents and some ‘children of’ did speak on the issue. But the campaigns for and against same-sex marriage has intensified the debate on children’s well-being and also provided platforms from which the children can speak.

Most speakers went public with a political agenda of ‘telling it like it is’ by claiming a position as the expert on their own lives. They worked to dispute myths regarding children of lesbian and gay parents and to campaign for equal rights. One of the motivations for speaking out was to claim a right over the direction of the conversations concerning them: “you get asked a lot of questions when you grow up with two mothers. Unfortunately, people rarely ask the ones you want to answer… If I had a dollar for every query about my sperm donor, what I call my mothers, discrimination at school or if I wish I had a dad, I’d be a rich woman” (Marsden in Cook 2012, para. 3). Maya Newell says “to those who ask, I answer in this order: No I didn’t spend my childhood longing for a father, I call my mothers by their first names, and yes, I was occasionally teased at school” (in Cook 2012, para. 16). It seems Australian ‘gaybies’ are getting frustrated with the stagnant conversations and the lack of engagement
with the people at the centre of the issue.\textsuperscript{22} Marsden continues, “the media and naysayers talk about children’s rights without ever speaking to any of us” (in Cook 2012, para. 5). Newell says of the forum she and Marsden organised for adult children of same-sex parents to speak out, that we have been pushed onto panels organised by our mothers, or made to chat endlessly to the pregnant lesbians, this time its our turn to choose the topic and frame the questions (in Cook 2012, para. 24).

Newell and Marsden seem resentful of the denial of agency and voice for children with lesbian and gay parents in all discussions about their existence.

Of the stories presented in the context of supporting marriage equality the young people argued that legalising same-sex marriage will bring with it legitimisation of their family. At a rally for marriage equality, fourteen year old Akira Boardman explained “marriage brings with it legal and social recognition, it legitimises family status, why should I be denied this status because of who my parents love?” (Boardman 2010). Sixteen-year-old Brenna Harding\textsuperscript{23} added her heartfelt video plea for marriage equality through tears:

\textsuperscript{22} Marsden and Newell both use the word gayby to describe themselves and Newell also uses the word to refer to the Australian children of lesbian and gay parents in the documentary she is filming.

\textsuperscript{23} Brenna Harding and her two mothers were at the centre of the ‘Play School controversy’ of 2004. Children’s television show Play School featured Brenna and her family in a segment on families. The normative portrayal of this family caused a media frenzy and public backlash against homosexuality. Prime Minister at the time, John Howard, used the homophobic hype over the incident to reinforce his views on homosexuality and to help pass his marriage amendment bill redefining marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman (Robinson 2011).
you know, children like me... how do they feel when their parents aren’t allowed the same rights as everyone else? I think that having their parents be able to get married will give them another thing, you know in the playground when someone says you’re parents can’t even get married, they’re not good enough, they’re disgusting, they can’t even get married, then they can say well yeah they can, they’re just as good as your parents, they can get married, they pay taxes, they’re just as good as anyone else (Harding 2012).

So equal marriage was seen as a means to family recognition and an end to the myth that children of lesbian and gay parents are somehow damaged. Queer theorists maintain that seeking marriage equality is a normalising and conservative strategy that legitimises some families and relationships at the expense of others (see Warner 1999; Butler 2002; Valverde 2006). But it does provide a way to re-position oneself from abnormal to normal.

The ‘children of’ demonstrate fluency in the language of their assumed pathology, whether this be the representation of the Christian rights damaged child or the implied child at risk in the research. They often used their own lived experiences to challenge this positioning by stating they are fine or normal. For example, Akira Boardman responds to accusations from Family First that children like her will suffer emotional abuse by commenting, ‘actually we are doing just fine... scratch that we do fantastically (Boardman 2010). Similarly Tom Dunsford comments that it is not the case children with lesbian mums are disadvantaged (in Levett 2004, p.18). Eamon Sullivan observes that his four
mothers “fulfil different aspects of parenting that I needed” (in Horin 2007, para.4). Some children respond specifically to outcomes mentioned in the research and some spoke more broadly on being undamaged.

The focus on (hetero)sexuality in the research was echoed in the children’s words. When arguing for equal marriage, Akira Boardman claims of all gaybies “most of us will be straight, but we won’t be narrow” (Boardman 2010). This is reflective of the deeper thought on sexuality and gender and appreciation of diversity that emerged from the qualitative research. Eamon Waterford also comments that he is not gay (in Horin 2007, para. 40). Heterosexual orientation is usually left silent as the taken-for-granted default. But because the sexuality of gaybies is such a contentious issue (despite assurances from the research), there seems to be a desire to come out as straight to waylay fears.

The children’s response to homophobia was not limited to victimisation and stigma, as suggested by the quantitative research. Similar to narratives from the qualitative research some of the children and young people refused to claim a victim position and instead shifted the focus of ‘the problem’ from themselves to homophobia. At Lismore’s equal marriage rights rally Akira Boardman (2010) spoke back to the “right wing Christian views” that maintain “legitimising gay marriage is like legalising child abuse” by stating “it is your homophobia that is child abuse”. She claims that the fundamental premise of the accusation against her family is homophobic and flawed and thus refuses to dignify it by refuting this allegation with research and statistics. Brenna Harding says in her
video that she has “never really understood homophobia” and that marriage inequality is “just ridiculous, it’s beyond my comprehension” (Harding 2012). She describes the government’s refusal to legalise same-sex marriage as “homophobic” and breeding a culture of hate.

Significantly the majority of children and young people whose stories I collected were born into planned lesbian or gay families. I believe that growing up in a lesbian or gay family from birth provides a unique experience as the early years are spent in an environment where being lesbian or gay is normal. It is obviously impossible to avoid permeating discourses of heteronormativity but this discourse is challenged and negotiated from an early age. Others may see lesbian and gay families as different or unusual but for the children within them their families are normal and all they have known. Brenna Harding (2012) describes her family of two lesbian mothers, a gay donor and his male partner before concluding “so that’s my family, that’s what I have always known and I’ve never really understood homophobia because I have never seen my family as different from other families.” At some point when these children begin interacting with the wider heteronormative community they will encounter differing and critical views on homosexuality.

A common experience was vivid memory of the moment they first realised others did not view them as a real or legitimate family and a sense of otherness emerged. For some this occurred as young as three and for others it did not occur until well into primary school. For Maya Newell this realisation occurred at
age three during an interaction with one of her mothers and the local butcher. The butcher made a joke about the mother’s husband, assuming heterosexuality, and the mother did not correct him. Newell recalls “I realised for the first time that my family was different, and apparently sometimes it was easier for that to be a secret” (in Cook 2012, para. 21). For James Tyrfell-Jones the moment of realisation came later in primary school when his graduating class had photos taken with their families and displayed on the wall:

I remember looking proudly at the photo of my parents and I then suddenly realised something was different... I carefully scanned each photograph on the wall and it was very clear to me that I was the only kid there with two fathers (Tyrfell-Jones 2012, para. 4).

This process of realisation is often difficult because it represents a growing awareness of heterosexism and sense that others see your family as different.

Many children talked about self-management strategies to avoid being the target of homophobia. Kate Burns, who made a film challenging homophobia in schools, recalled

at school I felt so scared of revealing my family that I pretended that one of my parents did not exist. At rowing one of my dads had to stand on the other side of the river because I was scared of people finding out I had gay parents (Burns 2009).

This is a self-surveillance strategy as one attempts to present themselves as ‘normal’. James Tryfell-Jones (2012) recalled he once hid the parent teacher interview night notices from his gay dads to keep them away from his school.
But secrecy and silence can be accompanied by a sense of guilt for denying one’s parents sexuality. Kate also says whenever she hears the phrase ‘that’s so gay’ in school she feels personally affronted and guilty for not standing up for her parents.

Children growing up in an ‘othered’ family tend to learn politics at a young age. Maeve Marsden, daughter of lesbian mothers, describes how “so early were we expected to have the language to describe our other-ness that many of us quickly became outspoken, opinionated kids” (in Cook 2012, para. 9). As many kids faced challenges to the legitimisation of their families, they quickly learnt the skills to speak back to this challenge. Newell observes that “while most kids are getting their teeth into the idea of Man + Woman = Baby, gaybies are fluent in IVF, Assisted Reproductive Technologies and the many uses of turkey basters” (in Cook 2012, para. 23). The story of these children’s existence is different to the commonly told story of conception and it requires challenging of heteronormative sexuality and gender roles. ‘Children of’ are usually given a language by their family and community to articulate, at a young age, the experience of being othered.

Maybe one potential consequence of having lesbian or gay parents is that the experience of growing up outside of heterosexual privilege forms a complex understanding of politics, oppression and discrimination. A nine-year-old daughter of lesbian parents (who does not give her name) wrote a speech on marriage rights that reads,
come on people our society has changed before like when people didn’t believe that women and Aboriginal people should be able to vote, so maybe it is time to change again (Rainbow Family Tree 2011).

I wonder how many other children in Year 2 know the history of sexual and racial discrimination in Australia’s electoral system.

Some ‘children of’ incorporated the discourse of gay pride into their self-presentations. Akira Boardman begins her speech with the words, “I am proud to be the daughter of lesbian mums” (Boardman 2010). James Tryfell-Jones says he is “proud” of his parents for being who they are (2012, para. 14). Kate Burns makes the plea “gay people do have children and these children should not feel scared to be proud of their families, they should be encouraged (Burns 2009). The concept of ‘pride’ has been central to gay and lesbian rights campaigns since the 1970s when the idea spread that people should publicly come out as a political statement and claim pride in a previously marginalised identity. ‘Children of’ can extend the already established discourse of pride to include their existence.

Another way the children and young people legitimised their family was through the discourse of love and planned families. Boardman (2010) claimed “kids like me are planned, wanted and loved”. Jocelyn de Groot, daughter of two lesbian mothers, commented “as long as same-sex families provide love and a stable environment, what’s the problem (in Hadgraft 2011, para.29). Speaking for marriage equality Brenna Harding (2012) commented “her [mother’s] love is just
the same as any other love, it’s equal, it means just as much.” The children are well versed in the discursive response of ‘love makes us a family’.

The discourse of love was also used to challenge the perspective that children of lesbian parents are disadvantaged because they do not have a father in their lives. This represents a simplistic assumption that having one or more lesbian mothers precludes the involvement of fathers in the child’s life. Nevertheless academic Victoria Clarke argues that lack of male role models has been a key attack strategy on lesbian families since they became visible (Clarke and Kitzinger 2005; Clarke 2006). Tom Dunsford, aged 15, responds to the idea that children do best when raised by a mother and father with “this is not a traditional family but to me it is all anyone could want, because I have love, support and a great family”. When asked by a journalist if she ever wished for a dad, Maya Newell replies “I’ve always had two loving parents and that’s all I needed” (in Hadgraft 2011, para.6).

Sons of lesbian mothers come under intense scrutiny for their perceived lack of male role models. Interestingly despite extensive quoting throughout the article on Eamon Waterford, son of four lesbian mothers, he is not allowed to speak for himself on the matter of father absence. Instead the author writes

    yet it is only natural, Eamon thinks, that his unusual family should have left some distinctive imprint. There is the unresolved relationship with his father, for example, and the general lack of male role models in his early life (Horin 2007, para. 32).
I wonder how much of this statement reflects Eamon’s actual concerns and how much of it reflects the concerns of the journalist.

Maeve Marsden speaks of the pressures coming from within the queer community “where our families, as ‘pioneers’ of same-sex parenting, were pressured to be high achievers, to succeed, to show society children of queer parents can thrive” (in Cook 2012, para.7). Maeve is drawing attention to the symbolic role that children with lesbian and gay parents occupy in debates around lesbian and gay rights. The normative development of children with lesbian and gay parents, as ‘proved’ through the research is used as justification for legitimising lesbian and gay parents. As Brenna Harding’s mother testified to the New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into adoption by same-sex couples, “the proof is in the pudding… it’s in our children” (in Riggs 2010, para. 18). The queer community, as well as the mainstream, maintains the gaze on the development of the ‘children of’.

Journalists also respond to a perceived need to emphasise how well-adjusted and normal these children are. While Maeve Marsden herself claims there is no need to justify her existence, Hadgraft’s (2011) article about her details how the three Marsden children are all high achievers. Similarly the article on Eamon begins, “Eamon Waterford is the sort of young man any mother would be proud to call son. He is smart, articulate, well-balanced, socially aware and just downright nice” (Horin 2007, para. para.1). Detailing how well-adjusted these young people are responds to, and reiterates, the belief that having lesbian and
gay parents will be detrimental to children. In an article on a white, middle class, suburban, heterosexual couple I believe it would be implied that the children are well-adjusted but not so expressively stated.

The stories that we have yet to hear, the stories that are silenced and not possible to speak in the current political climate are numerous and varied. It would be naïve to assume that because these are the only stories going public that every child of lesbian and gay parents is happy, proud and heterosexual. For example, we do not hear of children who are unhappy and hate their parents for being gay. We do not hear about those children and young people who are not proud of their parent’s sexuality and go to great lengths to hide it, or those who believe homosexuality is sinful or otherwise wrong. These people are not going to publicly claim the speaking position of a child of lesbian or gay parent. Furthermore so far we do not have accounts of those with mental or physical illness, learning difficulties, behavioural ‘problems’ or other perceived ‘negative’ outcomes publicly claiming the position of a child of lesbian or gay parents. Those who are speaking out seem to police themselves in a careful attempt to provide no ammunition to critiques of lesbian and gay parents.

Jacqui Gabb (2005) names lesbian custody battles as ‘the’ unspoken issue in discussions on lesbian and gay parenting in the UK. Not all same-sex parental separation is going to be amicable, as described in these narratives, where both original parents continue to co-parent the child and their new lovers become additional parents to the child. There is also silence within the queer community.
on child abuse or neglect. Australian Marriage Equality and others have seized upon recently published findings from the US National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study to claim that child abuse rates in lesbian families are at 0% (Australian Marriage Equality 2012). These are only a few examples of the stories that are unable to be told in the current social and political landscape.

Maeve Marsden critiques the strategy of claiming normality through scientific research and personal experience. In regards to the authoritative research she says “I feel those surveys are used to justify something that shouldn’t need to be justified” (in Hadgraft 2011, para. 9). Referring to a prompt that research shows children with same-sex parents do better academically than children with heterosexual parents she continues “we shouldn’t have to prove we’re better to be allowed to exist” (in Hadgraft 2011, para. 9). This is a powerful statement where she refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the arguments against her family and devalues them by simply refusing to engage with them. She herself is a lesbian, and thus cannot claim to be the successful heteronormative child of lesbian parents, but she is refuting the creation of a failed child subject position by challenging the classification and categorisation that may lead to this.

Representations from authoritative research on the ‘children of’ were reflected in their narratives and self-presentations. Foucault argues that the individual is produced through power;

it's my hypothesis that the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and
characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces (Foucault 1980a, p.73-74).

Foucault maintains that our bodies and our identities are produced through power/knowledge relations. But we are never simply determined solely by representations and discourse as our subjectivities are complex, relational and always changing.

The consensus of the research is that children with lesbian and gay parents are not disadvantaged socially, emotionally, psychologically, cognitively or physically. The evidence that is presented to support this conclusion is that statistically children with lesbian or gay parents are no different to children with heterosexual parents. The children’s narratives in this chapter support the conclusion that no damage is caused by having lesbian and gay parents, specifically coupled same-sex parents. It was specifically ‘same-sex parents’, not solo lesbian or gay parents, that were given legitimacy through the children’s narratives, either through their specific words or their family situation. But the children resisted the representational claim that they are the same as children of heterosexual parents. They spoke of their experience of homophobia and how this impacts on their lives and the consequences of having parents who may be legally or socially unrecognised. They also alluded to their expanded political consciousness, appreciation of diversity and respect for difference as positive outcomes of having lesbian or gay parents. Moreover some expressed pride in their subject position.
The ‘children of’ all spoke out to challenge inequality, caused in their perspective, by homophobia. All refuted the representation of the child damaged by having lesbian or gay parents by presenting themselves as living representations of prosperous children. This is a politically effective, but conservative and normalising, strategy that reinforces the specific legitimacy of the children who show outcomes ‘no different’ or ‘better’ than children with heterosexual parents. Some older gaybies critiqued the perceived need to justify their own existence and their parent’s fitness as parents. They also drew attention to the pressure that manifests from both within the queer community and the wider community to be evidence of parental fitness and success. The subjectivity of the ‘children of’ was influenced through the negotiation of authoritative representations of their subject position.
This thesis analysed how children of lesbian and gay parents are represented in research on their health and well-being and the children’s relationship to this representation. Both sides of the argument over the reliability and validity of the research accept the terms of the debate that positions ‘children of’ as passive objects of knowledge. I sought to move beyond the boundaries of this debate and refocus on the children as agents and active speaking subjects.

I have shown in this thesis that the research does not directly respond to the Christian Right’s ‘imagined damaged child’ but there is an implicit figure of the ‘child at risk’ behind the research. The representation of the ‘child at risk’ began as a reflection of homophobia within the courts system and the law that accepted, as a default position, that lesbian and gay parenting is harmful to children. The research was conducted against the perceived characteristics of the ‘child at risk’ whose normal development was at risk of being compromised through having lesbian or gay parents, alternatively expressed as lacking a mother and a father.

The research goes on to refute representations of the ‘child at risk’ by presenting scientific ‘evidence’ that shows having lesbian and gay parents is not a predictive factor of a child’s well-being. There will be children of lesbian and
gay parents who have a range of issues not considered to be 'normal', but only in the same percentages as the children of heterosexual parents.

I argued that instead of emphasising the non-predictive nature of parental sexuality researchers have responded to the ‘child at risk’ by representing children of lesbian and gay parents as the opposite of ‘at risk’, what I have termed the ‘prospering child’.

The prospering child is ‘proved’ to be socially, psychologically, cognitively and behaviourally well-adjusted. S/he is healthy, happy and shows ‘normal’ (heteronormative) gender and sexuality identity development. The quantitative research represents the ‘prospering child’ as no different from the assumed child of heterosexual parents.

The qualitative research extended the representation of the ‘prospering child’ to include positive or beneficial differences in development. The ‘children of’ were reported to be less judgmental, more open-minded and accepting of diversity. The children in the qualitative research expressed gratitude to their parents for broadening their minds and for helping them become ‘better’ people. Family loyalty and fierce love for parents was prominent in the stories being told. But this research was still constrained by the power of the researcher and a research agenda.
Australian ‘children of’ spoke up to challenge misconceptions about their families. Engagement with, and rejection of, the construction of the ‘child at risk’ was a compulsory part of the narrative script for Australian ‘children of’. The children were unanimous in their assertion that having lesbian and gay parents was not detrimental and any challenges they experienced were due to homophobia. They emphasised the positives of the experiences and the strong bonds of love existing within their family.

Two binary constructions underlie the representations of the ‘child at risk’, the ‘prospering child’ and the Christian Right’s ‘imagined damaged child’. The first is that of sameness/difference. Regarding their developmental outcomes and personal values, they are either the same as, or different from, children of heterosexual parents. The quantitative research emphasises sameness. The qualitative research confirms this sameness but also reveals differences framed as positive and beneficial. The ‘child at risk’ and the imagined damaged child’ are different to the ‘average’ child but these differences are considered detrimental and harmful. Some markers of difference, such as the deeper thought about the social construction of gender and sexuality discussed in chapter five, can be read as either beneficial or detrimental depending on ones epistemology.

Whether ‘children of’ are the same or different from children of heterosexual parents is taken as ‘proof’ that they are either well-adjusted and prospering or not. The second binary beneath the representations is that of
prospering/damaged. Sameness and not challenging heteronormativity positions a child as prospering. In Australia, difference remains firmly associated with damage and harm.

Queer youth with queer parents from COLAGE in America are starting to challenge the negative associations between non-normative outcomes, namely queerness, and the conclusions drawn that this demonstrates harm being done by the parents. But in Australia those children who are queer, have mental illness, have a disability, are in trouble with the law, do not excel at school, are unhappy, live in poverty, get bullied and so on remain relegated to the position of a damaged child.

Based on my own experiences I speculate that children who do not fulfil normative expectations censor their experiences to avoid giving ammunition to the Christian Right. I know for myself, as the lesbian daughter of lesbian parents, and as a Queerspawn who manages a mental illness, the invitation to feel like a failure and to stay silent about my parentage is strong. In my experience when those working in the mainstream helping professions (doctors, psychologists, social workers, counsellors) learn of my parentage they automatically assume I am seeking help to undo the damage of my “unusual” upbringing.24

24 To read about one such instance please see Hosking (2007).
I also argued in this thesis that ‘children of’ experience pressure to present themselves as well-adjusted and prospering as their outcomes are used as proof of parenting ability and reason for legal reform. In the qualitative research and their personal accounts they articulated the experience of being studied and ‘growing up under a microscope’ and experiencing social, medical and psychological scrutiny. They recount the pressure experienced to show they are ‘prospering’, to “set the record straight by standing up as successful well-adjusted children of gay parents” (in Goldberg 2007, p.556). In doing so they can challenge the figure of the damaged child that the Christian Right deploys to prevent law reform.

Chapter six showed how children themselves take up the position of the prospering child and present themselves as living representations of the success of lesbian or gay parenting. This strategy was also evidence in the qualitative research, as one child observes “as well-adjusted children of gay parents I feel we have a social responsibility to come out” (in Goldberg 2007, p.556). Implicit in this attitude is the belief that ‘children of’ who do not fulfill normative categories have a social responsibility to stay silent. Given this I speculate that ‘children of’ self-regulate their life narratives.

The strength of the ‘imagined damaged child’ is reflected in some children’s pride over their normative development, Brian, son of a gay father comments: “one thing that I’m very proud of is that I’m not screwed up, I’m very well
adjusted” (in Goldberg 2007, p.556). Negative representations of children with lesbian and gay parents has been normalised to such an extent that Brian experiences pride by not being a screw up.

In a reflection of heterosexism, heterosexual children of lesbian and gay parents are celebrated and queer children are problematised. The heterosexual, well-adjusted prospering child is used to argue for legal reform. ‘Gayness’ in parents is deemed acceptable as long as it is not reproduced and it manifests in a homonormative way. Moreover a ‘prospering child’ is becoming an essential part of the new homonormative couple. Rather than normalising diverse sexualities, the research legitimises lesbian and gay parenting on the condition that normative, prospering children are produced.

Scientific research that disproves the hypothesis that children of lesbian and gay parent are at risk has no doubt been both necessary and important. These research findings have been used to challenge homophobia in the courts, in legal reform, in education and in public policy. However these studies that objectify ‘children of’ have been conducted, largely unchanging, for forty years now. There is no longer concern about the development of children of lesbian or gay parents amongst university scholars researching this area. It is clear that producing more research will not sway those who oppose lesbian and gay parenting. Those from the Christian Right already accuse universities of being under the control of a ‘gay research mafia’ who controls promotion, research and funding (Hicks 2003).
I think it is time to change the direction of the research practices on children with lesbian and gay parents. Forty years of research has (unintentionally) authorised a discourse that positions children of lesbian or gay parents as 'at risk'. Refuting negative representations serves to privilege and repeat such stereotypes. The research contributes to the belief that children are at risk because the issue is deemed research worthy, rather than dismissing it. Imagine, for example, more than forty years of research on whether children who had a parent shorter than 150cm were developmentally disadvantaged. The only difference between this example and the research on children of lesbian and gay parents is that sexuality is not conceptualised as a socially trivial category. The scientific research responds to wider social beliefs and social policy.

Furthermore I posit that the non-predictive nature of parental sexuality should be emphasised rather than that children of lesbian and gay parents are prospering. The binary of prospering/damaged child creates a norm unachievable for some children and contributes to the pressure they experience. As Maeve Marsden, daughter of lesbian mums comments “we shouldn’t have to prove we are better to be allowed to exist” (in Hadgraft 2011, para. 9).

All this focus on their sameness/difference contributes to the sense of otherness that the children describe. The children within the research are very clear
in saying that interventions are needed into homophobia, not their families. I question if children with lesbian and gay parents need be a special research interest at all. Australian ‘children of’ conceived into a same-sex relationship observed that their families were ‘normal’ to them, their families were all they had known and it was no ‘big deal’. Goldberg (2007) comments that adult children of LGB parents reflecting on their upbringing indicate ‘other things mattered more’ than parental sexuality and societal focus on their parent’s sexuality was disproportional to the effect it had on their lives.

Researchers across all areas need to take children’s voices more seriously. The inclusion of children’s voices in the qualitative research has made a significant contribution to expanding representations of children of lesbian and gay parents. Children’s active involvement in creating their families needs to be acknowledged and respected. With lesbian and gay parenting expanding since the 1970s, the numbers of ‘children of’ demanding to be heard will only increase.
Appendix A: Quantitative Texts


Gibbs, E. (1989). 'Psychosocial development of children raised by lesbian mothers.'
Women & Therapy 8(1-2): 65-75.


Golombok, S., F. Tasker and C. Murray (1997). 'Children raised in fatherless families
from infancy: Family relationships and the socioemotional development of
cchildren of lesbian and single heterosexual mothers.' *Journal of Child


Green, R. (1978). 'Sexual identity of 37 children raised by homosexual or


and their children: A comparison with solo parent heterosexual mothers and


Hoeffer, B. (1981). 'Children's acquisition of sex-role behavior in lesbian-mother


Appendix B: Qualitative Texts


Appendix C:

Self-representation of Australian Children with Lesbian or Gay parents


Appendix D: Analysis Matrix for Research Studies

1. Who is the author?
2. When was the study published?
3. Where is the author geographically located?
4. What is the author’s discipline?
5. In which journal was the study published?
6. What discipline is this journal located in and what is its Impact Factor?
7. What has the author identified as the problem motivating the research?
8. What aspect of the child’s life is studied?
9. What methodology is used?
10. How is data obtained?
11. How is the child represented in the study?
12. What is the author’s conclusion?
# Appendix E: Location of Primary Author of Research Studies

## USA

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