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MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIAN MOTHERS AND  
THEIR CHILDREN AMONG SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: A NEW SCALE AND  
CORRELATES TO THE ATTITUDE MEASURE.

by

SHERRI B. VICTOR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in  
Educational Psychology in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
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1996

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

11/27/95  
Date

Marian F. Fish  
Chair of Examining Committee

Alan J. Gross  
Executive Officer

Professor Marian Fish

Professor Carol Tittle

Professor Alan Gross  
Supervisory Committee

THE GRADUATE CENTER  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIAN MOTHERS AND  
THEIR CHILDREN AMONG SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: A NEW SCALE AND  
CORRELATES TO THE ATTITUDE MEASURE.

by

Sherri B. Victor

Advisor: Professor Marian Fish

This study investigated the attitudes of 269 school psychologists using a new survey instrument, "Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and Their Children" (ATLMAC). The purpose of this dissertation is threefold: 1) to summarize the literature pertaining to lesbian mothers and their children; 2) to use the ATLMAC with a national random sample of school psychologists; and 3) to determine what factors are significantly correlated with these attitudes.

ATLMAC scale items were derived from research concerning lesbian mothers and their children and are based on the socio-cognitive theory of prejudice. Factor structure, reliability and validity were examined.

Correlates to the attitude measure were explored. Contact theory, proposed by Allport, posits that contact of equal

status between groups of people may reduce prejudice. Social contact was measured using the *Social Contact Questionnaire*, developed by this author. It was hypothesized that contact with lesbians would be related to more positive attitudes on the ATLMAC. This hypothesis was supported.

Conservatism has been correlated to prejudice. A modification of Wilson and Patterson's (1970) *Conservatism Scale* developed by Collins & Hayes (1993) was used in this study. It was hypothesized that participants who score higher in the conservative scale would exhibit more negative views. This hypothesis was supported.

Attribution theorists note that uncontrollable situations are viewed more neutrally than events under a person's control. Utilizing this construct, particularly Whitley's (1990) ideas, it was proposed that people who perceive lesbianism as a choice would view lesbians and lesbian mothers more negatively than people who perceive lesbianism as unchangeable. The *Attribution Survey*, designed for this study, was used to test this hypothesis. Attribution was significantly correlated with ATLMAC scores, in the expected direction.

Gender differences, as they relate to sex role stereotyping and prejudice toward lesbian mothers and their

children were also examined, using the *Expressiveness and Instrumentality Scale* (Gill, Stockard, Johnson & Williams, 1987). Expressiveness, or emotional awareness of others' feelings was hypothesized to be correlated with more acceptance of lesbian mothers and their children. This hypothesis was also supported.

Additional statistical analysis were also examined to determine the relative weight of demographic factors and the instruments in relation to ATLMAC scores.

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believe it myself. She is the one rock in my life whom I know will always be there for me. Bill Faccidomo pushed me along in his own inimitable way. Bill, you can never again say "Aren't you finished with that thing yet?". Last, I would like to acknowledge a little girl who is of yet unborn. Little Ms. Marlowe has inspired me just by knowing that she will someday be a part of my life. I look forward to meeting her and I hope that this research will help make her passage through life just a little easier.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study will investigate the attitudes of school psychologists toward lesbian mothers and their children utilizing a scale developed for this dissertation by the author. There is little information currently available about this form of alternative family, and virtually no information about school psychologist's feelings toward this group. The purpose of this dissertation is threefold: 1) to summarize all existing literature pertaining to lesbian mothers and their children; 2) to refine and utilize a newly developed instrument that specifically measures attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children; and 3) to determine what factors are significantly correlated with these attitudes in a random sample of school psychologists.

School psychologists often serve in a consultation role with teachers, administrators and parents, and develop interventions and workshops for students. For students, teachers and parents, school psychologists are often the most available and the most direct source of psychological information about individual differences among the diverse minority groups in our culture. A school psychologist's main responsibility is to facilitate academic, social and emotional development of children. Thus, school psychologists have a critical role in schools in working

with issues of fairness and reducing bias and intolerance arising from a lack of understanding of diversity in our culture. Their attitudes toward and expectations about minority groups can play an important role in determining how these minorities, including children of lesbians, will be treated and how adaptively they will function.

Results of attitude research about homosexuality indicate negative bias in counseling students (Glenn & Russell, 1986), psychologists (Garfinkle & Morin, 1978) and teachers (Fisher, 1982; Sears, 1989). General negative attitudes, beliefs and expectations of school staff have been shown to be correlated with reduced student achievement and/or behavior in some studies (Cooper, 1985; Hall & Merkel, 1985). Consequently, negative beliefs about children of lesbians may negatively correlate with school success. In order to formulate appropriate interventions to minimize prejudicial thinking and its possible negative correlates, it is necessary to first assess attitudes and collect baseline information. The *Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children* scale (ATLMAC) will provide basic demographic and attitudinal data for a national sample of school psychologists and will begin to study those persons who are more likely to have prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and their children. Educational programs to reduce

prejudice can then be targeted appropriately. In addition, a scale measuring attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children will heighten awareness and may help school psychologists identify bias in themselves.

Scale items are derived directly from research pertaining to lesbian mothers and their children. The items are based on sociocognitive theory of prejudice and are worded to elicit beliefs, not affective responses, about lesbian mothers and their children. This approach to scale development has been advocated by Duckitt (1992), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Stephan (1989) as being the best way to measure attitudes.

This study will also explore correlates to the attitude measure. Contact theory, proposed by Allport in 1954, posits that close, frequent contact of equal status between groups of people may reduce prejudice and negative attitudes. Social contact between participants in this study and lesbians will be investigated to test this hypothesis.

Conservatism, an offshoot of the theory of the authoritarian personality proposed by Adorno (1950), has been correlated to prejudice, including negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Seltzer, 1992; Weinberger & Millham, 1979). In this study, Wilson and Patterson (1970) provide the theoretical link between conservatism and

negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. A modification of their *Conservatism Scale*, the *Short-form Conservatism Scale* (Collins & Hayes, 1993), will be utilized in this study to explore this link.

Whitley (1990) theorizes that bias against lesbians and gay men may be correlated with an individual's ideas about the origin and changeability of homosexuality. Attribution theorists note that uncontrollable situations are viewed more neutrally than events under a person's control. Utilizing this theoretical construct, Whitley proposed that people who perceive homosexuality as a choice that can be changed will view lesbians and lesbian mothers more negatively than people who perceive lesbianism as biological and unchangeable. This aspect of attribution theory will be tested empirically in this current study.

Men have been found to exhibit more negative views than women toward lesbians and gay men (Aguero, Bloch & Byrne, 1984; Glassner & Owen, 1976; Hansen, 1982; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite, 1984; Larsen, Reed & Hoffman, 1980; Lieblich & Friedman, 1985; Seltzer, 1992; Shaffer & Wallace, 1990). Gender differences, as they relate to sex role stereotyping and prejudice toward lesbian mothers and their children will be explored in this study. Specifically, emotional awareness of others' feelings, coined "expressiveness" by Spence

(1980) will be investigated.

Results of this study will be divided into two parts. First, the *Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children* scale will be refined by confirming construct validity and analyzing its factor structure. Reliability, internal consistency and content validity have been established previously, and will be reviewed. Second, the social contact measure, conservatism measure, attribution measure and expressiveness measure will all be analyzed and correlated with the ATLMAC. Results will be discussed in terms of implications for school psychologists and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER I

## LITERATURE REVIEW - THEORY OF PREJUDICE

Homosexuals, both men and women are one of a long group of minorities that have been subject to bias and intolerance. Most psychological theories of prejudice focus on other groups of people, primarily racial and ethnic minorities. However, these theories are broadly applicable to homosexuals, including lesbians and their families. A socio-cognitive theory of prejudice has been used as the theoretical basis in development of the ATLMAC items, and will be examined in this section (Duckitt, 1992).

It is widely accepted that prejudice is an attitude but there is some controversy over what the concept of attitude means (Duckitt, 1992). Three models of attitude have been proposed: unidimensional, two-dimensional and 3-dimensional models (Duckitt, 1992, Olsen & Zanna, 1993). In the 1920's and 30's, attitude was discussed in terms of good-bad/favorable-unfavorable (Duckitt, 1992), a uni-dimensional approach. In the forties and fifties, a 3- component model was proposed, consisting of beliefs (cognitive component), feelings (affective component) and behavior (behavioral component) (Duckitt, 1992). This model, though more complex and broader, was criticized because the relationship of the components to one another and how they influenced behavior was

never explained well (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980); also each component may be independent of each other to a large degree. As Duckitt noted, this model also implies that behavior is determined by all three components, but attitude measures were still designed with a unidimensional construct. In addition, it is difficult to measure a behavioral component on a written attitude scale. There has been little research in the past twenty years using this three-component approach (Duckitt, 1992).

More recently, a two-component approach to attitudes has been developed by Levin & Levin (1982) using cognitive and affective components. Developing a pencil and paper scale measuring these two components is quite possible. However, there has been little research interest in this, and it has never been empirically tested (Duckitt, 1992). Thus, the unidimensional model has been the one most favored in research.

### Cognitive Theory

The ATLMAC was developed using a unidimensional model of attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children, focusing on the cognitive component of attitudes.

Recently, researchers have returned to the unidimensional model, but have expanded upon the good/bad premise of the 1920's and 1930's. To date, few studies have shown a strong

correlation between single attitude measures and specific behavior (Duckitt, 1992, Ehrlich, 1973, Fredricks & Dossett, 1983, LaPiere, 1934). However Ajzen & Fishbein posit that although researchers cannot accurately predict specific single acts from attitude, a very strong relationship should exist when multiple situations are assessed (1980). Consequently, the unidimensional approach does not expect an extremely strong correlation between attitude and specific behaviors, though a generalized attitude should predict overall tendencies (Duckitt, 1992). The unidimensional model has been empirically tested and the research has been supportive of the general framework (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Duckitt, 1992).

This research uses the cognitive component as the salient feature in the attitude scale. All items are worded to evoke cognitive evaluations, not affective responses, about lesbian mothers and their children. This particular approach to attitude measurement does not originate with one theorist, but has been discussed by several researchers. Duckitt theorized that prejudiced attitudes should be viewed as ultimately affective in nature but can be best measured by looking at stereotyped beliefs, or cognitions. Fishbein and Ajzen also noted that beliefs serve as building blocks for determining attitudes (1975) and affect comes after. Stephan posits that stereotypes are "most susceptible to the cognitive approach

precisely because they consist entirely of cognitions concerning groups" (1989, p.37).

Cognitively based explanations of prejudice have dominated the literature in the past twenty years and have taken over non-cognitive explanations such as psychodynamic factors (Duckitt, 1992). Prejudice is seen as a cognitive process used to simplify, structure and categorize the world and make social interaction less confusing and more coherent (Allport, 1954; Duckitt, 1992; Ehrlich, 1973; Tajfel, 1969; Wilder, 1981). One important part of the cognitive perspective is social categorization, or the need to evaluate one's own group as better than an outgroup (Tajfel, 1969). Outgroups tend to be rated as less favorable than in-groups due to what Rokeach, Smith and Evans, (1960) call "belief congruence". Belief congruence theory posits that people seek out those who are similar to them and dislike those who are dissimilar in attitudes and values. Rokeach et al. hypothesize that similarities in beliefs (i.e., thoughts, cognitions) are the psychological process underlying prejudice attitudes. Olson and Zanna (1993) note that attitudes can influence virtually every step of the information-processing sequence, including attention, comprehension, interpretation and memory.

Belief congruence can lead to cognitively categorizing people into specific outgroups (e.g., liberal, Southerner,

gay) (Miller, 1982; Tajfel, 1969). Once categorized, people tend to view outgroups as simplified; less complex and individuated than their own group. This can result in cognitive distortion, stereotyping and prejudice (Duckitt, 1992). Social norms are developed, in which the majority group is seen as natural and the outgroup as deviant, inferior and unnatural. Prejudice can be socially transmitted and assimilated into society by communicating these norms via cultural values and beliefs such as intolerance of differences, distrust of strangers and excessive pride in ingroup identity (Allport, 1954). Cooper and Fazio (1979) noted the strength of cognitive stereotyping. They stated that during intergroup conflicts, prejudicial attitudes can become extremely intense, to the point of irrationality with "people inventing the most outrageous logic to convince themselves of the evil inherent in the outgroup member" (Cooper & Fazio, p.150).

A cognitive theory of prejudice currently is the best approach in designing a measurement of attitudes. However, determining what factors correlate with these cognitions is equally important. The identification of correlates draws on theories of prejudice. The following sections will discuss some theories of the origins and sustenance of prejudice that are used in forming the hypotheses of this study.

### Contact Theory

In the 1950's social scientists became increasingly concerned with racism and anti-Semitism. Much research was designed to study how to diminish or eliminate these social problems. Contact theory arose out of this research, primarily, but not exclusively from the work of Gordon Allport (1954). In simplest form, the theory suggests that contact of any kind between an in-group and an out-group would reduce prejudice. It was believed that avoidance and separation allowed misconceptions to remain unchallenged and that contact (e.g., desegregation) would allow a broader, more realistic picture of individuals and would disconfirm stereotypes (Allport, 1954). Later theorists and Allport himself have added onto this idea, for studies have shown that contact alone was often insufficient to reduce prejudice (Amir, 1976; Cook, 1978).

There are several facets of contact that are important in determining whether prejudice will be reduced. A primary concept, developed by Allport, is "equal status contact". Allport discusses equal status as referring to "true acquaintances" (intimate contact) not casual contacts, of similar socioeconomic and/or educational means who are not in competition with each other (Allport, 1954). In a sense, he seems to be discussing situations in which an out-group member

becomes more of an in-group member by sharing similar salient traits. Friendships with an out-group member, of more than a superficial nature, appear to be an important component in reducing prejudice, and are seen by Allport to strongly support his contact theory. Amir extensively reviewed this aspect of contact theory and found numerous studies demonstrate positive attitude change in equal status groups and negative or negligible change in unequal status groups (Amir, 1976).

Cook (1978) expanded the contact hypothesis delineated by Allport to include five facets: equal status in the situation where contact occurs, opportunity to disconfirm stereotypes in the contact situation, cooperation in the contact situation, a close not casual relationship and egalitarian social norms in the situation. Essentially, it seems that prejudice will be reduced if there are numerous occasions for contact, the contact is of a harmonious nature, in a variety of setting and on equal standing. Rothbart and John note that with repeated contact in numerous situations people "recode" their cognitions to "more specific, differentiated and idiosyncratic terms" which disconfirm stereotypes and prevent generalization (1985, p.98).

The vast majority of research in contact theory has been concerned with race relations though one study specifically

focuses on and supports contact theory in relation toward gays and lesbians. Ellis and Vasseur (1993) reported that prior exposure to lesbians and gay men reduced a subject's negative questioning in a mock interview procedure with a supposed gay man or lesbian when compared to an interviewer who had no prior exposure. Other studies have also suggested that previous interaction reduce negative attitudes (Lance, 1987; Milham, San Miguel & Kellogg, 1976). No previous published studies have looked at contact with lesbians or lesbian mothers in direct relation to attitudes. A preliminary investigation by this author, to be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV, found that acquaintances of lesbians were significantly less negative in their attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children than were people who did not know any lesbians. This will be further investigated in this study by having respondents fill out a social contact questionnaire modified from work done by Battaglia (1993) (see Appendix I for questionnaire).

#### Authoritarianism

It is highly improbable that lack of contact alone is the sole correlate to prejudice thinking. Numerous researchers have looked at authoritarian personality types in attempts to determine if this particular personality is more prone to prejudice thinking. Authoritarian thinking was believed to be

a strong correlate to prejudice when this form of research was in its infancy in the 1950's. As with contact theory, discussion of authoritarian personalities began primarily in response to the anti-Semitism seen in World War II and racism seen in the United States after the war. Adorno (1950) is widely acknowledged to be the primary theorist in this area. He defined authoritarians as people who exhibit a cluster of traits, which later formed his F-scale of the Authoritarian Personality Syndrome. The nine traits are as follows: an adherence to conventional values; a submissive and uncritical attitude toward ingroup authorities; a tendency to reject and punish those who violate conventional values; opposition to the subjective, the imaginative and the tender-minded; superstitious, rigid and stereotypic beliefs; preoccupation with dominance-submission and an exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness; a general hostility and distrust of human nature; a belief that the world is a dangerous place and an exaggerated concern with sexual goings-on of others (Adorno, 1950, adapted from p.251-252). Adorno believed that those people who exhibit high levels of the nine traits were at risk for fascistic behavior, prejudice, discriminatory behavior and political conservatism. Adorno attributed the roots of authoritarianism to psychodynamic causes, including rejection of oral urges and anal tendencies that developed in

childhood, primarily because of strict and punitive parental socialization (Adorno, 1950).

There has been much criticism of Adorno's theory and methods, including criticism on subject selection and conceptual flaws (Christie, 1954; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1954; Shils, 1954). Disagreement with the psychodynamic roots of authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981) and the term "authoritarian" are also noted in later critiques of Adorno's work (Duckitt, 1992). Currently, the F-Scale is rarely used, though traits underlying Adorno's authoritarian personality type have not been rejected (Duckitt, 1992). Numerous scales have been developed since then, designed to measure some aspect of authoritarianism, though by different names. The most researched appear to be Rokeach's *Dogmatism Scale*, Wilson-Patterson's *Conservatism scale* and Christie & Greis's *Machiavellian scale*, plus their modifications, though many more exist (Christie & Greis, 1970; Rokeach, 1960; Wilson & Patterson, 1970). Kline and Cooper (1984) factor-analyzed five of the most common of these scales, including the three above-mentioned tests. They found that one factor loaded highly on all scales, but particularly on the Wilson-Patterson scale and the Kohn F scale, a modification of Adorno's F scale. Kohn's scale has no subscales and Wilson-Patterson's C scale has four: military, anti-hedonism, ethnocentrism and

religion, all of which loaded on Kline and Cooper's factor from .40 to .60. A literature review of subsequent research on both Kohn's and Wilson and Patterson's scales revealed that the latter has been much more extensively researched, validated and modified than the former. This scale, as an offshoot and improvement upon Adorno's original work was adopted for this current research.

### Conservatism

Wilson (1973) provides the ideological bond between conservatism and prejudice. He noted that the term 'conservatism' is less value-toned than other alternatives such as fascism, authoritarianism or dogmatism. He theorized that conservatism stems from fear of uncertainty, feelings of insecurity and inferiority. Conservatives, as defined by Wilson, will be ethnocentric and fear others who are different, seeing them as a general threat. Conservatives are said to be resistant to change, pro-establishment and insistent on strict rules and punishments. They are theorized to prefer safe, traditional and conventional forms of institutions and behaviors (Wilson, 1973). Wilson believed that a conservative stance is a defensive function that serves to simplify, order and control the world, allowing the conservative to feel more secure both in his or her external world and internal world of feelings and needs. Wilson noted

that order is imposed upon inner needs by subjugating them to rigid external codes of conduct and rules, thus reducing uncertainty and anxiety that accompany freedom (Wilson, 1973). As Feather (1979) noted, these ideas are not too dissimilar to those of the authoritarian personality. However Wilson's analysis stresses order and control as a way of reducing anxiety related to inferiority and insecurity, while Adorno used Freudian concepts and deals more with controlling id impulses.

According to Wilson, conservatives (high scorers on the C scale) are theorized to exhibit higher degrees of prejudice than more liberal people. Wilson's scale initially included seven items, but has been modified over the years as certain subscales have become outdated. At first, he measured seven subscales: religious fundamentalism; right-wing political orientation; insistence on strict rules and punishments, intolerance for minorities; preference for conventional art, clothing and institutions; an anti-hedonistic outlook and superstitious resistance to science. Ultimately, Wilson & Patterson reduced the subscales to the four measured in Kline & Cooper's work (Wilson, 1985) with a powerful general factor, labeled conservatism/liberalism being evident. There have also been several modifications of the work in the past twenty years (Collins & Hayes, 1993; Kirton, 1978). Wilson and

Patterson's C scale and its newer forms use a short-item format or "catch phrases" which respondents agree or disagree with, rather than lengthy statements. The authors believe this will provoke an immediate response and a "suspension of judgement while qualificatory and justificatory details of the statement are examined" (Wilson & Patterson, 1968). Wilson and Patterson had simple yes/?/no responses, while later authors included Likert scales.

Wilson and Patterson's scale and subsequent modifications have been demonstrated to have excellent reliability, validity and a similar factor structure with a wide range of subjects literally all over the world, including Israel (Katz & Ronen, 1986; Walkey, Katz & Green, 1990), South Africa (Katz, 1987; Walkey et al., 1990; Wilson & Shutte, 1973), Japan (Walkey et al., 1990); South Korea (Wilson & Lee, 1974); Great Britain, Netherlands, New Zealand and West German (Wilson & Patterson, 1968), Australia (Feather, 1979 and the United States (Green, Reynolds, Walkey & McCormick, 1987; Hogan, 1975; Joe, 1974; Joe, 1984; Truett, 1993). The instrument seems to be quite powerful, as the general factor of conservatism holds true in many different cultures. However, as Walkey, et al. (1990) noted, as the groups become more dissimilar to Judeo-Christian cultures (Arab Israelis, non-Christian Japanese) the correlations weaken.

Using an English-speaking subject pool, Wilson & Patterson found split half reliability of .94 on the C Scale. Subsequent studies by the above authors have replicated high reliability and internal consistency. The C scale has repeatedly been shown to be a valid instrument. Wilson & Patterson (1970) found that political groups scored in the expected direction on the C scale (i.e., New Left Club scored low while "The Gideons", a fundamentalist religious group, scored high) and Hogan found 12 categories of "known groups" scoring as theoretically expected. Wilson found positive correlations with numerous other related scales in his 1973 book. Joe (1974) found a high correlation with the California F Scale-Fascism, providing additional construct validation. Feather (1979) found that conservatism was positively related to values concerned with security and rule following and negative related to values referring to equality and freedom.

Wilson & Patterson's C scale contained 50 items, some of which are very much out-of-date (i.e., working mothers, horoscopes). Kirton (1978) shortened the scale to 30 items, removing dated and low-correlated items. The modified C scale was found to be high in internal reliability, to have a strong underlying unidimensionality, and an "elegant factorial structure" consistent with Wilson's original scale. The modified C scale showed a strong relationship with other

relevant tests (Rokeach's *D Scale*, Budders *Scale of Tolerance-Intolerance of Ambiguity*, MacDonald's *Ambiguity Tolerance Scale* and Gough's *Flexibility Scale*). The final modification was developed in 1993 by Collins and Hayes. This form will be the one utilized in the current study. The authors again modified the scale to update it from 1978 and shorted it to 16 items, which they noted makes the scale more suitable for use in mail surveys. The modified C scale was developed by testing variations of the themes initially proposed by Wilson and Patterson, reviewing comments of the participants in the study and revising the scale. A Likert format was used, as participants in the pilot study felt a yes/?/no format was too rigid. Collins and Hayes Short-form Conservatism scale returned a coefficient alpha of 0.82 and a component analysis yielded a strong general factor of conservatism, accounting for 28.2% of the total variance, consistent with Wilson's 1973 conceptualization. Collins and Hayes note that the Short-form accounted for "considerably more variability than evidenced in earlier studies using the full scale" (p.420). They found five factors, using varimax rotation, which accounted for about 64% of the variance. The factors matched closely with factors from the original *Conservatism scale*. These factors were as follows: anti-art/intolerance of alternative lifestyles; anti-hedonism/

rigid ideas about sexuality; religious fundamentalism; militarism and a domination theme/gender freedom (see Appendix J for entire scale).

Wilson noted certain trends of conservatism such as correlates with age and religious commitment (Wilson, 1973) that were replicated in Collins and Hayes Short-form. Collins and Hayes also found a significant correlation between conservatism and AIDS related attitudes. This suggests there may be a relationship between conservatism and attitude toward homosexuals, at least gay men, as this group has been strongly linked to AIDS.

Churchill (1967) proposed that prejudice against lesbians and gay men may be due to sexual conservatism. These individuals may see homosexual acts and actors as a threat to social organization. This idea of threat is very much in line with Wilson's ideas of the conservative personality. Weinberger and Millham (1979) corroborated this idea empirically. In their study of attitudes toward male and female homosexuals, they found a significant correlation between negative attitudes, a belief that homosexuals are dangerous and personal anxiety in the presence of lesbians and gay men. The authors concluded that homophobia may be related to rigid support for traditional masculine-feminine polarities and may serve to reduce sex-identity confusion and anxiety.

Conservatism, in terms of political affiliation or self-label, has been found to be significantly related to negative attitudes toward homosexuals. Henley & Pincus found more negative scores in a "gayism" scale for conservatives than for middle-of-the-roads or liberal. Seltzer (1992) found that self-identified political viewpoint on a liberal to a conservative continuum, was the most predictive variable, explaining 39% of the variance of his *Homosexual Attitude Index*. A preliminary study by this author, to be reviewed later, found a significant relationship between a respondent's self rating as "conservative" or "very conservative" and high negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. Conservatism will be measured in this study, to determine its correlation with prejudicial attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children.

#### Homophobia

The term "homophobia" was first used by Weinberg in 1972 to describe heterosexuals feelings of "dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals". Over the years, the term has gained great popularity. Despite its widespread use, the word "homophobia" is not really accurate and Weinberg's original meaning is not used today, though his term remains. Homophobics are not classically phobic, and homophobia does not manifest itself as an intense fear reaction in most

people (Herek, 1986). Rather, homophobia has come to mean antihomosexual attitudes and behavior. Authors suggest other terms such as homonegative (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980) or heterosexist (describing all human experiences in heterosexual terms, ignoring homosexuality) (Hansen, 1982). This paper will continue to use Weinberg's original term, homophobia, as it is the most common and widely recognized definition of negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The American Psychological Association (APA) continues to use this term as well (Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton, 1991). Despite the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality from the DSM-II in 1973, and the removal of ego-dystonic homosexuality from the DSM-III R, many heterosexuals continue to express negative opinions about gay men and lesbians.

Whitley (1990) suggested that homophobia may be partially attributed to a person's belief about the "causes" of homosexuality. Using attribution theory, specifically the social stigma theory, Whitley posits that people who believe homosexuality is a choice or a learned behavior will view gay men and lesbians more negatively than those who view homosexuality as genetically or biologically determined. He noted that attribution theorists believe that uncontrollable events elicit more neutral affect in others than events that are perceived to be under another person's control. The theory

predicts that people who are perceived to cause their own social stigma are looked upon more negatively than those who are stigmatized for reasons beyond their control (Whitley, 1990). Research has supported this. People who believe homosexuality is a matter of personal preference or is learned view gay men and lesbians more negatively than those who believe that people are born gay or lesbian (Aguero, Block & Byrne, 1984; Ernulf, Innala & Whitam, 1989; Schneider & Lewis, 1984, Whitley, 1990). Ernulf and colleagues (1989) used a modified version of Herek's attitude scale (1984) in Hawaii and Sweden and a modified version of Hudson and Rickett's *Index of Homophobia Scale* (1980) in the Philippines, Arizona, Hawaii and Sweden in an empirical study of 745 men and women. The respondents were asked whether they thought homosexuality was innate or learned/chosen. People who believed that lesbians and gay men were "born that way" were found to be significantly more tolerant than people who believed homosexuality was a choice or a learned response. This question of perception of origin of homosexuality, lesbianism in the case of this study, will be investigated empirically in this current research to discern if it correlates with attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children.

#### Gender Differences and Sex Role Stereotyping

Many studies note differences in attitudes of men and women

in relation to homosexuality. Generally, findings reveal that men exhibit more negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians than women. (Aguero, Bloch & Byrne, 1984; Glassner & Owen, 1976; Hansen, 1982; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite, 1984, Larsen, Reed & Hoffman, 1980; Lieblich & Friedman, 1985; Seltzer, 1992; Shaffer & Wallace, 1990).

A study of attitudes toward lesbians mothers must not only look at attitudes toward homosexuality but should also examine views toward women and unorthodox motherhood. A pilot by this author, to be reviewed later, found that men held significantly more negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children than did women. The possible reasons for this will be explored in the current study.

One possible explanation for the gender difference may be sex role stereotyping. Newman (1989) specifically investigated male and female attitudes toward lesbians. He found that sex role attitudes were the only significant predictor for men, while women's attitudes toward lesbians were influenced by a variety of factors. This sex role stereotyping may be particularly at odds when dealing with lesbian mothers. Men may have a difficult time accepting lesbian mothers because these women present a confusing mixture of traditional and non-traditional sex roles (mother and lesbian). Several authors have suggested that homophobia is related to the need

to maintain traditional distinctions between the sexes (MacDonald & Games, 1974; MacDonald, Huggins, Young & Swanson, 1972; Weinberger & Millham, 1979). Millham and Weinberger's empirical study found homophobia significantly related to expectations that the homosexual would possess nontraditional gender characteristics, which created feelings of anxiety (1977). MacDonald and Games (1974) and Smith, Resick and Kilpatrick (1980) found that people with positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men exhibited more feminist notions than did those with negative homosexual attitudes. MacDonald, Huggins, Young and Swanson (1973) found that a double standard for the sexes was correlated with negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Dunbar, Brown & Amoroso found a significant relationship between anti-homosexual attitudes and intolerance for non-stereotypic traits, hobbies and professions (1973). Weinberger & Millham (1979) studied gender, homophobia and support of traditional sex roles. They found that women expressed less support for traditional role behavior than men and that people who described themselves in traditional sex role terms expressed more homophobic attitudes. Numerous studies have found that women typically have a broader definition of sex roles than do men (Dempewolf, 1974; Henly & Pincus, 1978; Jarrett & Sherriffs, 1953). Minnigerode's (1976) empirical study found a strong

positive correlation between anti-homosexual attitudes and nonfeminist and conservative sexual attitudes.

Based on the above research, it seems that in order to determine the reasons for men exhibiting more negative attitudes toward homosexuals it is necessary to explore their ideas about sex roles.

There are several published sex role inventories on the market, the most popular being Bem's *Sex Role Inventory* (BSRI) (Bem, 1974) and the *Personal Attributes Questionnaire* (PAQ) Masculinity and Femininity scales (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Bem's inventory treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions, rather than polarities. The BSRI is a checklist in which respondents rate themselves on 20 stereotypical female traits, 20 stereotypical masculine traits and twenty filler items. In 1978 Bem refined the scale to thirty items to increase internal consistency (1978). Bem categorizes people in four personality groups; masculine, feminine, androgynous (high on both scales) and undifferentiated (low on both scales). Her empirical research, using the BSRI, the *Attitudes Toward Women Scale* and the *Machiavellianism Scale* has found that men who scored high on the femininity scale were more liberal in their attitudes toward women than masculine men who were the most conservative. Androgynous and undifferentiated men were in

between. Women's attitudes toward women did not relate to their masculinity or femininity scale (Bem, 1977). Anderson & Bem (1981) found that sex-typed respondents (high masculine men or high feminine women) were friendlier to people who conform to cultural standards of beauty. Motowidlo (1982) found that sex-typed managers were less supportive than androgynous managers of workers who had jobs atypical for their gender. Frable (1989) found sex-typed individuals agreed with gender rules more than other groups. In this same study Frable found that sex-typed participants devalued female job applicants in comparison to a similar male job applicant.

Though Bem's scales have been shown to differentiate between groups there has been some controversy over her theoretical premise of the four categories. Several authors suggest that Bem is not measuring what she purports to be measuring (Gill, Stockard, Johnson & Williams, 1987; Lubinski, Tellegen & Butcher, 1983; Spence & Helmreich, 1980; Spence, 1983). Bem's critics suggest that she cannot measure global femininity and masculinity but is actually measuring a different, more specific set of personality traits. Bem's masculinity can be thought of as measuring dominance- poise (Tellegen & Lubinski, 1983) or to be a scale of instrumentality, independence and self-assertion (Spence, 1983). The femininity scale is said to actually measures

nurturance- warmth (Tellegen & Lubinski, 1983) or expressiveness - emotional awareness of others' feelings (Spence, 1983).

Spence & Helmreich (1978) do not discuss androgyny or undifferentiated personalities in theoretical terms in their scale. However, the term "androgyny" is used as a label to refer to individuals who score high on both their instrumental (M+) and expressive (F+) personality traits. Lubinski et al., (1983) evaluated the short BSRI and the PAQ and found them empirically interchangeable. They also found no support for the significance of androgyny as an interaction of masculinity and femininity. Spence & Helmreich (1980) noted that instrumental and expressive traits may not strongly relate to sex-role behaviors and the researcher must also look into interests, attitudes, values and other aspects of the individual. They noted that this does not mean we should abandon personality inventories of this sort; we should simply execute sufficient caution in interpretation of results.

Gill, Stockard, Johnson & Williams (1987) have provided an alternate approach to the measurement of gender similarities and differences in personality. They noted that both the BSRI and the PAQ base their items on stereotypic masculine and feminine traits. Gill and colleagues scale measures expressiveness and instrumentality, but avoids variables such

as androgyny. Gill et al. also criticize the BSRI and PAQ as being developed using undergraduates as the sample pool. These students' perceptions of stereotypes formed the basis of the two scales. They contend that both Bem and Spence and Helmreich linked their scales to theory after the scales were developed. Gill et al. noted that, despite Spence's claims to the contrary, the PAQ is indeed equated with masculinity and femininity, with instrumentality being masculine and expressiveness being feminine. They noted that neither Bem nor Spence and Helmreich adequately discuss these connections. They also noted that the PAQ and BSRI combine dependency and emotionality with expressiveness, which Gill et al. believe is unwarranted.

Gill et al. redefined expressive-instrumental distinctions in their research. They defined an instrumental orientation as "concern with the attainment of goals external to the interaction process while an expressive orientation gives primacy to facilitating the interaction process itself" (Gill et al., 1987; p.379). They noted that instrumental people manipulate objects, the environment and others to achieve their goals and accomplish tasks. Expressive people are oriented toward interpersonal interaction and are rewarded by affective attitudes such as "love and friendship.". Instrumental action is related to more affectively neutral

attitudes such as "approval and respect" according to Gill et al.

Gill et al. noted that expressiveness and instrumentality are not polar opposites, but separate dimensions, both active orientations. Unlike the PAQ and BSRI, their scale is devoid of stereotypic perceptions of males or females. Their theory of expressiveness and instrumentality seems to be the most unbiased to date.

Gill et al. extensively developed their scale over approximately a ten year period. Their research was consistent with their theoretical expectations, in that expressive traits formed a separate dimension from traits associated with emotionality and acting out of feelings, one of their main criticisms of the PAQ and BSRI. Their final scale uses a Likert format and consists of 23 items divided into three distinct factors: expressive, instrumental and autonomous. They used a variety of populations in the development of their scale including college students, high school students and adults differing in age, socioeconomic status and work status. Reliability as measured by coefficients alpha were generally relatively high, within acceptable ranges (alpha ranged from .39 to .82, with the majority of scales in the .70 range). The expressiveness scale, the scale of interest in this study, had reliability levels of .74 to .83 in the eight populations

sampled.

Gill et al. found that women exhibited consistently higher levels of expressiveness than men in every study. However, some studies (a 1984 sample of college students, the high school sample and a sample of nurses) found that women also rated themselves higher on portions of the instrumental scale as well. Autonomy showed no gender differences overall, but specific items did show gender distinctions. Thus, Gill et al.'s research indicated that a central difference in men's and women's self-concepts is that "women typically see themselves as more relational or expressive than men... but women are not necessarily less instrumental or less independent than men." (Gill et al., 1987, p.396). Since this lower level of expressiveness appears to be the major distinction between men and women, it is possible that this may account for some of the underlying gender differences seen in attitudes toward gay men, lesbians, lesbian mothers and their children. This aspect of personality will be looked at in the current investigation of school psychologist's attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children, using Gill et al.'s scale (see Appendix K for full scale).

## CHAPTER II

## LITERATURE REVIEW - LESBIAN MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

An increasing number of American children are being raised in nontraditional families such as blended, single-parent, grandparent, gay, foster and adoptive homes. One family type that has been misunderstood by the general populous and largely ignored by the school literature is lesbians and their children. Various studies and reviews estimate between 400,000 and 5 million women are lesbian mothers, and that 1.5 - 14 million children live with them (DiLapi, 1989; Falk, 1989; Gibbs, 1988; Patterson, 1992; Turner, Scadden & Harris, 1990).

The existing research on lesbian mothers and their families focuses on dispelling myths about lesbians and demonstrating that negative stereotypes are not supported by fact; little attention has been given to positive and/or unique aspects of this alternative lifestyle.

In general, the research suffers from problems such as small sample sizes, weak methodology, infrequent use of control groups and sample bias (Gottman, 1990; Harris & Turner, 1986). Much of the published literature on lesbian mothers and their children is anecdotal and not empirically based. In both empirical and clinical studies, participants are overwhelmingly white, middle class and urban. A major

research obstacle appears to be obtaining representative samples of lesbian mothers and children. Out lesbians, those who do not hide or disguise their homosexuality, are much more willing to participate in studies than closeted lesbian mothers, those who have not openly revealed their sexual orientation to others. Study results may well be affected by the degree of openness of lesbian parents.

The focus of the research also is problematic in that it usually does not deal with different types of lesbian mothers. Research has concentrated almost exclusively on comparing divorced single lesbian mothers to divorced heterosexual mothers even though not all lesbian mothers live alone. Also, some children of lesbians do not have fathers known to them (e.g., children conceived through artificial insemination with anonymous sperm bank donors); these children are not dealing with divorce issues.

This section reviews available information on lesbian mothers and their children by first delineating three main family patterns of lesbian households: (a) single mothers, (b) divorced mothers (both single and couples), and © lesbian couples. These categories have been developed in response to the lack of clarity in the literature and may overlap (e.g., divorced mothers can be single or coupled), but they will serve to organize the material. Next, studies addressing

common misconceptions about these families are discussed using a mental health framework. Differences among children of lesbians are reviewed and the children's reactions to parental self-disclosure (coming out) are examined. Detailed information about all empirical and clinical studies reviewed appears in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

### Family Patterns of Lesbian Mothers

#### Single Lesbian Mothers

A single lesbian mother is defined as one who is living with her child or children and no adult partner. A single lesbian may have been previously married or had a past live-in lesbian relationship although in most studies to date, single parents are divorced lesbians. Many lesbian mothers find themselves single for at least part of their child rearing life. Lewin and Lyons (1982) in a clinical study, compared single lesbian mothers to unmarried heterosexual mothers and report that the two groups shared very similar problems and concerns (see also Golombok, Spencer & Rutter, 1983; Hoeffler, 1981; Kirkpatrick, Smith & Roy, 1981, Pagelow, 1980) including finances, housing, employment and child care. Both groups judge motherhood to be of primary importance to them, and the lesbians identified more with motherhood than lesbianism. Both groups relied heavily on family for all kinds of support and both tended to be closest to women friends. Erlichman (1988)

also reports that both groups needed to deal with introducing new lovers to their children. Pagelow's (1980) clinical experience revealed that lesbians generally felt more oppressed than heterosexual women, due to what Pagelow calls a sense of "double deviance" -- lesbianism and single parenthood.

#### Divorced Lesbian Mothers

Reviews note that a large number of lesbian mothers are divorced women (Falk, 1989; Patterson, 1992). Divorce results in a number of stressors for all women such as the loss of a partner and concomitant loss of financial and emotional support. Further, developing new relationships and stepparenting are issues of concern for some who have been divorced.

Green and colleagues (1986) report no differences between lesbians and heterosexual women who divorce with regard to drop in income, level of child support and ratings of stress-related factors such as moving and arguing with the child's father.

Differences between divorced lesbian and non-lesbian mothers have been identified in reason for divorce, current living situation (more lesbians were living with another adult), future plans concerning remarriage and having more children, level of feminism (lesbians were stronger feminists)

and level of religious attendance (non-lesbians attended more frequently) (Green et al. 1986). It has been suggested that a major difference between divorced lesbian and heterosexual mothers is that lesbians are more concerned about custody than heterosexuals who do not exhibit this fear as often (Ehrlichman, 1988; Kirkpatrick, 1987; Pagelow, 1980). Custody issues may affect whether a woman wants to disclose her homosexuality to her ex-husband or to her children. Harry (1988) notes that courts can discriminate against lesbian mothers because of their sexual orientation, while divorced heterosexual women have no analogous concern.

Unique to divorced lesbians is the issue of how to handle their sexual identity and whether or not they should discuss their sexuality with family, friends and/or coworkers. If open about their lesbianism, rejection by current peers and family may require establishing new peer groups.

Children must deal not only with the divorce, but also with the realization that their mother is a lesbian. The children may find themselves living with a new female stepparent, though the mother is not always involved with another woman. Both lesbian and heterosexual women may have difficulty finding a romantic partner as others may be hesitant to become involved with a partner who has children (Bozett, 1987).

Lesbians tend to divorce for different reasons than heterosexual women. In a small clinical study by Kirkpatrick (1987), more lesbians than non-lesbian women initiated the divorce. Lesbians generally cited loss of intimacy or incompatibility as the reason for divorce, while heterosexual women cited abuse and affairs as well as incompatibility. Lesbians were much less bitter about the separation and seemed more concerned that their children have contact with their fathers or other adult men than were the heterosexual mothers. Despite this attitudinal difference, an empirical study of 83 children and 70 mothers by Hotvedt and Mandel (1982) found that most children of divorce saw their fathers about the same amount of time, 25% or less, regardless of their mother's sexual orientation. Kirkpatrick also found that lesbians tended to have more male friends and made more of an effort to include non-paternal male relatives in their children's lives. In an empirical study of 27 heterosexual and lesbian mothers and their children by Golombok et al. (1983), lesbians saw their ex-husbands significantly more than divorced heterosexual women. The children's contact with the father was not one of the variables looked at in this study.

Many divorced lesbians are not fully aware of their sexual orientation until after they are married, perhaps due to societal pressure to submerge these feelings (Coleman,

1989; Wyers, 1987). It may be that lesbians marry for the same reasons as heterosexual women: love, tradition, intimacy, companionship, stability and the desire to start a family. Coleman (1989) attributes some of these marriages to internalized homophobia as well. Some women who marry and have children are also bisexual, but this issue is beyond the scope of this study.

#### Lesbian Mothers in Couples

Lesbian couples are defined as two women in a romantic relationship, living together in the same household. This group would most closely parallel a traditional heterosexual wife and husband. Lesbians dating each other but not in a live-in relationship are not included in this group. Lesbian mothers in couples are generally involved in either a stepparent household or a co-parent household. Stepmothers usually come into the relationship after the child is born whereas lesbian co-parents have decided as a couple to have a child, usually through artificial insemination or adoption.

There is limited legal recognition of lesbian couples that has ramifications in relation to child custody, health insurance, child-care leave and hospital visitation. Further, traditional Judeo-Christian religions have generally not been supportive of homosexual relationships. Ritter and O'Neill (1989) noted that in their clinical practice this lack of

support lead to feelings of shame and sinfulness in some lesbians. The lack of religious and legal support for lesbianism, coupled with homophobia, may contribute to secretiveness in everyday life. This perceived or real need for secretiveness does not occur with heterosexual mothers. For example, a lesbian mother, particularly a co-parent or stepparent, must consciously decide how much of her life to reveal to coworkers (e.g., concern that talking about her family may result in co-worker stigma or discrimination). Similarly, if the mother is concerned that her child may be stigmatized by his or her mother's sexuality, she needs to decide how involved she will be in her child's after school activities such as car pools (Ross, 1988). Heterosexual couples generally do not face these concerns although some non traditional families do experience prejudice (e.g., racially mixed marriages).

Roles in lesbian relationships seem to be more loosely defined than roles in heterosexual relationships (Harry, 1983). Though there are certainly many exceptions to traditional heterosexual role models, heterosexuals do have a prior history to use as a guideline. Lesbians have few models to compare themselves to in relation to work, child rearing, sexual intimacy and household responsibilities. Also, in current society few role models for lesbian mothers are

available in a family's daily experiences outside of the home. Although positive lesbian images have increased recently in the media, lesbian mothers are minimally portrayed on television, film or in public life (Baptiste, 1987b).

Browning, Reynolds and Dworkin (1991) discuss their experience in treating lesbian women in their psychotherapy practice. They comment that lesbian couples who decide to have children may have to deal with changes in their peer group and social circle to a larger extent than heterosexual couples. They suggest that not all lesbians and gay men value parenthood, and lesbian mothers may need to develop new or additional support systems.

There may be financial differences between lesbian couples and heterosexual couples as well. Women tend to earn less than men traditionally, so it seems that a man's and a woman's combined income would be greater than that of two women. Miller, Jacobsen and Bigner's (1981) study of 81 families found that two-income lesbian families earned less, on average, than one-income heterosexual families with working fathers.

One type of lesbian-headed family consists of a divorced mother and her partner, who is often seen as a stepparent. As in any relationship, the introduction of a stepparent changes the dynamics of a family. Loulan (1986) noted however that the

differences may seem more pronounced at times than in heterosexual relationships. For example, in Loulan's clinical work, lesbians were often concerned with issues about secrecy and social disapproval in lesbian stepparent families. This may put constraints on shows of affection, such as holding hands in front of the children. Concern over societal disapproval also may make it harder for a child to accept and adjust to his or her new stepparent, perhaps feeling the need to keep the stepmother a secret from friends or school. If both women are mothers, the children's relationship to each other as step siblings becomes blurred and confusing, as this family is not automatically legally recognized. To date, no controlled empirical study on lesbian stepparents has been carried out.

#### Misconceptions About Lesbian Parents and Their Children

The literature cites numerous fears associated with lesbians and lesbian mothers that have implications for school psychologists. Questions have been raised concerning the mental health of lesbians and lesbian mothers, the compatibility of homosexuality and effective parenting, the possibility that children will be indoctrinated into becoming homosexuals themselves, the possibility that homosexuals may molest their children, the mental health of children of lesbians and their social acceptance by peers and society

(Falk, 1989; Turner, Scadden & Harris, 1990).

Emotional Health and Interpersonal Relationships of Lesbian Mothers

Empirical studies have demonstrated that lesbians, on average, exhibit no more, and sometimes less, psychological disturbance than heterosexual women (Green et al., 1986; Harris, 1977; Rand, Graham & Rawlings, 1982; Thompson, McCandless & Strickland, 1971). Thompson and colleagues (1971) in an empirical study of 84 lesbians and 94 heterosexual women found that lesbians were more self-confident and independent than the female heterosexual sample. Personal adjustment was comparable in the two groups. Harris & Turner (1986) reported that lesbians and heterosexuals did not differ on measures of defensiveness, personal adjustment and self-awareness. Rand, Graham and Rawling's (1982) study of 25 lesbian mothers reported no difference from a standardized sample in psychological functioning although lesbian mothers who were more expressive about their lesbianism tended to be better adjusted than those who were less expressive. Green and colleagues (1986) study of 90 heterosexual and lesbian women reported no difference in overall psychological adjustment, although lesbian mothers were found to be more self-confident and dominant than heterosexual mothers, who scored higher on abasement and deference.

DiLapi (1989) worked clinically with both lesbians and heterosexual women and found that lesbians' interpersonal relationships tend to be similar to heterosexual relationships in terms of stability and maturity. Bell and Weinberg (1978) interviewed 979 lesbians and gay men and 477 adult heterosexuals on a variety of variables including lifestyle issues, personal characteristics and parenting characteristics. They reported that lesbians were more likely to have a greater number of close friends than heterosexual women. These friendships were often with other gay people but not exclusively. Frequently, lesbians develop "families of creation" or alternative families that consist of friends. These friendships may develop to take over the role of the family of origin in cases where the family is not understanding of the lesbian relationship or when the lesbian is overtly rejected. Shernoff (1984) hypothesized that these created families tend to provide the emotional support and stability that extended families can provide in more traditional situations.

#### Home Environment and Parenting Skills of Lesbians

Miller, Jacobsen and Bigner (1981) compared the home environment of children, ages 6-18, in 34 lesbian households with those in 47 heterosexual households. All heterosexual households were two-parent homes, while 24% of the lesbians

were living alone, and all others were with a female partner. Results of this empirical study indicated that the lesbian homes were less affluent than the heterosexual homes. Occupations were different as well, with fewer heterosexual women working full-time and more lesbians working as skilled or unskilled laborers. Lesbians in this study were found to be more child-oriented than heterosexuals in terms of their interactions and communications.

Several studies have demonstrated that there are no differences in parenting ability of lesbians and heterosexual women in terms of maternal attitudes, parenting styles, maternal interests and child-rearing (Golombok et al., 1983; Green et al., 1986; Hotvedt & Mandel, 1982; Rees, 1979). Hoeffler (1981) empirically studied 40 lesbian and heterosexual mothers and their children. She found that lesbian and heterosexual mothers did not differ in the importance of motherhood in their lives, in encouragement of sex role traits and on the child's contact with males. Turner, Scadden and Harris's (1990) clinical exploration found lesbians did not differ from heterosexuals in problem solving in relation to their children, providing play and recreational activities for their children nor in problems associated with children and child rearing.

It can be tentatively concluded that stereotypes about

lesbian mothers being non nurturing, or very different in child rearing from heterosexual mothers appear to be unsubstantiated. It should be noted, however, that most of the studies reviewed in this section do not distinguish between single and partnered women, and almost all the children are from divorced families, reducing generalizability of results.

#### Lesbian Mothers' Influence on Their Children's Sexuality

The fear that homosexual parents will raise homosexual children arises from both Freudian notions and social reinforcement or role-modeling views (Green, 1978). According to psychoanalytic theory, for example, a child's psychosexual development would be "profoundly influenced" by having a lesbian mother, for the child could not resolve "penis envy, castration fear and resolution of the oedipal conflict" (Green, 1978, p.696). Social learning theory would predict that the child would model his or her mother's homosexual behavior and that the child's homosexual behaviors would be reinforced. Green was unable to substantiate these hypotheses in his clinical study of 37 children raised by lesbians or transsexuals. All but one child reported or remembered childhood toy, game, clothing and peer activities typical for their gender; all older children reported heterosexual fantasies and behavior.

Current research tends to indicate that lesbian mothers

do not have gay or lesbian children any more or less than their heterosexual counterparts (Golombok et al., 1983; Gottman, 1990; Steckel, 1987). One study found that 60% of children of lesbian, gay or bisexual parents question their sexuality at some point in their lives (i.e., Will I grow up to be gay?) (Paul, 1986). However, this research was not controlled and was a small clinical study of 34 adult children of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents, limiting its predictive usefulness; it is fairly common for adolescents and young adults to have some same-gender sexual thoughts or fantasies (Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, 1948). No research could be found focusing on whether children of lesbians and gay men have these thoughts any more, less or the same as children of heterosexuals.

Most research does not explore homosexual behavior or orientation in children directly. Rather, research looks at children's play activity, clothes preference, peer group and toy/game choice, vocational goals and Draw-A-Person test in an attempt to predict or uncover future sexual orientation. This is limiting as it confuses the issue of gender identity and sex roles with sexual orientation. Gender identity is the subjective sense of ones own maleness or femaleness, sex roles are behaviors that are culturally deemed to be either female or male and sexual orientation refers to sexual preference

(i.e., homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual) (Steckel, 1987). Gender identity, sex roles and sexual orientation are all different constructs, and research to date primarily deals with the first two. No significant differences between children raised by lesbians versus female heterosexuals in sex role behavior or gender identity have been found, using the measures noted at the beginning of the paragraph (Golombok et al., 1983; Patterson, 1994). Hoeffler (1981) reported that both lesbian and heterosexual mothers preferred that their children (ages 6-9) play with gender-neutral toys more than same-gender toys, which were preferred over opposite-gender toys. Heterosexual mothers preferred sex-gender toys more than lesbian mothers. This did not affect the children's choices, however, which tended to be influenced by peers more than parents. Hotvedt and Mandel (1982) failed to provide evidence of gender confusion in the 58 children of lesbians they studied, but sex role behavior was somewhat less stereotyped and broader for the daughters of lesbians; no difference was seen in the boys. Golombok and colleagues (1983) found most prepubertal children, as expected, to have friends of the same sex. DiLapi (1989) noted in her literature review that no clear correlation exists between absence of a father and acquisition of sex role behavior in the general population or lesbian-mother population. She noted that many, if not most

children of divorce have other male role models.

Lesbians and heterosexual women seem to have similar wishes about how they want their children to act in relation to their degree of masculinity, femininity or androgyny (Kweskin & Cook, 1982). Kweskin & Cook administered the Bem Sex Role Inventory to 22 lesbian mothers and 22 heterosexual mothers. They found that a mother's self-described sex-role behavior is a better indicator of her desired sex-role behavior in her child than is her sexual orientation.

Pollack (1990), in an overview article, stated that it may be an error to assume that lesbians are very much like heterosexual mothers and that their children are similar. She believed this leaves lesbians invisible in society and obscures real differences between lesbian and heterosexual women's lives. She disputed the rationale for sex role research and assumptions of "appropriate" sex roles because children do not have to have limitations in their roles in life. Riddle (1978) also conjectured that lesbians and gay men can be positive role models who will not instill limiting traditional sex roles in their children. Riddle further stated that gays and lesbians are good role models for children of heterosexuals as well. Many heterosexuals, especially boys, experiment in same-gender sexual activity at some point in their development (Kinsey, et al., 1948). Consequently,

Riddle believed that "meeting mature, well-adjusted gays might help dispel feelings of guilt or pathology which children connect with such experiences." (p.52). She felt that this might decrease violence against gays by male teens.

#### Lesbian Mothers and Child Molestation

The fear that lesbians will molest their children has no basis in research. The majority of molestation of children in the United States is by heterosexual men (Rivera, 1987), making lesbians less likely to molest their children than males. According to expert testimony, child molestation is unrelated to adult sexual orientation (Rivera, 1987). No further empirical evidence is available in this area.

#### Mental Health of Children of Lesbians

The mental health and emotional well-being of children raised by lesbians as compared to control groups are not substantiated by existing research (Golombok et al., 1983; Kirkpatrick, Smith & Roy, 1981; Lewis, 1980, Patterson, 1994). The research is limited by the fact that all but Patterson's study compared children of divorce and did not include children of lesbians choosing parenthood after they were out. Empirical and clinical studies report that the trauma of the divorce is problematic and is often more troublesome to the child than his or her mother's lesbianism (Kirkpatrick et al., 1981, Lewis, 1980). Golombok and colleagues (1983) empirically

studied 75 children of divorced lesbian and heterosexual women in a non clinical setting. No significant differences were found between children of lesbians and children of heterosexuals in terms of worry, fears, physical complaints, conduct, sociability, popularity or hyperactivity. Golombok and colleagues (1983) reported a lower rate of psychiatric problems in the children of the lesbian group, but attributed this to the fact that most of their mothers were in a relationship, while most heterosexual mothers were single.

Huggins (1989) reported similar results in her study of self-esteem in children of heterosexual and lesbian divorced mothers. She found that higher self-esteem scores were obtained for children if their mothers currently lived with a partner than if she were single, regardless of the mother's sexual orientation. Patterson (1994) found that 37 4- to 9-year-old children of lesbian mothers who never knew their fathers scored in the normal range in behavior problems and self-concept. Puryear (1983) found similar results in a self-concept study. Seven- to twelve-year-old children of divorced lesbians did not differ in self-concept from similar children of divorced heterosexual women. The research suggests that a parent's sexuality does not appear to be a significant issue in a child's self-esteem or self-concept.

#### Social Stigma and Social Competence of Children of Lesbians

The potential stigmatization of children of lesbians has led some to argue against lesbians having children, however, very little empirical research on the effects of peer or societal nonacceptance has been reported. In one of the only empirical studies, Huggins (1989) investigated the social stigma of adolescent children of lesbians and its effect on self-esteem. She compared the following groups: children of divorced lesbians with children of divorced heterosexuals and children living with a single parent (lesbian or heterosexual) with children living with remarried or re-partnered women. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in the self-esteem of adolescents of heterosexual and lesbian mothers for either boys or girls. Children of lesbians in couples and children of remarried mothers scored higher in self-esteem than those children living in a single-parent home.

Researchers also interview children about their feelings concerning their mother(s) to ascertain perceived social stigma. For example, Lewis (1980) interviewed 21 children, age 9 - 26, from eight families whose mothers were lesbians. Based on these clinical interviews, he reports that younger children were more troubled about the need for secrecy issues than older children. Bryant's 1975 unpublished study (cited in Nungesser, 1980) noted that many children did not seem overtly

aware of society's negative view of their family. Those that were aware seemed to understand that society, not their mothers, was responsible for the stigmatization they felt. It appears that the social stigma of living in a lesbian-run home did not affect self-esteem and that the significant factor was living in a two-parent home.

Research has failed to substantiate that children of lesbians are significantly different from children of heterosexuals in their perception of their social acceptability. Green and colleagues (1986) investigated self-rated social acceptance of 104 children of lesbian and heterosexual mothers. They found that 80% of the daughters of lesbians reported that they were liked by same sex peers "as much, more or much more" than other girls in their class. Of the daughters of heterosexuals, 75% rated themselves in these categories, and 80% of boys of heterosexual and lesbian mothers reported similar rates of popularity with male classmates. Patterson's (1994) empirical study revealed that lesbian mothers rated their children's social competence on the Achenbach and Edelbrock Child Behavioral Checklist as comparable to the normative group.

#### Gender and Developmental Differences Among Children of Lesbians

Some evidence of differences between boys and girls

raised by lesbian mothers exists. Pennington (1987) observed that in a clinical sample of 32 children of lesbian mothers, teenage daughters seemed more overtly upset than sons, who were often able to settle their feelings by physically fighting with peers. Pennington also judged girls to be more overtly worried about "becoming homosexual" than boys. Lewis's (1980) clinical study noted that boys tended to be more hostile to their mothers' lover while girls tended to compete with the lover for their mothers' attention. It is possible that boys may also feel rejected in an all-female household. Hall (1978) pointed out that it is more difficult for lesbians to find non-sexist male role models for their sons than their daughters.

Children of lesbians can react differently to their alternative families depending on their age and developmental level. Essentially all of the research in this area is non-empirical and more controlled studies are needed. However, clinical and anecdotal evidence suggests that young children may adjust more easily to their mother's lesbianism than older children. Young children may have only vague memories of their father, or have no known father. They may have only known a household with a lesbian mother or mothers, and may not go through as much of a negative reaction as older children. Pennington (1987) basing her hypothesis on her

clinical research, speculates that children under seven react to a split-up of their mother and her female lover with more anxiety than older children, perhaps viewing it as a divorce and loss of a parent figure. Older children may fantasize that the break-up signifies their mother returning to heterosexuality, whereas younger children may never have known of their mothers' earlier heterosexuality, if it were ever evident. Prepubescent children must deal with parental breakup, embarrassment and fear of peer ridicule, but, as Lewis (1980) noted, these youngsters are often less able to deal with ambivalence toward their mothers than adolescents, so they need to accept their mothers' lifestyles more than teenagers. Teens seem to have the most difficult time accepting homosexuality in general (Coleman & Remafedi, 1989), and adjusting to their mothers' homosexuality, in particular (Lewis, 1980). Unlike younger siblings, they are experiencing adolescent issues such as movement toward autonomy and sexual identity. They may be sufficiently separate from their mothers to be openly angry, hurt, shocked or mournful but still dependent on their mothers for emotional and physical support (Lewis, 1980). Early adolescence is also a time of rigid sex role stereotyping and teens may be insecure enough in their sexuality at this time in life to be particularly vulnerable to learning about their mother's sexuality (Lewis, 1980).

While research suggests developmental differences among children of lesbians, there have not been any longitudinal studies in this area.

#### Coming Out/ Self-Disclosure to Children

In a correlational study, lesbians who reported that they were openly gay in a variety of areas in their life, such as family, work and friends, scored lower in neurotic anxiety as measured by Eysenck's Personality Inventory than did lesbians who were more reluctant to disclose their sexual identity in the same settings. Out lesbians also scored higher in perceived ego strength and psychological adjustment as measured by a self-assessment scale of overall psychological well-being and psychological strength (Miranda & Storms, 1989). There are no analogous studies for lesbian mothers or children of out lesbians as compared with children of closeted lesbians.

There is no evidence that disclosing lesbianism has a negative impact on children of lesbians. A few studies have examined how children respond to lesbians' self-disclosure and children's reactions and views about their mothers' homosexuality. Hoeffler's (1981) empirical study of 40 lesbians and their children (ages 6-9) found that most lesbians are honest about their sexuality with their children and that the children generally reported feeling emotionally

closer to their mothers after disclosure. Turner et al.'s clinical study of eleven lesbian mothers notes that the mothers rarely believe that their children have long-term problems because of their homosexuality, and the mothers see their sexual orientation as unimportant in the development of parent/child relationships (1990). This study was based on interviews and was rather subjective, however. Other clinical and anecdotal studies and reports note that short-term or transient problems are expressed by children and parents alike, concerning social stigma, secrecy, a sense of differentness and self-doubt on the part of the child in terms of his or her own sexuality (Lewis, 1980; Steinhorn, 1982; Turner et al., 1990).

In sum, existing research does not support negative beliefs about lesbian mothers and their children. This review failed to substantiate that children of lesbians are different from children of heterosexuals with regard to their emotional health, interpersonal relationships, sexual orientation or gender development. Psychological adjustment and parenting skills did not vary significantly for lesbian and heterosexual mothers. Lesbian mothers have not been shown to influence their children's sexual orientation any more or less than heterosexual mothers.

Despite this empirical evidence, attitudes and behaviors

toward homosexuals seem to reflect negative beliefs about this group of people. The next chapter will specifically discuss attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.

CHAPTER III  
LITERATURE REVIEW - ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD LESBIANS  
AND GAY MEN

No published scale specifically measuring attitudes toward lesbian mothers or their children currently exists. However, several scales have been developed to measure attitudes toward homosexuals, some of which have subsections on attitudes toward lesbianism. Survey research of this type varies in format, length and specificity (Hansen, 1982; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Millham, San Miguel & Kellogg, 1976; Smith, 1971). Most of the scales have not been researched extensively, rarely going beyond development and one modification. Often, they do not separate attitudes toward lesbians from attitudes toward gay men in the survey or in the scoring of the survey (Hansen, 1982; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Larsen, Reed & Hoffman, 1980; Lumby; 1976). Some are lengthy (Millham, San Miguel & Kellogg, 1976) or very short (Glassner & Owen, 1976). Some have very emotionally-laden somewhat offensive language (Mosher & O'Grady, 1979). Some only give a yes/?/no choice for responding (Glassner & Owen, 1976; Millham, et al., 1976; Smith, 1971). Most have a very restricted sample, generally college students (Hansen, 1982, Hudson & Ricketts, 1980;

Larson, et al., 1980; Millham et al., 1976)

Gregory Herek's scale, *Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men* (ATLG) is an exception (see Appendix H for Lesbian subscale). Herek's survey uses a Likert-type scale, differentiates between gay men and lesbians, is of sufficient length, and has been used with student and non-student populations in a variety of geographic areas over a ten year period (Herek, 1994). Herek carried out several reliability and validity studies on the ATLG, and its components (ATL and ATG scales). Research on the *Attitude Toward Lesbian* scale, a 10-item measure, revealed satisfactory internal consistency ( $\alpha = .90$ ), significant correlation with a battery of paper-and-pencil construct validity measures ( $p < .05$ ), and satisfactory reliability on an alternative forms test ( $r=.92$ ) and a test-retest ( $r=.84$ ) (Herek, 1984, 1994).

Research with Herek's scale and other attitude surveys has demonstrated mixed tolerance toward lesbians and gay men. Studies before the late seventies generally showed 70-80% of the sample with negative or "homophobic" attitudes. (Levitt & Klassen, 1974). Later studies found overall tolerance at about 50% tolerant/50% negative (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980).

Goodyear, Abadie & Barquest reported that both men and

women rated "typical female homosexuals" as "most negative" on the Personal Attribute Inventory, when compared to "typical male homosexuals" , "typical males", "typical females" and a "typical person" (1981).

Acquaintance of more than a superficial nature with a lesbian or gay man also influences a person's overall attitude toward homosexuals, which corroborates contact theory's suppositions. Studies find that those individuals who knew or interacted with homosexuals had less negative attitudes than those who had no known gay or lesbian friends or close relatives (Glassner & Owen, 1976; Grieger & Ponterotto, 1988, Hansen, 1982; Herek, 1988; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Lance, 1987; Pagtolun & Clair, 1986). Millham, San Miguel and Kellogg(1976) and Herek (1988) found that knowing a lesbian reduced negative attitudes to a significant degree. Their studies are the only ones that differentiated between lesbians and gay men in terms of friendships/ close relatives.

Age can also be a significant factor in determining acceptance of lesbians and gay men. Studies have found that older people express less tolerance (Nyberg & Alston, 1977, West, 1977). However, Hudson and Ricketts (1980) found that this did not hold true for the youngest members of the sample, in their teens and early twenties, who had more

negative attitudes than some older respondents. Seltzer found that Black respondents between the ages of 30 and 49 were more liberal than those older or younger, with the youngest group scoring the most homophobic (1992). Perhaps these findings can be correlated with the conservative trend in government with the Reagan and Bush administrations or with a holdover of adolescent sex role identities. This would have interesting effects on research, as most of the research in this area uses college students as participants in studies. An exploration of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper, however.

Race, education level, religion, church attendance, liberalism/ conservatism, city vs. rural environment, geographic local and marital status have all been investigated with respect to attitudes toward homosexuals. Non-Hispanic Whites were found to have less negative attitudes than Asian-Americans (Hudson & Rickett, 1980). Hispanics of all races were said to not differ from non-Hispanic Whites but to be more tolerant than Blacks in terms of morality measures but not in terms of civil liberties for gay people (Bonilla & Porter, 1990). Educated people had more positive attitudes than the less educated (Herek, 1988; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980, Nyberg & Alson, 1977; Seltzer, 1992). Protestants and Roman Catholics were found

to be less tolerant than Jews, members of other religions and nonaffiliated (Irwin & Thompson, 1977). Less frequent church attendance was associated with more tolerance (Henley & Pincus, 1978; Herek, 1988; Seltzer, 1992; West, 1977). Herek found that religious conservatism was a better predictor of homophobic attitudes than was religious orientation (1987). A liberal belief about human sexuality (Hudson & Ricketts, 1977) and a liberal to moderate political viewpoint (Henley & Pincus, 1978; Herek, 1988; Seltzer, 1992) are also associated with more tolerance toward lesbians and gay men. Urban residents looked more favorably on homosexuals than rural residents (Hansen, 1982; Levitt & Classen, 1974; McGrory, McDowell & Muskin, 1990; Nyberg & Alston, 1977) though Glassner and Owen (1976) found no difference between urban and suburban residents. Southerners were found to be the most negative toward homosexuals (Seltzer, 1992). People who were separated, divorced or never married were found to be more liberal in their attitudes than married or widowed people (Seltzer, 1992).

Stereotypes tend to simplify individuals. Consequently, global negative attitudes toward homosexuality can color specific perceptions of individual gays and lesbians. For example Dew (1985) found that females, especially

conservative women, labeled photographs as lesbians if they also rated those pictures as less attractive, not well dressed, not having an attractive hairstyle and not being desirable to meet. Testa, Kinder and Ironside (1987) found that undergraduates randomly presented vignettes about a couple, identical except for the sexual orientation of the couple, rated the lesbian and gay couples more negatively than the heterosexual couples. They rated the homosexual couples as less loving, less satisfied and more prone to discord. Stereotypic attitudes may affect selective memory as well. Snyder and Uranowitz (1978) had participants read a narrative about a fictional woman. One week later, half the participants were told she was a lesbian and half were told she was heterosexual. When given multiple choice questions about the woman, the participants reconstructed events to fit into stereotypic views for the lesbian. Uranowitz, Skryped and Snyder (1978) in an unpublished study reported by Snyder in 1981 had participants view a tape of a man and woman conversing. After viewing the tape, half of the group was told the woman was a lesbian. These subjects rated the woman as less secure, less sexually warm, less sociable and less happy than the group who believed she was heterosexual.

Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men can also influence a person's behavior. Several studies have

demonstrated this effect. Gray, Russell & Blockley found that helping behavior was significantly less when the person to be assisted was identified as gay or pro-gay (1991). Cuenot and Fugita found that experimental interviewees spoke faster and expressed more conservative attitudes about sexual behavior when they believed the interviewer was gay or lesbian (1982).

#### Mental Health Professionals Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men

There has been some research with regard to mental health practitioners' feelings and beliefs about homosexuality. Two studies investigated counseling students' attitudes and found a negative bias when the student thought the client was a lesbian or gay man (Glenn & Russell, 1986) and average to high homophobia scores (McDermott & Stadler, 1988). Studies of working counselors, summarized by Rudolph (1988), indicate that counselors believed that lesbians and gay men can fully function but have the potential to be pathological. The belief in the pathology of homosexuality was especially evident in the early 1970's. Thirty-eight percent of a sample of therapists stated that they would treat a homosexual with "the direct aim of changing sexual orientation", though 43% would not. Seventy-two percent believed this change was possible and 73% called

homosexuality "a personality disorder" as it was labeled at that time (Fort, Steiner & Conrad, 1971). A 1974 study on psychiatrist's attitudes toward lesbians was much more favorable (Gartrell, Kraemer & Brodie). A more recent study of psychiatrists found that most were nonhomophobic (Chaimowitz, 1991). In 1975, the APA formed a task force on sex bias and sex-role stereotyping in psychotherapeutic practice. As a result of that study, a resolution was passed, noting that "homosexuality, per se, implies no impairment in judgement, stability, reliability or general social or vocational capabilities". It condemned discrimination against homosexuals and urged health professionals to "take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations" (Conger, 1975). Studies after the resolution do not indicate a great deal of attitudinal change in therapists. Garfinkle and Morin (1978) studied psychologist's attitudes toward lesbian and gay male clients. When given a hypothetical client, differing only in sexual orientation, the psychologists found the homosexual clients less psychologically healthy than their heterosexual equivalents and different therapeutic goals were set for homosexual and heterosexual clients. No differences were seen between lesbians and gay men. Emond (1978) examined the

consequences of lesbian labels on clinical social workers judgement of women clients. With only sexual orientation altered, otherwise identical protocols were assessed by both male and female social workers. Results indicated that two of the three lesbian characters were assigned significantly more negative traits than their heterosexual counterparts. Wisniewski & Toomey (1987) and Decrescenzo (1984) also found that social workers had a relatively high rate of homophobia. Also in 1984, an APA task force, the Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, investigated bias in psychotherapy with lesbians and gay men. The task force received 2544 psychologist's responses to an open-ended survey. Demographics, age and psychological orientation were diverse, though the sample was 96% White and 69% female. Results of the survey suggest that psychologists vary widely in their adherence to a standard of unbiased practice with gay men and lesbians. Though frequency of subject's comments was not noted, negative beliefs were seen in seventeen areas, reflecting "biased, inadequate or inappropriate practice" in "strategies of intervention, issues of special relevance to lesbian and gay male populations and issues about therapist's expertise and training" (Garnet, Hancock, Cochran, Goodchilds & Peplau, 1991, p.966). Exemplary practice was also seen in these same

areas by other psychologists surveyed. Results of the survey suggest that inadequate and unethical practice may be fairly common. Fifty-eight percent of the psychologists surveyed knew of negative incidents, including therapists who defined lesbians and gay men as sick and attempted to change their orientation. The task force concluded that APA must continue to promote nondiscrimination policies pertaining to lesbians and gay men, through expanded education efforts.

Similar to Snyder and Uranowitz's 1978 study, Casas, Brady and Ponterotto found that mental health professionals can distort and selectively remember facts about clients, depending on the client's sexual orientation. In their 1983 study 34 mental health professionals were given a stack of 48 randomly shuffled cards with different characteristics and descriptors of a client who was described as gay, lesbian, heterosexual male or heterosexual female. The participants then answered a questionnaire based on the information on the cards. It was found that individuals retained more of the information provided on the cards that was congruent with the prevailing stereotypes. They made more errors when processing information about homosexuals than heterosexuals. An analysis of errors revealed that they occurred when information about homosexuals was incongruent with stereotypes. Casas et al. concluded that stereotypes by

mental health professionals might affect their processing of information about their gay and lesbian clients. Davidson and Friedman (1981) found distortion of clinical judgement in psychology students. When given a case study differing only in the patient's sexual orientation, students rated the homosexual as more pathological than the heterosexual. This study is limited in its generalizability to working professionals however, as students were the participants.

#### Teachers Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men

There is little argument that children can be influenced by people who spend a considerable portion of the day with them. Consequently, it is important to study the attitudes of people who work in the schools directly with the children. Teachers beliefs, expectancies and attitudes can have implications in relation to students functioning.

Very little has been written concerning educators' attitudes toward homosexuality. Sears (1989) studied prospective teachers while Fischer (1982) investigated working teachers. Sears found 80% of the trainees had negative feelings toward homosexuals, with one-third scoring as "high-grade homophobics" (p.6). These scores indicate a higher degree of homophobia in the teacher trainees than was seen in a group of college students measured with the same instrument ten years prior to this study (Sears, 1989).

Elementary education trainees expressed more negative attitudes and feelings than any other group and Black preservice teachers expressed more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than did White teachers. Black people and elementary education trainees were also found to be less knowledgeable about homosexuality.

Fischer (1982) also found that teachers scored higher in non-acceptance than a similar study (Macdonald, 1973) using the general population as a sample. Among the variables Fischer looked at were age, gender, and geographic area where teachers worked. Though the severity of non-acceptance differed, the direction of trends in results were similar in both studies. More acceptance was seen in younger teachers, women, and urban employees.

#### Influence of Teacher Attitude and Expectancies on Children

If teachers have negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children this may have significant effects on the children's functioning in school. Although this particular issue has never been researched, teacher expectancy and attitudes in other areas have been investigated extensively. One of the most quoted and most controversial studies on teacher expectancies found that youngsters whom the teachers thought were academically advanced (actually randomly selected) showed a significant

gain in IQ from a parallel control group (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Though this study has been criticized for methodological and other weaknesses (Elashoff & Snow, 1971; Jensen, 1969; Thorndike, 1968), the area of teacher expectancy continues to be studied and results showing change in student's behavior, though not as dramatic as Rosenthal and Jacobsons, have been reported. Social and emotional differences are seen more often than academic and cognitive differences in teacher expectancy studies (Crano & Mellon, 1978). Cooper (1985) states that teacher expectancy can sustain the student's level of performance or alter it to bring it into closer agreement with the teacher's expectancy. If a teacher believes that an "outgroup" child (in this case, the child of a lesbian) has a disadvantage or is less well liked, his or her expectancy and behavior toward that student may be different from other students.

Hall and Merkel wrote an extensive review of teacher expectancy and educational psychology. The review reported considerable evidence that a teacher's rating of high or low expectancy students is correlated with differential teachers interactions, attention, criticism, praise and feedback (Hall & Merkel, 1985). In some cases, this has a significant effect on school functioning such as appropriateness of responses of children (Good, Cooper & Blakey, 1980), and

reading achievement (An effect size of .48 was found in a meta-analysis by Smith, 1980). Palardy compared boys of equal reading readiness abilities who differed in their teacher's expectations. The first group had teachers who believed that boys could learn to read as well as girls while the second group had teachers who felt that boys could not learn to read as well as girls. The first group scored significantly higher than the second group six months later. Although this is correlational and not causal data, it is possible that teachers' expectation somehow contributed to differential teaching techniques that affected student's achievement. Weinstein (1985) described an unpublished meta-analysis by Haertel, Walberg & Haertel (1979) that supports this assumption. They found that "classroom environment perceptions accounted for variance in learning outcomes beyond the variance accounted for by ability (Weinstein, p.341). Other differences that can affect teacher expectancy include race, ethnic background, gender, socioeconomic status, social class, similarity to teachers own reference group, one vs. two-parent homes, physical attractiveness, sex-role behaviors and even name stereotypes (Baron, Tom and Cooper, 1985; Dusek and Joseph, 1985; Good and Findley, 1985; Hall and Merkel, 1985; Mitman and Snow, 1985; and Peterson and Barger, 1985). Teachers rated essays

by children with unusual names as lower than identical essays supposedly written by children with common names (Harari & McDavid, 1973). Similar results were obtained when teachers rated identical essays varying only in the ethnicity of the child (Guttmann & Bar-Tal, 1982). Garwood's 1976 study found that children with more common names scored higher on the *Children's Self-Concept of Achievement Test* scale, the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* and the IOWA achievement tests than did children with unusual names. Garwood suggests that this is due to a higher quality of student-teacher interaction for "in-group" children. The fact that something as seemingly minor as an uncommon name can affect student's emotional functioning and achievement seems significant. It is similarly possible that knowledge that a child comes from an uncommon home (i.e., one with a lesbian mother) may have a significant impact on this child's functioning in school. A more recent study by Guttmann and Broudo (1989) found that teachers' stereotypes about family type affected teachers attitudes toward their students. Children from "intact" homes were expected to perform better academically, socially and emotionally than children from divorced or "conflicted" two-parent homes. Ultimately, this may affect childrens' behavior, motivation and school success, as children tend to conform to the

teacher's original expectations (Short, 1985).

#### Influence of Psychologist Attitude and Behavior

Research on psychologist's attitudes and behavior toward clients have also shown significant effects on clients. Many of these studies focus on the effect of subtle nonverbal cues that the psychologist may give to the client, or a school psychologist may project to the student directly, or to the teacher during consultation.

Vrugt (1990) found that beginning psychotherapists had a more negative nonverbal stance toward students that they thought were clients in comparison with individuals described as untroubled students. This was noted by differential body movements and speech patterns. The beginning psychotherapists also expressed more discomfort when the students were introduced as clients, manifested in more pauses in speech and speech disturbances. Saigh (1980) also found that nonverbal feedback can affect functioning. Thirty junior and senior high school students were administered two subtests of the WISC-R in one of two treatment groups. The experimental group received positive nonverbal treatment consisting of the experimenter leaning forward, making eye contact and smiling and nodding. The control group received neutral nonverbal feedback, with Saigh leaning back in his seat, looking down at the test

protocol and keeping a bland facial expression. Students in the positive nonverbal group scored significantly higher than the group that received no feedback. In addition, the neutral treatment group tended to overelaborate significantly more than the experimental group, which Saigh attributed to a possible anxiety response. These results are relevant in that school psychologists who are themselves uncomfortable with the students they are testing, such as children of lesbians, may respond to them (probably unknowingly) in a neutral rather than positive nonverbal way. This can affect test results and possibly diagnosis. Maurer & Tindell found similar results in a 1983 study. Eighty high school juniors were interviewed about career plans by two school psychologists. The interviews were structured and only varied in the posture of the psychologist: whether or not the psychologist changed position when the student changed position. The students then rated the psychologists on level of empathy. The psychologists whose body movements were congruent with the interviewee were rated as significantly more empathetic than the control group. A similar effect was seen with the use of touch (Hubble, Nobel & Robinson, 1981)

Chasen (1975) studied diagnostic sex-role bias in school psychologists. She found that school psychologists'

attitudes toward sex and sex-roles influenced their actual evaluation of childrens' behavior as being healthy or not healthy. Diagnosis and test interpretation can also be affected by reason for referral, which may be considered a type of expectancy. Tidwell (1976) found a significant biasing effect in case reports when psychologists knew the referral reason.

Attitudes and expectancies of teachers and school psychologists have been empirically shown to affect behavior toward students, which may affect student's performance or opinions about themselves or the school staff. With school psychologists, who generally deal with children individually, these behaviors can be extremely subtle and still be of significance to the student. Their influence on teachers, as professed authorities about children's mental health, can also be vast. Consequently, it is of great importance that school psychologists have realistic, non-biased attitudes toward all types of families, including lesbian mothers and their children.

CHAPTER IV  
PILOT STUDY SUMMARY - TEACHER AND SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIAN  
MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

No published research has focused directly on teachers' and school psychologist's attitudes and expectations about lesbians, lesbian mothers and their children. An unpublished pilot study was carried out by this author in 1993 in a preliminary attempt to investigate this area. This section summarizes the salient results of the pilot with more detail in the next chapter.

Instrument Development

A 45-item attitude questionnaire, *Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children (ATLMAC)* was developed which included statements related to common misconceptions about lesbian mothers and their children that have been studied in scientific literature published since the late 1970's. These misconceptions were reviewed in Chapter I. The statements were followed with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The number of items was reduced to 20, then to 17 after validity and reliability studies were done (to be described below). (see Appendix E for original survey and demographic

questionnaire)

#### Content Validity

Items measuring attitudes toward lesbians were based on the available research on lesbian mothers and their children, culled from an extensive literature review in the social sciences (psychology, education, counseling). A panel of expert judges, consisting of three lesbians and a female clinical psychologist who specializes in treatment of gay men and lesbians reviewed the questions to determine accuracy and relevance. Items that were not agreed upon by the psychologist and 2/3 of the lesbians were discarded. Twenty items were kept and 25 were discarded.

#### Item Analysis

The 20 item questionnaire was distributed to 25 volunteer social workers, school psychologists and educational evaluators in a New York City school district, at a staff meeting. Questionnaires were numbered and the clinicians signed an attendance sheet next to their number. It was announced that the sheet would not be seen by the test developer. An assistant kept the information and redistributed the form three weeks later, to obtain test-retest information. All forms were returned, with the follow up of the assistant. Statistical analysis revealed that the intercorrelation matrix yielded some negative

correlations. The item-total correlation was then examined and it was found that three questions had an item-total correlation below .3 and were negatively correlated with several other items. These three items were removed. The eliminated questions were all negatively coded and it is possible that the wording was confusing to the respondents. Four of the 17 remaining items are reversed coded.

#### Reliability

Analysis of the 17 remaining items revealed item-total correlation ranging from  $r = .33$  to  $.71$ . Cronbach alpha, a measure of internal consistency was  $.89$  for the pretest and the posttest. Test-retest results confirmed reliability ( $r = .94$ ).

#### Procedure

The 17 item questionnaire, with an explanatory cover letter and a page of demographic questions, was distributed to 305 teachers in one New York City junior high school, one Philadelphia high school, one Philadelphia junior high school and in one suburban and two rural school districts in New York. One hundred fifty psychologists were randomly selected from the National Association of School Psychologists directory of northeastern states. An additional sample of 18 was obtained from a New York City school district. (See Appendices A, B and C for copies of

the teacher cover letter, school psychologist cover letter and School Survey/Demographics). Teachers had the choice of mailing their responses to the investigator or putting them in the mailbox of the school contact. Instructions were similar for the psychologists, however, they were asked to mail back responses in a preaddressed, stamped envelope.

#### Summary of Hypotheses and Results

The surveyed population consisted of 154 teachers and 73 school psychologists. Thirty-five percent of the subjects worked primarily in elementary schools, 34% in junior high schools and 31% in high school settings. Sixty-five percent of respondents were female. Age ranges were as follows: 20-29 (11%), 30-39 (26%), 40-49 (46%), 50-59 (14%) and over 60 (3%). Thirty eight percent of the sample worked in urban areas, 37% in suburban and 26% in rural areas. Table 1 provides a full breakdown of sample size and percentages for each area.

The independent variables were those that had been significant in similar studies such as age, gender, religion and location of employment. The dependent variable was score on the ATLMAC, the scale used in this study. The current study keeps the same dependent variable, but independent variables are now theoretically based and are modifiable variables, that is, characteristics of the school

psychologist that can be changed through interventions.

It was expected that the results of the pilot would follow the trend of previous research, even though most of the prior studies were based on attitudes toward homosexuals in general, not lesbians or lesbian mothers. It was hypothesized that the oldest (over 60) and youngest (20-29) age groups, rural, elementary school employees and those with conservative social views would have more negative attitudes than mid-age range (30-60), urban/suburban, junior and senior high school employees and those with liberal to moderate social views, respectively. It was further hypothesized that knowing a lesbian or a lesbian parent would significantly reduce negative attitudes. Within the group who knew lesbians, it was hypothesized that the closer the relationship to the subject, the less negative the attitudes. Males were hypothesized to have more negative views than women. Religion, race and occupation (school psychologist or teacher) was also explored but no significant difference was anticipated.

Results, using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) or a t-test for gender confirmed three hypotheses: conservatives held more negative views than moderates and liberals ( $p < .0001$ ), men were significantly more negative in their attitudes than women ( $p < .001$ ), and people who

knew a lesbian were significantly less negative than those who did not ( $p < .049$ ). Knowing a lesbian parent was not significant, nor was age, geographic location of employment, type of school, religion, race or profession. In the group of those who knew lesbians, significant differences were found depending on the relationship between the subject and the lesbian ( $p < .002$ ). The closeness and frequency of contact within the relationship were not measured. The respondents were simply asked to check off the following relationships: self, friend, immediate relative, other relative, coworker, neighbor, service person or other. Results were not in the expected direction. Although self-identified lesbians and friends of lesbians had more positive attitudes than other groups, respondents with a lesbian as an "immediate relative" scored higher (more negative) than all other groups. This subgroup was very small ( $n=4$  out of a total sample of 227) so interpretation is difficult. However, in an attempt to explain this, the current study will not look at specific relationships as did the pilot, but will examine the quality of the relationships, in accordance with contact theory.

A regression analysis revealed that only two variables accounted for the majority of the variance. Conservative views accounted for 44.48% of the variance and gender

accounted for about 7%. The subject's relationship to a lesbian accounted for 2.63% of the variance, which was not significant. Each of the other factors accounted for a very small portion of the variance, ranging from .33 to .0011. Teachers and school psychologists responded in virtually identical manner, when all other factors were taken into account ( $F=.0011$ ). Consequently, this factor can be considered non-essential and only school psychologists will be investigated in the current study.

Table 1

Demographics of Pilot Sample

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
20-30	24	11
30-40	59	26
40-50	105	46
50-60	33	14
Over 60	6	6
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

Gender

Male	80	35
Female	147	65
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

Profession

Teacher	154	68
School Psychologist	73	32
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

Geographic Area of Employment

Urban	86	38
Suburban	83	37
Rural	58	25
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

table continues

<u>Level of School of Primary Employment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Elementary	79	35
Junior High School	78	34
High School	70	31
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

<u>Race</u>		
White	195	86
Black	5	2
Hispanic	7	3
Other	2	1
Declined to Answer	18	18
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

<u>Religion</u>		
Protestant	59	26
Catholic	70	31
Jewish	47	21
Other	13	6
None	20	9
Declined to Answer	18	7
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

table continues

<u>Social View</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Liberal	48	21
Somewhat Liberal	73	32
Moderate	68	30
Somewhat Conservative	30	13
Conservative	8	4
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

<u>Know Lesbian Mother</u>		
Yes	95	42
No	42	18
Don't Know	90	40
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

<u>Know Lesbian</u>		
Yes	150	66
No	35	15
Don't Know	42	19
	-----	-----
TOTAL	227	100

table continues

<u>Known Lesbian's Relationship to Subject</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Self	4	2
Immediate Relative (sibling, child, etc.)	4	2
Friend	75	33
Other Relative (cousin, aunt, etc)	6	3
Neighbor	13	6
Coworker	23	10
Service Person	4	2
Other	21	9
Know no lesbians	77	33
TOTAL	227	100

## CHAPTER V

## RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES

The results of the preliminary investigation of the *Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children* scale plus the research reviewed above provide the basis for the following four hypotheses. Contact between groups of people that is close, frequent and of equal status has been found to reduce negative attitudes (Allport, 1954). Thus, a participant's contact and the type and quality of this contact with lesbians and lesbian mothers will be investigated in the first hypothesis, utilizing the *Social Contact Questionnaire*.

Conservatism has been correlated to prejudice, including negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Seltzer, 1992; Weinberger & Millham, 1979). As seen in this study's preliminary investigation, a participant's self-rating as a conservative was found to be the strongest correlate to negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. The second hypothesis will explore conservatism, both in an individual's self-labeling and in his or her scores on the *Short-form Conservatism Scale*.

An individual's belief about the causes and changeability of homosexuality has been found to be related to his or her acceptance of lesbians and gay men (Whitley, 1990). Those who attribute homosexuality to genetics, biology or an inborn

trait that cannot be changed have been shown to perceive lesbians and gay men less negatively than individuals who believe homosexuality is a changeable choice or a learned behavior. This aspect of attitudes will be measured and analyzed in the third hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis explores emotional awareness of others' feeling, "expressiveness", the factor that is believed to be related to men showing more negative attitudes than women toward lesbian mothers and their children. *Gill, et al.'s Expressive and Instrumental Scale* will be the measure utilized.

H<sub>1</sub>. The first hypothesis is based on contact theory. Respondents who have frequent, equal status contact of more than a superficial nature with lesbians will be more accepting of lesbian mothers and their children than people with infrequent, superficial contact with lesbians. High scores on the *Social Contact Questionnaire* will predict low scores on the *ATLMAC*. A respondent who is a parent of a lesbian, with no other contact, will not show lower *ATLMAC* scores, due to unequal status.

H<sub>2</sub>. The second set of hypotheses is based on conservatism theory. Conservatism will be significantly related to negative

attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children, as measured on the ATLMAC.

a) The total score on the ATLMAC will positively correlate with scores on the *Short-Form Conservatism Scale* (SFCS). High scores on the SFCS will predict high scores on the ATLMAC.

b) Respondents self-description of their level of conservatism will be directly related to scores on the ATLMAC.

H<sub>3</sub>. The third hypothesis is based on attribution theory, as related to the causes and changeability of lesbianism. The total score on the ATLMAC will be related to a respondent's perception of the origin and changeability of homosexuality as measured on the *Attribution Scale* (AS). Individuals who believe that lesbianism is innate and unchangeable (i.e. low AS scorers) will score lower on the ATLMAC, indicating more tolerance, than those who believe lesbianism is a choice or a learned behavior that can be changed.

H<sub>4</sub>. The fourth set of hypotheses, parts a) and b), is based on Gill's theory of sex-roles, specifically levels of expressiveness. Expressiveness will be significantly related to attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children as

measured by the ATLMAC.

a) Respondents who score high on expressiveness measures on *Gill's Expressiveness and Instrumentality* scale (GE&I) will score lower on the ATLMAC than those who have low expressiveness measures, regardless of gender.

b) Further, gender differences seen in responses will be explained by the expressiveness score (i.e., low expressive men will not score significantly different on the ATLMAC than low expressive women; high expressive men will not score significantly different on the ATLMAC than high expressive women).

## CHAPTER VI

## METHODS

Subjects

A random sample of school psychologists was obtained for this study. The National Association of School Psychologists supplied a random sampling of 1000 names of Nationally Certified School Psychologists (NCSP), as of October 1994. This represents one-ninth of the total NCSP membership. A survey package was mailed to every other name on the list, starting with the first name (n=500). A follow up letter was sent three weeks later.

Instruments1. Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children Scale (ATLMAC)

The ATLMAC is a 16-item scale developed by this author. Respondents indicate the level of their agreement with statements about lesbian mothers and their children (e.g., "Children of lesbians have a low self image"). The responses are recorded on a five-point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Total scores can range from 16 to 80 with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes. The scale was originally developed with 17 items (ATLMAC17) but one item was dropped due to poor intercorrelation with the

other sixteen. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The ATLMAC17 exhibited adequate reliability during the pilot study ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Content validity was established by expert judges who rated items as consistent with current information about lesbian mothers and their children. Additional information regarding the reliability and validity were obtained in the current study for the 16-item ATLMAC and will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 2. Social Contact Questionnaire (SCQ)

The SCQ is an eight-item questionnaire modified from Battaglia (1993) concerning the degree, specificity and type of contact the respondent has with lesbians, to be answered in a yes/no format. (e.g., "I have a close friend who is a lesbian"). Each "yes" item was scored as one point, with the exception of question #5, "I have a daughter who is a lesbian." which was scored as zero, due to the unequal, non-peer status of this relationship. Three items from the SCQ were dropped in the final analysis, as will be discussed later. Final total scores can range from 0 to 5 with higher scores indicating more contact with lesbians.

## 3. Short-Form Conservatism Scale (SFCS)

This scale was developed by Collins and Hayes (1993) and is a modification of Wilson and Patterson's (1968) original

scale. The 16-item scale consists of single words or two-word phrases measuring conservative ideas. The respondent indicates his or her agreement on a five-point scale, from "strongly disagree/ disapprove" to "strongly agree/approve" (e.g., "ROTC", "Legalized Abortion"). Total scores can range from 16 to 80 with higher scores indicating more conservative opinions.

In previous studies, the SFCS had a coefficient alpha of 0.82. Content validity was obtained by utilizing items consistent with Wilson's conservatism construct. Construct validity was obtained by correlating results of the SFCS with age ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), religious commitment ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ), participants attitudes toward social restriction of AIDS patients ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ) and participants attitudes toward needle exchange ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ). Factor analysis yielded a strong general factor of conservatism and a factor structure consistent with the original Wilson and Patterson scale.

#### 4. Gill et al.'s Expressive and Instrumental Scale (GE&I)

This scale was developed by Gill, Stockard, Johnson and Williams in 1987 as a response to the problems in other sex-role scales. In this scale, twenty-three words are presented which tap expressiveness, instrumentality or autonomy. (e.g., "considerate", "thorough", "independent"). The respondent indicates his or her level of agreement on a

4-point scale ranging from "very true of me" to "very untrue of me". Total scores can range from 23 to 92. Seven items constitute the expressiveness subscale, which is the scale of interest in this study. Total scores on this subscale can range from 7 to 28 with higher scores indicating more expressiveness.

In previous studies, reliability, as measured by internal consistency, ranged from a coefficient alpha of .39 to .82. The expressiveness scale exhibited reliability of .74 to .83 in the eight populations sampled. Factor analyses revealed a strong expressive factor. Factor loadings ranged from .33 to .78. An instrumental factor and an autonomy factor were also identifiable, but were not as uni-dimensional as the expressive factor. Content validity was obtained by utilizing items consistent with the expressive-instrumental theoretical distinction, chosen by 5 of 7 expert judges. Consistency and generalizability was established by four replications.

#### 5. Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL)

This ten-item scale was developed by Herek in 1984 and consists of statements about lesbians (e.g., "Lesbians are sick.") The respondents indicate their level of agreement on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Total scores can range from 10 to 50 with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes. This scale

was used to establish an aspect of construct validity of the ATLMAC.

In previous studies, the ATL's internal consistency was satisfactory ranging from a coefficient alpha of .77 to .90, in the nine replications. Content validity was established by culling items from the literature on lesbians. Construct validity was established, utilizing a battery of nine conceptually related scales. ATL scores also correlated positively with parallel forms ( $r=.84$ ). Factor analysis revealed one cognitive dimension, labeled the *condemnation-tolerance* factor that accounted for 35-45% of the total common variance.

#### 6.Attribute Survey (AS)

This survey was designed by the author. Six statements about the causes and changeability of lesbianism were included on the same page as the ATL scale, as items 11 through 16. Two items concern the innate nature of lesbianism, two discuss lesbianism as a learned behavior and two explore the changeability of lesbianism. They were presented in a random order. The items fit the general topics of the ATLMAC and ATL and are in the same 5-point Likert format. (e.g., "Lesbianism is largely biological determined."). Scores can range from 6 to 30 with lower scores indicating beliefs that lesbianism is innate and unchangeable. (see Appendix H for ATL+AS). One item

was not used in the final analysis, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### 7. Demographic Data

Thirteen questions were asked to obtain demographic information (e.g., age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation). These questions were revised based on suggestions of pilot study participants and results. (see Appendix L for demographic questionnaire)

### Instrument Reliability and Factor Structure

The ATLMAC, which was originally developed for the pilot study, was further analyzed in this study by examining construct validity and analyzing underlying factors. In addition, new reliability estimates were obtained. All instruments that were utilized as independent variables were factor analyzed and reliability coefficients were obtained. A complete description of all new analyses is discussed in the results section of this paper.

### Procedure

The following items were mailed to a random sample of 500 school psychologists nationwide, as described in the "Subject" section: 1) a cover letter explaining the study, 2) the 17-item *Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and their Children* survey, 3) the 10-item *Attitudes Toward Lesbians* scale with the six item *Attribution Survey* 4) the 8-item *Social Contact*

Questionnaire, 5) the 16-item *Short-form Conservatism Scale*, 6) the 23-item *Gill et al.'s Expressive and Instrumental* scale, 7) a demographic questionnaire, 8) a pre-addressed, stamped envelope and 9) a pre-stamped, pre-addressed postcard to be returned if respondents requested a summary of study results. The cover letter (Appendix F) was similar to that of the pilot (Appendixes C and D), with some modifications because of the expanded survey. A brief follow-up letter was mailed three weeks later.

## CHAPTER VII

## RESULTS

This chapter summarizes the results of the study, beginning with a demographic description of the participants. A multiple regression was performed to examine the relationship between the demographics and the total score on the ATLMAC. Each instrument was evaluated in terms of reliability and underlying factor structure. Each hypothesis was tested, and a final multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationships of the independent variables to the dependent measure (ATLMAC). An appendix of all intercorrelations of measures and significant demographics (Appendix M) and one of the means, standard deviations and ranges of the measures and significant demographics (Appendix N) are also included.

Description of the Participants

A total of 269 surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 53.8%. The population is fully described in Table 2. The survey population ranged in age from 32 to 73 with 50.2% of the sample falling between the ages of 40-49. Ninety-four percent of the sample was white, 52% was female, 75% were married and 75% have children. Ninety-three percent of the sample describe themselves as heterosexual, while 5% describe

themselves as gay or lesbian and 2% describe themselves as bisexual. The total non-heterosexual sample consisted of six lesbians, seven gay men, one bisexual female and three bisexual men.

The participants live throughout the United States, though most respondents live in the Northeast (46%). Most live in suburban areas (46%) and work in suburban areas (42%). Thirty-five percent of the respondents work in elementary schools, 12% in Jr. High/Middle schools and 15% in high schools. The remainder work in a variety of other settings.

The majority of the sample was Protestant (35%), with 24% describing themselves as Catholic, 20% as Jewish, 6% as other and 13% as having no religion. Forty-percent describe their traditional religious conviction as "moderate" while 30% describe it as "weak" and 17% as "strong". Ten percent state that they have no traditional religious convictions. Thirty-seven percent of the sample describe their views as "somewhat liberal", with 22% describing themselves as "liberal". Twenty-six percent state they are "moderate", 11% describe themselves as "somewhat conservative" and 3% describe themselves as "conservative".

Table 2

Demographics of Sample

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
30-39	54	20.1
40-49	135	50.2
50-59	57	21.2
60 and over	17	6.3
Missing	6	2.2
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0
 <u>Gender</u>		
Male	128	47.6
Female	139	51.7
Missing	2	.7
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0
 <u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	31	11.5
Married	201	74.7
Cohabiting	9	3.3
Widowed	4	1.5
Separated/Divorced	22	8.2
Missing	2	.7
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

table continues

<u>Children</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	202	75.1
No	65	24.2
Missing	2	.7
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	249	92.6
Lesbian/Gay	13	4.8
Bisexual	4	1.5
Missing	3	1.1
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

Region of Residence

West	29	10.8
South	79	29.4
Midwest	32	11.9
Northeast	124	46.1
Missing	5	1.9
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

Location of Residence

Urban	66	24.5
Suburban	123	45.7
Rural	76	28.3
Missing	4	1.5
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

table continues

<u>Location of Employment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Urban	88	32.7
Suburban	114	42.4
Rural	59	21.9
Missing	8	3.0
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

Place of Primary Employment

Preschool	11	4.1
Elementary	94	34.9
Jr. High/Middle	32	11.9
High School	41	15.2
Administration	4	1.5
Private Practice	13	4.8
Special Education	5	1.9
Retired	5	1.9
University	14	5.2
Other	42	15.6
Missing	8	3.0
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

table continued

<u>Race</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	252	93.7
Black	6	2.2
Hispanic/Latino	3	1.1
Asian	0	0.0
Mixed Race	2	.7
Other	3	1.1
Missing	3	1.1
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0
 <u>View</u>		
Liberal	58	21.6
Somewhat Liberal	99	36.8
Moderate	70	26.0
Somewhat Conservative	29	10.8
Conservative	8	3.0
Missing	5	1.9
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

table continues

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Protestant	95	35.3
Catholic	66	24.5
Jewish	53	19.7
Other	17	6.3
None	34	12.6
Missing	4	1.5
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0
<u>Traditional Religious Conviction</u>		
Strong	45	16.7
Moderate	107	39.8
Weak	82	30.5
None	26	9.7
Missing	9	3.3
	-----	-----
TOTAL	269	100.0

A multiple regression analysis was performed, using the total score on the 16-item ATLMAC as the dependent variable and all demographics as independent variables. Seven demographic variables were found to significantly contribute to 26% of the variance in ATLMAC scores: rating oneself as 1)liberal, 2)somewhat liberal, 3)conservative (or other); rating oneself as 4)heterosexual (or not); 5)separated/divorced (or other); 6)Protestant (or other); and 7)respondent's age ( $r^2 = .26$ ,  $F(7,247)= 12.7$   $p < .01$ , see Table 3). Rating oneself as separated/divorced, liberal or somewhat liberal predicted lower ATLMAC scores (more tolerance); while conservatism, heterosexuality, Protestantism and higher age predicted higher scores.

Table 3

Significant Demographic Predictors of ATLMAC Score Using  
Stepwise Multiple Regression

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B*</u>	<u>T**</u>	<u>Sig. T</u>
Separated/Divorced	-5.01	-2.63	.01
Heterosexual	5.50	2.58	.01
Protestant	2.78	2.56	.01
Liberal	-6.24	-4.47	.001
Somewhat Liberal	-3.19	-2.71	.007
Conservative	13.63	4.56	.001
Age (Categorical)	1.30	2.08	.04
(Constant)	29.48	11.41	.001

\* beta weight

\*\* t-test

### Analysis of Instruments

#### Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and Their Children (ATLMAC)

The ATLMAC, with 17 items, was previously evaluated in a pilot study for content validity and reliability ( $\alpha = .89$ , test-retest  $r = .94$ , see Chapter IV). In this study, reliability was re-estimated, construct validity was established and a factor analysis was carried out. The final ATLMAC consists of 16 items.

An item analysis of the 17-item ATLMAC revealed that the first item, "Children who have lesbian mothers are more likely to grow up to be gay than other children." correlated poorly with the total score (.26). All other item-to-total correlations ranged from .42 to .71 (see Table 4). Removal of the first item increased reliability from an alpha coefficient of .86 to .89. Consequently, the 16-item ATLMAC was utilized for all analyses.

Respondents' total scores ranged from 16 to 67 ( $M = 35.97$ ,  $SD = 9.28$ ). Nine cases were excluded due to missing data and 260 were included in the frequency analysis of total score.

Table 4

ATLMAC17 Item-Total Correlation

<u>Item</u>	<u>Item-Total Correlation</u>
1	.26
2	.50
3	.57
4	.58
5	.38
6	.59
7	.71
8	.44
9	.58
10	.56
11	.42
12	.43
13	.67
14	.56
15	.50
16	.60
17	.56

A factor analysis, using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) and a rotated factor matrix, revealed four factors accounting for 46.2% of the variance, with the first factor accounting for 35.6% of the variance (see Table 5). The first factor can best be described as measuring pathology of the child and the mother and consisted of items 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15. All the items had factor loadings ranging from .39 to .57. The second factor seems to measure society's response to lesbian mothers and their children and consists of items 13, 14, 16 and 17. These items had factor loadings ranging from .48 to .69. The third factor concerns parenting issues and consists of items 4, 7 and 11, which had factor loadings ranging from .52 to .63. The fourth factor appears to measure the absence of pathology in lesbian mothers and their children and consists of items 2, 5 and 8, which had factor loadings ranging from .41 to .50.

One aspect of construct validity was established by correlating the ATLMAC with Herek's *Attitudes Toward Lesbians* (ATL) scale. Total-Score correlated significantly ( $r=.76, p < .001$ ). A full analysis of the ATL will be discussed in the next section.

Table 5

Factor Analysis of the ATLMAC

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>EIGENVALUE</u>	<u>% of Variance</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1	5.70	35.6	35.6
2	.67	4.2	39.8
3	.57	3.6	43.4
4	.46	2.9	46.2

Factor 1= Pathology of lesbian mothers and their children

Factor 2= Society's response to lesbian mothers and their children

Factor 3= Parenting issues of lesbian mothers and their children

Factor 4= Lack of pathology in lesbian mothers and their children

table continues

ATLMAC ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>
2	.24	.38	.06	<b>.42</b>
3	<b>.49</b>	.36	.27	.06
4	.30	.22	<b>.60</b>	.07
5	.16	.15	.13	<b>.50</b>
6	<b>.57</b>	.24	.31	.12
7	.45	.24	<b>.63</b>	.21
8	.13	.14	.34	<b>.41</b>
9	<b>.51</b>	.12	.36	.22
10	<b>.48</b>	.10	.22	.42
11	-.02	.15	<b>.52</b>	.32
12	<b>.52</b>	.19	-.02	.20
13	<b>.55</b>	.54	.12	.19
14	.29	<b>.48</b>	.27	.18
15	<b>.39</b>	.18	.16	.37
16	.13	<b>.66</b>	.34	.22
17	.21	<b>.69</b>	.12	.17

(Item 1 omitted, bold indicates highest factor loading for item)

### Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL)

Herek's scale in previous studies exhibited reliability estimates ranging from .77 to .90. The scale also has established construct validity and a unidimensional factor accounting for 35-45% of the total variance. Reliability estimates and a factor analysis were established for the population of interest in this study.

The ATL consists of 10 items with possible total scores ranging from 10 to 50. Participants in this study scored from 10 to 48, with five missing values ( $M = 18.94$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ ). The ATL yielded one factor after a PAF analysis. This factor explained 55.4% of the variance of the scale, with item factor loading ranging from .49 to .81. Reliability was more than adequate ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### Social Contact Questionnaire(SCQ)

The SCQ, as presented to the participants, had 8 questions, three pertaining to lesbian friends, two pertaining to degree of contact with lesbians and three pertaining to lesbian relatives. This entire scale, deleting question #5 - lesbian daughters, because of the unequal status of this group (see Hypothesis 1), yielded a reliability coefficient of .75. However, a factor analysis revealed that all questions pertaining to relatives, both with and without the "daughter question" did not correlate

strongly with total score (see Tables 6 and 7). When the "relative" questions were removed, the scales reliability increased ( $\alpha = .79$ ) and the scale became unifactorial for this sample. This one factor accounted for 55.2% of the variance with item factor loading ranging from .50 to .80 (see Table 6). Total scores ranged from 0 to 5 ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ). There were no missing items on this scale.

#### Short-Form Conservative Scale (SFCS)

Previous investigations of this scale by it's authors, Collins and Hayes, yielded good construct validity and acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .82$ ). For the present sample, internal consistency was estimated and found to be well within the acceptable range ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Possible total scores ranged from 16 to 80. Actual total scores ranged from 27 to 76 ( $M = 47.3$ ,  $SD = 7.9$ ). Ten items were missing (left unanswered by respondents) and 259 were included for analysis.

A factor analysis, utilizing a rotated factor matrix, revealed five factors, accounting for 48.3% of the total variance. The first factor, which seems to be measuring religion/church accounted for 23% of the variance. The remaining factors accounted for 8.9 to 3.9% of the variance (see Table 8).

Table 6

Social Contact Questionnaire - Item-Total Correlation

	<u>Item-Total Correlation</u>	<u>Alpha if Item Deleted</u>
Soc. Friend #1	.47	.71
Soc. Friend #2	.62	.67
Soc. Friend #3	.56	.69
Soc. Sister #4	.11	.76
Soc. Other Relative #6	.16	.77
Soc. Contact One Lesbian #7	.65	.66
Soc. Contact One+ Lesbians #8	.55	.69

Alpha = .75

(Question #5 -Lesbian daughter deleted as per Hypothesis 1)

table continues

Revised Social Contact Questionnaire Item-Total Correlation

	<u>Item-Total Correlation</u>	<u>Alpha if Item Deleted</u>
Soc. Friend #1	.46	.79
Soc. Friend #2	.63	.74
Soc. Friend #3	.56	.76
Soc. Contact One Lesbian #7	.67	.72
Soc. Contact One+ Lesbian #8	.57	.76

Alpha = .79

Table 7  
Social Contact Questionnaire Factor Analysis (PAF)

Original Factor Analysis

	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>
Soc. Contact #1	.54	.31	-.29
Soc. Friend #2	.70	.26	-.11
Soc. Friend #3	.69	.22	.36
Soc. Sister #4	.11	.10	-.00
Soc. Daughter #5	.18	.11	.20
Soc. Relative #6	.17	.14	-.02
Soc. Contact One Lesbian #7	.81	-.33	-.04
Soc. Contact One+ Lesbian #8	.70	-.41	-.02

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Revised Factor Analysis

	<u>Factor 1</u>
Soc. Contact #1	.50
Soc. Friend #2	.70
Soc. Friend #3	.63
Soc. Contact One Lesbian #7	.81
Soc. Contact One+ Lesbian #8	.67

Eigenvalue = 2.76      % of Variance = 55.2

Table 8  
Factor Analysis of the Short-Form Conservatism Scale

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>EIGENVALUE</u>	<u>% of Variance</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1	3.68	23.0	23.0
2	1.43	8.9	31.9
3	1.09	6.8	38.7
4	.92	5.7	44.5
5	.62	3.9	48.3

Factor 1 = Religion/Church

Factor 2 = Military

Factor 3 = Sexual Virtue

Factor 4 = Sexual Promiscuity

Factor 5 = Music

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>	<u>Factor 5</u>
1	.19	<b>.45</b>	-.09	.18	.19
2	.16	.10	<b>.93</b>	.10	.08
3	<b>.60</b>	-.02	.17	.24	-.00
4	.28	.24	<b>.51</b>	.17	.02
5	.05	.06	.11	<b>.71</b>	.14
6	<b>.48</b>	.31	.20	.21	-.11
7	.11	.13	.07	.27	<b>.59</b>
8	-.04	<b>.68</b>	.11	.05	.07
9	.02	.03	.02	.13	<b>.79</b>
10	.11	<b>.60</b>	.19	-.12	-.00
11	.06	.03	.04	<b>.58</b>	.18
12	<b>.63</b>	.10	.05	-.05	.11
13	<b>.69</b>	-.06	.08	-.02	.15
14	<b>.56</b>	.40	.01	-.06	-.10
15	<b>.64</b>	.39	.14	.22	.00
16	<b>.36</b>	-.11	.13	.32	.08

Bold numbers indicate highest factor loading for that item

### Attribute Survey (AS)

This survey was designed by the author for the current study. Reliability was estimated and a factor analysis was conducted.

A factor analysis of the six items revealed two factors. However, as can be seen in Table 9, question #5, "Some woman may think they are lesbians, but they are not.", loaded very poorly on the first factor, and did not seem to be measuring what the other items were measuring. When this item was removed, the survey became unidimensional with item factor loadings ranging from .41 to .86. This factor accounted for 43.4% of the variance of the survey and seems to be measuring what was intended: whether the participants believe lesbianism is a choice or innate/biological/genetic.

Reliability of the final five-item Attitude Survey was adequate ( $\alpha = .78$ ). Participants' total scores ranged from 5 to 25 ( $M = 12.52$ ,  $SD = 3.6$ ,  $N=268$ ).

### Gill Et al.'s Expressive and Instrumental Scale (GE&I)

Previous scale development by the authors found the scale to have fair to good internal consistency, with alpha levels ranging from .39 to .82. Gill and colleagues found three factors; expressive, instrumental and autonomy. The present

study concentrated on the 7-item Expressive Scale, which had previously yielded reliability levels of .74 to .83.

A factor analysis based on the present study's data revealed an identical factor structure as found by the designers of the scale. However, while Gill found that expressiveness was the stronger factor, the current study indicates that instrumentality is the first factor, accounting for 31.6% of the variance. The expressive factor accounts for 12.6% of the variance and the autonomous factor accounts for 5.7%. (See Table 10).

Full scale reliability was within accepted limits ( $\alpha = .89$ ) as was reliability for the Expressive subscale ( $\alpha = .94$ ). Participants' total Expressive scores ranged from 7 to 28 ( $M = 22.94$ ,  $SD = 4.02$ ). Five respondents had missing items and the N for analysis was 264.

Table 9

Factor Analysis of the Attribute SurveySix Item Survey

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>EIGENVALUE</u>	<u>% of Variance</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1	2.32	38.5	38.5
2	.57	9.6	48.1

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>
1	<b>.77</b>	-.37
2	<b>.64</b>	.32
3	<b>.86</b>	-.25
4	<b>.55</b>	.08
5	.19	<b>.31</b>
6	<b>.46</b>	.41

Bold numbers indicate highest factor loading for that item

Revised Five Item Survey

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>EIGENVALUE</u>	<u>% of Variance</u>
1	2.17	43.4

FACTOR MATRIX

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>
1	<b>.75</b>
2	<b>.62</b>
3	<b>.87</b>
4	<b>.57</b>
6	<b>.41</b>

Table 10

Factor Analysis of Gill Et Al's Expressive and Instrumental Scale

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>EIGENVALUE</u>	<u>% of Variance</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1	7.27	31.6	31.6
2	2.91	12.6	44.2
3	1.32	5.7	50.0

Factor 1= Instrumentality

Factor 2=Expressiveness

Factor 3=Autonomy

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>
1	<b>.55</b>	.24	.26
2	<b>.75</b>	.17	-.06
3	<b>.70</b>	.32	.18
4	.33	<b>.77</b>	.06
5	.31	<b>.77</b>	.11
6	<b>.53</b>	.09	.50
7	.36	<b>.73</b>	.05
8	.26	.17	<b>.40</b>
9	<b>.71</b>	.16	.09
10	<b>.66</b>	.25	.21
11	<b>.76</b>	.32	.07
12	.43	<b>.73</b>	.06
13	.18	.30	<b>.48</b>
14	.28	<b>.75</b>	-.01
15	.17	<b>.39</b>	.07
16	<b>.43</b>	.05	.08
17	.12	-.40	<b>.55</b>
18	.02	<b>.52</b>	-.11
19	-.08	-.40	<b>.29</b>
20	.09	.10	<b>.68</b>
21	.11	-.31	<b>.64</b>
22	<b>.68</b>	.24	-.05
23	-.08	-.06	<b>.74</b>

(Bold indicates highest factor loading for item)

### Hypotheses

The results of each hypothesis are presented below, following a statement of the specific hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: The first hypothesis is based on contact theory. Respondents who have frequent, equal status contact of more than a superficial nature with lesbians will be more accepting of lesbian mothers and their children than people with infrequent, superficial contact with lesbians. High scores on the *Social Contact Questionnaire* will predict low scores on the ATLMAC. A respondent who is a parent of a lesbian, with no other contact, will not show lower ATLMAC scores, due to unequal status.

Results indicate that most people had more than a casual acquaintance with a lesbian (68.8%) and had at least one lesbian friend (53.2%). Most people reported that they did not have a close lesbian friend (77%) or have frequent contact with one or more than one lesbian in a non-professional capacity (37.2% and 23.4% respectively) (See Table 11).

Table 11

Social Contact Questionnaire  
Demographics of Sample

<u>Question</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Know at least one lesbian in more than a casual relationship	185- yes 84 - no	68.8 31.2
TOTAL	269	100.0
2. Have at least one lesbian friend	143 - yes 126 - no	53.2 46.8
TOTAL	269	100.0
3. Have a close lesbian friend	62 - yes 207 - no	23.0 77.0
TOTAL	269	100.0
7. Have frequent contact with at least one lesbian in a non-professional capacity	100 - yes 169 - no	37.2 62.8
TOTAL	269	100.0
8. Have frequent contact with more than one lesbian in a non-professional capacity.	63 - yes 206 - no	23.4 76.6
TOTAL	269	100.0

(Items 4, 5 and 6 were deleted from the final analysis.)

A Pierson correlation was calculated between ATLMAC score and the total SCQ score (5-item revised questionnaire). Hypothesis 1 was supported. The data indicated a negative correlation between scores on the SCQ and scores on the ATLMAC ( $r^2 = -.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) About 10% of the ATLMAC variance can be accounted for by the *Social Contact Questionnaire* ( $r^2 = .1047$ ).<sup>1</sup>

Hypothesis 2 :The second set of hypotheses is based on conservatism theory. Conservatism will be significantly related to negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children, as measured on the ATLMAC.

a) The total score on the ATLMAC will positively correlate with scores on the *Short-Form Conservatism Scale* (SFCS). High scores on the SFCS will predict high scores on the ATLMAC.

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<sup>1</sup> As stated previously, the 3 "relative" questions were removed from the survey due to poor item-total correlation. However, a t-test, comparing the 4 respondents who have lesbian daughters with the remaining sample indicates a trend towards higher ATLMAC scores/less acceptance for this non-equal status group. The "daughter" group had a mean of 39 while the "non-daughter" group mean was 35.9 ( $F = 2.08$ ,  $p = .151$ ). Three respondents had lesbian siblings, an equal status group. This group's trend was towards more acceptance ( $M = 32$ ) than the overall sample ( $M = 36.0$ ), ( $F = .68$ ,  $p = .41$ ).

b) Respondents singular self-description of their level of conservatism will be directly related to scores on the ATLMAC.

The hypotheses stated in a) and b) were both supported. A Pearson correlation was carried out between total ATLMAC scores and total SFCS scores. A significant positive correlation was found ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ). Twenty-seven percent of the variance of the ATLMAC can be explained by the *Short-Form Conservatism Scale* ( $r^2 = .2733$ ).<sup>2</sup> (See Table 12).

A Pearson correlation was calculated for ATLMAC scores and View (a participant's self-rating on a liberal to conservative scale). Results were found to be significant ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ).

Hypothesis 3 : The third hypothesis is based on attribution theory, as related to the causes and changeability of lesbianism. The total score on the ATLMAC will be related to a respondent's perception of the origin and changeability of homosexuality as measured on the *Attribution Scale* (AS). Individuals who believe that lesbianism is innate and unchangeable (i.e. low AS scorers) will score lower on the

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<sup>2</sup> A step-wise multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine which of the conservative factors are significantly related to ATLMAC scores. Results indicate that the factors "religion/church", "military" and "music" were significant ( $F = 38.13, p < .0001$ ) while the other two factors were not entered into the equation (see Table 11).

ATLMAC, indicating more tolerance, than those who believe lesbianism is a choice or a learned behavior that can be changed.

Table 12  
Stepwise Multiple Regression - Short-Form Conservatism Scale  
Factors and ATLMAC

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B*</u>	<u>T**</u>	<u>Sig. T</u>
Religion/Church	.82	7.83	.0001
Military	.55	2.01	.04
Music	1.25	3.97	.0001
(Constant)	8.70	2.62	.009

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<u>Variables not in Equation</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Sig. T</u>
Promiscuity	-.03	.97
Virtue	-.90	.37

\* beta weight

\*\* t-test

The third hypothesis was supported. A Pearson correlation between ATLMAC scores and *Attribution Scale* scores indicated a significant positive correlation between low AS scorers and low ATLMAC scorers ( $r = .52, p = .001$ ). Twenty-seven percent of the ATLMAC variance can be explained by the variance in AS scores ( $r^2 = .2659$ ).

Hypothesis 4: The fourth set of hypotheses, parts a) and b), is based on Gill's theory of sex-roles, specifically levels of expressiveness. Expressiveness will be significantly related to attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children as measured by the ATLMAC.

a) Respondents who score high on expressiveness measures on *Gill's Expressiveness and Instrumentality* scale (GE&I) will score lower on the ATLMAC than those who have low expressiveness measures, regardless of gender.

b) Further, gender differences seen in responses will be explained by the expressiveness score (i.e., low expressive men will not score significantly different on the ATLMAC than low expressive women; high expressive men will not score significantly different on the ATLMAC than high expressive women).

The results of the hypotheses are as follows. A Pearson correlation between expressive scores and ATLMAC scores yielded a significant correlation in the expected direction ( $r = -.14$ ,  $p = .03$ ). Although the effect size is statistically significant, the relationship between expressiveness and ATLMAC scores is weak. Variance in expressive scores account for slightly less than 2% of the ATLMAC variance ( $r^2 = .0192$ ). This supports part a) of the fourth hypothesis. Instrumentality and autonomy were not significantly correlated to the ATLMAC, as expected ( $r = -.08$ ,  $p = .20$ ;  $r = -.02$ ,  $p = .72$  respectively).

A t-test for gender differences on the ATLMAC revealed that men scored higher than women (37.14 versus 34.87), indicating more negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children ( $p < .05$ ). However, an analysis of covariance examining the gender differences in ATLMAC scores after controlling for expressiveness showed that there is no significant gender difference when expressiveness is taken into account ( $F = 1.99$ ,  $p = .159$ ). This supports part b) of the fourth hypothesis (See Table 13).

Table 13  
ANCOVA: ATLMAC by Gender with Expressiveness as the Covariate

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig. of F</u>
Covariate EXPRESSIVENESS	499.49	1	5.94	.015
Main Effect GENDER	167.48	1	1.99	.159
Explained	666.96	2	3.97	.02
Residual	21096.00	251		
Total	21762.97	253		
269 cases total, 15 cases (5.6% missing)				

### Additional Analyses

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship of the independent variables to the dependent measure (ATLMAC). All significant demographic variables were first entered into the multiple regression equation as a set. These control variables were age, religion (Protestantism and other), marital status (separated/divorced and other), view (liberal, somewhat liberal, conservative and other), and sexual orientation (heterosexual and other). A forward procedure was then carried out utilizing the four independent variables measured in the hypotheses, to determine if they add anything to the explained variance in ATLMAC scores above and beyond the demographics (*Social Contact Questionnaire*, *Short-Form Conservatism Scale*, *Gill's Expressive Scale* and the *Attribute Survey*).

The significant demographic variables, when entered into the equation as the first step constituted slightly less than 30% of the variance ( $r^2 = .296$ ). The significant independent variables were labeling oneself separated/divorced, liberal or conservative. Using the demographic variables and the three significant predictors,  $r^2 = .48$ . The predictors were scores on the *Attribute Scale*, *Short-Form Conservatism Scale* and *Social Contact*

*Questionnaire*. Expressiveness did not add anything further to the equation and was not included in the analysis (see Table 14).

Table 14

Predictors of ATLMAC Score Using Stepwise Multiple Regression, Significant Demographics Entered as First Block

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B*</u>	<u>T**</u>	<u>Sig. TR<sup>2</sup></u>	
Separated/Divorced	-4.65	-2.82	.005	
Heterosexual	.96	.50	.62	
Protestant	1.35	1.39	.17	
Liberal	-3.16	-2.27	.02	
Somewhat Liberal	- .43	- .39	.70	
Conservative (self-label)	7.48	2.84	.005	
Age (Categorical)	1.02	1.87	.06	.30 (as a set)
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Attribute	.84	6.17	.0001	.44
Conservative (SFCS)	.25	3.30	.001	.46
Social Contact	-.71	-2.53	.01	.48
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Variables not in Equation				
Expressiveness		-.55	.58	
* beta weight				
** t-test				

## CHAPTER VIII

## DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the psychometric properties of the ATLMAC and briefly review the psychometric properties of the other four instruments. Demographic information in relation to the ATLMAC scores will be discussed. In addition, findings for each hypothesis will be examined, including limitations of each premise. Areas of future research and implications for school psychologists will be addressed.

InstrumentsAttitude Toward Lesbian Mothers and Their Children (ATLMAC)

One purpose of this dissertation was to create and test an instrument that was a valid and reliable measure of attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children, utilizing a sociocognitive model of prejudice as the theoretical construct in the development of the instrument. The ATLMAC, in both the pilot study and the current study seems to be a useful measure of a person's beliefs about the topic of interest, at least in the groups studied (teachers and school psychologists in the pilot, school psychologists in the dissertation). The ATLMAC has adequate content validity that was determined in the pilot. Construct validity is also well within the accepted limits, as the

ATLMAC correlated highly with Herek's *Attitudes Toward Lesbians* scale. Reliability was also more than adequate in both the 17-item pilot study and the current 16-item study. Although all items correlated positively with total score in the pilot, the first item correlated poorly with the total score in the current study and was removed.

The ATLMAC was expected to be a unifactorial instrument. This was not the case. Four factors were found which accounted for 46.2 % of the variance. However, as expected, the strongest factor measured respondents' beliefs concerning pathology in children of lesbians and lesbian mothers. This factor accounted for 35.6% of the variance and consisted of seven items. The other three factors added a little more than ten percent and each consisted of three items. Due to the strong nature of the first factor, the ATLMAC's factors were not separately examined in the hypotheses. It is not believed that results would have been significantly different if separate factors were analyzed, although this may be interesting for future research. In addition, one item, #11 ("A lesbian mother's live-in partner should have equal decision-making in regard to the child as a father would") was slightly negatively correlated with Factor 1 and it may be advisable to remove it in future analyses if the ATLMAC is being used in a unifactorial

manner. The ATLMAC, based on this current analysis, appears to be a valid measure of attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children.

#### Attitudes Toward Lesbians

This scale has been utilized extensively in the past and was expected to yield good reliability and a unifactorial structure. Results were consistent with past findings. The ATL was of a unidimensional factor structure and yielded a reliability measure that was as high as any previously obtained by Herek. It was also expected that the ATL would correlate positively with the ATLMAC but the degree of correlation was unexpectedly high. A lower correlation was anticipated because the two instruments measure somewhat different constructs: attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children as compared to attitudes toward lesbians. It is possible that lesbianism evokes such strong feelings in people that their opinions about female homosexuality override their beliefs about children of lesbians, but this was not examined directly. Regardless, it is clear that the two attitude measures are highly correlated to one another.

#### Social Contact Questionnaire (SCQ)

This instrument was modified fairly extensively in the final analysis and was not as comprehensive as originally planned (to measure attitudes of friends of lesbians,

frequent contacts of lesbians and relatives of lesbians). However, the last type of contact proved to be so multidimensional that it could not be adequately measured by the SCQ. A factor analysis of the original SCQ showed very weak correlation of "relative" questions to total score. However, despite this scale's limitations, it proved to be a good measure of non-relatives contact with lesbians. The final SCQ was unifactorial and had an adequate reliability. This scale was proven to be a useful, short, easily administered measure of contact with lesbian friends and other peer relationships.

#### Short-Form Conservative Scale

The SFCS was multifactorial in the current study, as was found in previous investigations by the scales authors. Collin and Hayes found that their five factors accounted for about 64% of the variance of their scale. Currently, five factors were found, accounting for a little over 48% of the variance. Similar, but not identical factors to those described by Collins and Hayes were seen in the current study. Religious conservatism was found to be the strongest factor in the current study. Collins and Hayes also found what they labeled "religious fundamentalism" to be a strong component of their scale. Militarism was the second factor in the current study and was also a factor in Collin and

Hayes study. The present study also consisted of two factors concerning sexual virtue and promiscuity that are similar to Collin and Hayes ant-hedonism/rigid ideas about sexuality factor. The current sexual virtue factor included the items "chastity" and "premarital virginity" and the sexual promiscuity factor included the items "casual sex" and "strip shows". Collin and Hayes study found all four of these items to factor together. The current music factor is identical to Collin and Hayes anti-art factor. Collin and Hayes found a domination theme/gender freedom factor that was not evident in the current study.

Reliability of the SFCS in this study was within the acceptable range, similar to Collin and Hayes reliability measure.

#### Attribute Survey

This author-designed survey was modified slightly in the final analysis. Initially, it yielded two factors. All items except for the fifth question loaded strongly on the first factor. When this item was removed, the scale became a unifactorial measure of a participant's beliefs about the causes and changeability of lesbianism. The factor accounted for 43.4% of the variance. Reliability of the five-item *Attitude Survey* was acceptable.

#### Gill Et al.s Expressive and Instrumental Scale

This scale was found to be very consistent in its factor structure. Gill sampled a variety of adolescents and adults (e.g., high school students, nurses) while this present sample consisted of school psychologists. The current study found three factors accounting for 50% of the variance. These factors are virtually identical to those discussed in the original study: expressiveness, instrumentality and autonomy. Although the factor structure was the same in the current and in past studies, the factor loadings were different. Gill and her colleagues found that expressiveness was the strongest factor, while instrumentality was the strongest factor in the current study, accounting for almost 32% of the variance. It had been anticipated that expressiveness would be the strongest factor in the current study, as it was this aspect of the scale that was salient. However, expressiveness was found to account for 12.6% of the variance. The current study found that the expressiveness subscale was more reliable than the total score, though both were well within acceptable limits. The current study's expressive reliability was also higher than previously obtained by the scale's authors.

#### Demographic Information

The pilot study of this dissertation, utilizing a sample of school psychologists and teachers in the northeastern

United States, revealed that a self-label as a conservative and gender (men scoring in the more negative range) were significant variables accounting for the majority of the variance in the ATLMAC. In this study, similar significant demographics of importance were expected. Both studies found that a participant's self-label on a liberal to conservative scale was the most important demographic determinant of ATLMAC scores. A self-rating of conservative was strongly correlated with negative views toward lesbian mothers and their children, while a self-rating as liberal was strongly correlated with positive views. Although labeling oneself as a heterosexual was statistically significant, due to the small number of non-heterosexuals in the sample, this demographic does not have much practical significance. Gender did not prove to be a significant variable in the regression analysis in this study, although it was in the pilot. Age was significant in the current study with older people scoring more negatively than younger people. This has been seen in previous research on attitudes toward homosexuals. Separated and divorced people were found to have significantly more tolerant attitudes than single, married and widowed participants in this study. Seltzer (1992) found somewhat similar results although that particular study also found more positive attitudes toward

homosexuality in single people as well. Labeling oneself Protestant was found to be significantly related to higher ATLMAC scores (less tolerance). As will be seen in further discussion, religion and conservatism seemed to be closely related, although it was not expected that a particular religion would be a significantly correlated factor with the ATLMAC. It was anticipated that religious conviction would be a more significant factor than religion, but this was not the case. However, as religious conviction increased, ATLMAC scores also increased.

A final multiple regression of significant demographic information and the instruments utilized in this study revealed that almost 30% of the variance of ATLMAC scores could be accounted for by the significant demographic variables (separated/divorce, heterosexual, Protestant, liberal, somewhat liberal, conservative, age). It is interesting to note that the two extreme views (liberal and conservative) accounted for half of this variance.<sup>3</sup> Conservatism appears to be an extremely salient feature correlated with attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children.

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<sup>3</sup>When a stepwise multiple regression was performed, individually entering the seven significant variables to predict ATLMAC scores (not as a block), the liberal and conservative view accounted for 15% of the variance in the ATLMAC.

Although surveys were mailed randomly and more than half the participants returned them, demographic range limits generalizability of results. The sample was overwhelmingly White and heterosexual. Seventy-five percent were married and had children. A majority were from the northeastern part of the country, although this is also true for the NASP membership in general. One-fifth were Jewish, much higher than the national average of the overall population. The sample was split evenly between men and women and the participants worked in a variety of settings. Most participants both lived and worked in suburban areas.

The overall sample also rated themselves as fairly liberal, with 59% labeling themselves liberal or somewhat liberal, compared to the 14% who believed they were conservative or somewhat conservative. Only 3% of the participants believed they were conservative. The lack of conservative response may be a self-selection: conservatives may have been offended by the survey and not returned it. It is also possible that Nationally Certified School Psychologists, as a group, are fairly liberal.

## Review of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was based on contact theory and predicted that respondents who have frequent, equal status contact of more than a superficial nature with lesbians will be more accepting of lesbian mothers and their children than people with infrequent, superficial contact. The hypothesis was supported. It was found that respondents who had friendships and frequent contact with lesbians in a non-professional capacity (i.e., equal status) were significantly more accepting of lesbian mothers and their children than people with infrequent, superficial contact with lesbians. This was measured by correlating scores on the *Social Contact Questionnaire* with ATLMAC scores, with more contact significantly, but modestly, correlated with lower ATLMAC scores (more acceptance).

Despite significant results, there were several limitations to this scale. The scale was additive, with higher scores on the SCQ indicating more contact. However, the questionnaire did not discuss degree of contact, at issue is whether the questions should have been weighted equally. For example, it is probable that responding "yes" to the statement "I have a close friend who is a lesbian" would be more important than answering "yes" to a question about knowing a lesbian more than casually. Also, the words "casual" and "friend" were not operationally defined, and

may have meant different things to different people. In addition, not all contacts and friendships are equal status, a relationship necessary in contact theory in relation to reducing prejudice. Attempts were made to eliminate non-equal contact on the questionnaire by disallowing contact with clients or mothers of students but this was probably only partially successful.

It was also anticipated that relatives of lesbians could be analyzed in relation to their ATLMAC scores. However, the three questions pertaining to relatives seemed to bear little resemblance to each other and could not be looked at together. Apparently, parents of lesbians, siblings of lesbians and relatives of lesbians all view lesbianism very differently. It was expected that parents of lesbians would have a more negative view toward lesbian mothers and their children than the rest of the participants, due to their unequal status with lesbians, and there was a trend toward this. However, there were only four parents in the sample, so generalizability is very limited. There was also a very small sample of siblings ( $n = 3$ ). Siblings are generally an equal status-group, although it is possible that older siblings or family-favorites could construe themselves as non-equal status. Never - the - less, this group did have a trend toward more acceptance as based on their ATLMAC scores

in comparison to the rest of the sample. The "close relative sample" though a bit larger ( $n = 26$ ) was not analyzed separately. After the data was obtained, the diversity of this group would make the results hard to interpret. This group could include relatives of equal status, unequal status, close by blood only and rarely seen, or close in their interpersonal relationships with the survey respondent. An additional problem with the relative group is that the vast majority of them also knew lesbians in other capacities. In fact, all parents and siblings stated that they had friends or more than casual lesbian acquaintances. Therefore, results became confounded. Beliefs correlated with having a lesbian relative probably had interaction effects with beliefs correlated to knowing a lesbian in another capacity.

Although not a part of the hypothesis, some information gathered about contact is of interest. A very large portion of this national sample of school psychologists knew lesbians, had lesbian friends and/or had more than casual acquaintances with lesbians. In fact, only 24.2% of the participants had no knowledge of knowing a lesbian in more than a superficial or professional manner.

The hypothesis that contact is correlated with reduced prejudice in regards to lesbian mothers and their children

has been supported in this study. It suggests that school children should be aware of teachers, neighbors and other adults who are lesbians. Childrens's less negative attitudes about lesbians will be facilitated through openness and opportunities for contact. Although not tested in this dissertation, beliefs about gay men are probably related to contact with them as well.

### Hypothesis 2

The second set of hypotheses, based on conservatism theory, were supported. Total score on the *Short-Form Conservatism Scale* was correlated with total score on the ATLMAC. High scorers on the SFCS also scored higher on the ATLMAC. In addition, participants who rated themselves as more conservative in their demographic information also scored higher on the ATLMAC and on the SFCS. The strong correlation between the SFCS and demographic view indicates good content validity of the instrument. Although self-reported view was a significant predictor of ATLMAC scores in and of itself, SFCS added to the prediction on the multiple regression equation and was found to be a useful instrument.

A review of the five factors in the SFCS yields some interesting findings. To summarize, the five factors were religion/church, military, music, sexual promiscuity and

sexual virtue. When a regression analysis was performed, it was found that the two factors pertaining to sexual conservatism were not variables in the equation and did not significantly relate to ATLMAC scores. Apparently, participant's negative beliefs about lesbian mothers and their children have little to do with their feelings about sex, at least those measured in the SFCS. This is somewhat surprising, as homophobic spokespeople in the media invariably discuss what they coin immoral sexuality as the main reason to outlaw homosexuals' rights. Perhaps the word "immoral" holds more import to homophobic people than the sexuality aspect. Morality generally connotes some type of religious belief, and it was found that conservative religious conviction was a significant predictor of increased prejudice toward lesbian mothers and their children. Interestingly, a conservative view about music, specifically punk rock and heavy metal, was also a highly significant factor. These two types of music are also seen as immoral, at times Satanic, by extreme conservative groups. Conservative military beliefs were also a significant predictor of ATLMAC scores, but not to as great a degree.

Although the SFCS was a useful instrument in this study, there are problems about how to effectively utilize the

results. Conservatism can be difficult to change (Wilson, 1973) and it is ethically questionable whether anyone even has a right to try and modify ingrained belief systems. Perhaps the best method of modifying prejudice is straightforward education concerned with dispelling myths about homosexuality, with the understanding that conservatives may have a harder time accepting the information. Part of the theory of conservatism discussed in the literature review notes that conservatives find it difficult to change and prefer conventional behavior and clear rules and order. Relinquishing control is difficult for conservatives, as this stance is used to help them simplify the world and make it seem safer (Wilson, 1973). Consequently, any inroads toward educating people about alternative lifestyles will have to be approached so as not to alienate those who have conservative viewpoints. In this way, it may be possible to modify specific viewpoints toward homosexuality without disrupting the conservative person's entire way of thinking. Clearly, conservatives are not equally conservative about everything, as was seen in the lack of relationship between their views about sex and their views about lesbian mothers and their children.

### Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis concerned attribution theory. It was predicted and supported that people who believe lesbianism is innate and unchangeable will show more tolerance toward lesbian mothers and their children than people who believe lesbianism is a choice.

As in conservatism, a major limitation with this finding is its practical significance. There is virtually no scientific research pertaining to causes of lesbianism, and very little about male homosexuality. Consequently, opinions about causes and changeableness about lesbians will have to remain just that- opinions. A more important question, however, is why does this matter. As attribution theory notes, it seems to stem from issues of control, a similar concern with conservatives. According to attribution theorists, if something is beyond a person's control, no matter how much they want to repress it, other's will be more sympathetic to them than if it is a controllable event. This can be illustrated anecdotally, in the case of AIDS transmission. Many people feel sympathetic toward the "innocent victims" of blood transfusions but show contempt toward gay men and intravenous drug users who are HIV infected or have AIDS. This seems to be a classic case of attribution theory in real life. As with conservatives, the best approach to remediating homophobia among people who

believe that homosexuality is a choice seems to be specific education about gay and lesbian people, with an understanding that those who feel homosexuals can change may be initially more intolerant of information that is pro-gay or neutral toward gay men and lesbians. Teaching information about attribution theory may help as well, as people might be able to see the inconsistent reasoning behind their prejudices.

#### Hypothesis 4

This hypothesis examined sex-roles, specifically expressiveness and found that people who scored high on expressiveness measures, regardless of gender, showed more tolerance toward lesbian mothers and their children. Gender differences seen in responses were explained by expressiveness as well. High expressive people scored lower on the ATLMAC, indicating more acceptance toward lesbian mothers and their children. Although men scored significantly higher on the ATLMAC than women, there was no difference when gender was looked at in relation to expressiveness.

Expressiveness, an aspect of sex roles, is a measure of a person's emotional awareness of others' feelings and an emphasis on an interactive orientation. This factor appears to significantly contribute to acceptance of lesbian mothers

and their children. However, although significant when looked at in relation to the ATLMAC, this factor was the least important of the factors examined. When a multiple regression analysis was carried out, examining all factors together, expressiveness was no longer a significant predictor of ATLMAC scores. This is unfortunate, for emotional awareness of other's feelings is easier to instill in people than some of the other factors analyzed in this study. It is highly probable that there are more aspects of men and women that contribute to attitude than expressiveness but they were not measured in this study.

#### Summary

In sum, the following factors were correlated with more positive views toward lesbian mothers and their children: 1) contact with lesbians, 2) liberal views, 3) belief in the innate, unchangeable nature of lesbianism and 4) expressiveness.

Although the four hypotheses seem unrelated, it appears that there is a connecting theme in relation to attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. Issues of control appear to be related to attitudes in all four hypotheses. Attribution of the cause of lesbianism is involved in control. If lesbianism is beyond a woman's choice, it seems less threatening and more acceptable to people than if she

can control her sexual orientation. Conservatism has already been linked to issues of control. Conservatives have been said to dislike change and seek order and control to reduce anxiety (Wilson, 1973). Expressiveness can also be said to be loosely related to control. When people are in tune with others' feelings and are emotionally flexible, they may be giving up some internal control and rigidity, to meet the needs of the people with whom they are interacting. In addition, an expressive man seems to be defying traditional sex-roles and may not have the need to maintain conventional distinctions between the sexes. The maintenance of traditional sex-roles can be seen as a form of control over others and a form of self-control. Contact seems less related to control, but it may be that persons who know lesbians well feel more comfortable with them and may feel more internally secure with themselves. Parents may feel that they are too involved with their lesbian daughter and have had too much power and authority over them in the past ( i.e., control). This may contribute to more negative attitudes.

This study has just begun to look at these issues, and much more research needs to be done to determine any correlation between control and prejudice toward lesbian mothers and their children.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Besides correlating control issues with ATLMAC scores, there are many other areas of possible future research. These research aspects will be discussed in this section.

The ATLMAC has been shown to be a reliable and valid instrument. It has been used with a limited number of teachers and a national sample of school psychologists. The ATLMAC is a new instrument that seems to be a reasonable measure of attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. It could be used with other groups of teachers or helping and health professionals to assess their opinions about lesbian mothers and their children. It could also be effectively used in future research as a pretest-posttest instrument. (The ATLMAC has already been shown to have good pretest-posttest reliability in the pilot study.) The instrument could be used to assess change in attitudes after administration of educational programs geared to reduce bias about lesbian mothers and their children. Of course, as with all pencil-and-paper tests, participants may answer in a way they believe will please the examiner rather than how they truly think. Coded but anonymous ATLMAC responses could be used in future research to diminish this problem. In addition, though not useful for scientific research, participants in training programs could use their own pre

and posttest scores as a private assessment of their attitude change. It should be noted that the ATLMAC measures attitude, not behavioral change. Attitude change is not necessarily indicative of how people act. In future research, behavioral measures would be needed to determine behavioral change.

The ATLMAC can be further researched itself. Currently, attitudes about lesbian mothers and children of lesbians are examined in a unidimensional manner. It may be of interest to separate the two. As seen in hypothesis three, attribute theory played a significant role in relationship to attitudes. If participants believed that lesbianism was a choice, they tended to have more negative attitudes. Children of lesbians do not choose their parents. Consequently, it is possible that participants in future research may rate the children differently than the mothers. This was not examined in the current study.

More information needs to be obtained about relatives' feelings about lesbian mothers and their children. Both the pilot study and the current study found that at least some relatives of lesbians exhibit more negative views than comparable non-relatives. Future research should explore the relationships more closely, perhaps with interviews, to determine some of the correlations between homophobic

attitudes and having a relative who is a lesbian. If the correlations can be determined, developing specific therapies or educational programs to facilitate change in prejudicial ideas may be possible.

Future research of a non-survey nature is also recommended. There is currently no empirical research directly measuring school performance of children of lesbians or how teacher attitudes toward lesbians and their families affect children. Teacher expectation and subtle differential behavioral changes in teachers have been correlated with reduced student actions, affect and functioning. Teachers' expectations have also been correlated with reduced ratings of students' work (Dusek, 1985). In-vivo studies could examine these differences. Likely subjects could include teachers, counselors or school psychologists. The participants could be told that randomly-picked students are from particular types of families, including those with lesbian mothers. The participants could then be observed or asked to rate a student's behavior or work to discern if the professionals have different assumptions or assessments about them, or differential behavior toward them, in comparison to a matched control group. A student's actual school work, attitudes and beliefs about the teacher or school professional could be measured,

to determine if the adult's views had any discernable difference on the child's functioning.

If this is not practical or if parental permission cannot be granted, written vignettes could be given to the professionals, that they rate in terms of perceived child's mental health. Simulated student work could be graded by teachers, such as the experiments done with essays and unusual student names (Harari & McDavid, 1973).

Psychologists could interpret simulated projective responses, drawings or other test protocols. Counselors and school psychologists could be asked to assess counseling transcripts of children they believe to have lesbian mothers, in comparison to control groups.

If a high level of negative expectations and/or misconceptions exist in teachers and school psychologists in relation to children of lesbians, the ramifications could be great. Currently, only one preliminary descriptive, non-empirical study, based on interviews and anecdotes, exists on teacher attitudes toward lesbian mothers (Casper, Schultz & Wickens, 1992). With new information, specific interventions and workshops can be developed to educate teachers and psychologists.

Research on children of lesbians needs to become more narrowly focused and refined. Currently, the majority of

investigations compare children of divorced lesbians with children of divorced heterosexual women. Studies on children's emotional well-being, self-esteem, school functioning and social adjustment should be narrowed to separate out children whose mothers chose to have them as self-identified lesbians from the lesbians who had children in a heterosexual marriage. Studies should also separate out children living with a single lesbian mother as opposed to two women. The existing research suggests that children in two parent homes are somewhat emotionally healthier than those from single parent homes, regardless of their mother's sexual orientation (Huggins, 1989), but more research is needed. Controlled, focused research will help clinicians identify high risk children and will thereby facilitate better clinical practice (if indeed there is a subgroup of children of lesbians who are high risk). As Patterson concludes in her review, differences between groups may be found to be related to quality of family interaction and relationships. Sexual orientation of the mother may be an insignificant variable. If this is so, research is needed on process in the families as well as structure (Patterson, 1992).

#### Implications for School Psychologists

This study shows differential attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children in relation to various demographic information and personal traits. Some factors are unlikely to change (i.e., religion) while some can be modified (contact with lesbians, expressiveness). However, rather than work with each aspect individually, general interventions and preventions can be implemented in the schools to decrease prejudice toward lesbian mothers and their children. This general approach may be the best way to handle prejudice, as it does not stigmatize one group of people (e.g., conservatives). As mentioned previously, trainers of prejudice reduction workshops should be sensitive to those who may find it difficult to deal with the topic of lesbian mothers and their children.

School psychologists often lead training sessions in schools and seem the likely candidates to run educational workshops reviewing the misconceptions and realities of lesbian mothers and their children. However, as was seen in this study and other research, some school psychologists may be uncomfortable around lesbians and have more negative attitudes toward them because of ignorance, inexperience, specific religious training or personal value systems (Baptiste, 1987a; Rice & Kelly, 1988). If there is any discomfort at the thought of working with lesbians or their

children, effective intervention could be difficult to attain.

If clinicians have ingrained biases against homosexuals and supervision is not possible or desired, they should have the insight to know self-limitations, and refer the family or child elsewhere for guidance. This is true no matter what aspect of the job is being done - assessment, consultation, counseling or any other facet of a school psychologist's responsibilities. On the other hand, if a school psychologist is comfortable working with or providing information about lesbian mothers and their children, he or she can be an invaluable resource in the school.

#### Conclusion

Research on lesbian families and their children and on attitudes toward these families is in its infancy. The field has relevance to school psychologists, teachers and clinicians, and also to lesbians who are contemplating parenthood or who are already mothers. The current research has shown that there are differential and sometimes negative attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children among a random sample of school psychologists. Attitudes were found to vary depending on demographic factors, contact with lesbians, views about the roots of lesbianism, degree of conservatism and degree of expressiveness. It is hoped that

future research will examine attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children further and that the families will be studied as well. As we learn more about this minority group, it is anticipated that lesbian mothers might become more accepted and accommodated for in the future.

Appendix A  
Empirical Studies

Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Bell, A., & Weinberg, M. (1978)	1456	979 lesbians and gay men	477 adult heterosexuals	Author developed Interview	Demographic information, life-style, personal characteristics, parenting characteristics	Sexual orientation, gender	This study reports extensive comparative information about the similarities and differences of black and white lesbians, gay men and heterosexual men, and women in areas such as marriage, child rearing, age of coming out, friendships, and parenting styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Was an Introductory exploratory study</li> <li>•Instrument was not previously validated</li> <li>•Population limited to the San Francisco area</li> </ul>
Golombok, S., Spencer, A., & Rutter, M. (1983)	75 children; 7 mothers	Children and their lesbian mothers	Children and their heterosexual mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adaptation of Brown &amp; Rutter's standardized Interview</li> <li>•Author-developed sex role scales</li> <li>•Rutter's Malaise Inventory</li> <li>•Parent and teacher questionnaire</li> </ul>	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Psychosexual features</li> <li>•Child rearing practices</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Psychosexual development</li> <li>•Emotional difficulties</li> <li>•Behavioral difficulties</li> <li>•Quality of relationships</li> </ul>	Mother's sexual orientation, child's gender	No lesbian mothers preferred their children to have a homosexual orientation as an adult. Most had no preference whereas heterosexuals preferred their children to grow up to be heterosexual. No other significant differences between parent groups. No significant differences between children in psychosexual development, conduct, emotional difficulties, sociability, or hyperactivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reliability and validity were not reported for measures used</li> <li>•No controls for living arrangements (all heterosexuals lived with no other adults, lesbians lived in a variety of situations)</li> <li>•3 children of lesbians had no known father but were included in the sample</li> </ul>

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Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Gottman, J. (1990)	70	Adult daughters of divorced lesbians who had been raised with a lesbian coparent	Adult daughters of divorced heterosexual mothers, half raised with a stepfather or father-figure and half raised without	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Personal Attributes Questionnaire</li> <li>•Masculinity-Femininity Scale</li> <li>•Sexual Orientation Method</li> <li>•California Psychological Inventory</li> </ul>	Gender identity, gender role, sexual orientation, social adjustment and general well-being	Mother's sexual orientation, presence of a man in the household	No significant differences between groups in gender identity, sexual orientation, and social adjustment. Differences in gender role correlated with having an older brother. Well-being of children of lesbians and "remated" heterosexuals was higher than children of single heterosexuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reliability and validity of little known scales were not provided</li> <li>•Statistical analysis was minimally explained</li> </ul>
Green, R., Mandel, J., Hotvedt, M., Gray, J., & Smith, L. (1986)	104 children; 90 women	Boys and girls, ages 3-11, and their lesbian mothers, living with no adult males	Boys and girls, ages 3-11, and their heterosexual mothers, living with no adult males	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Bem Sex Role Inventory</li> <li>•Adjective Checklist</li> <li>•Jackson PRF-E</li> <li>•Questionnaire</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•WPPSI or WISC-R</li> <li>•H-Scale for Children</li> <li>•Interview</li> </ul>	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Psychosexual development</li> <li>•Current life style</li> <li>•Psychological adjustment</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sexual Identity</li> <li>•Gender role preference</li> <li>•Family &amp; peer group relations</li> <li>•IQ</li> </ul>	Mother's sexual orientation, child's gender	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers exhibited more similarities than differences in parenting experience, marital history, and present living situation. Psychosexual development was significantly different.</li> <li>Lesbians scored higher on self-confidence, seeking leadership roles, and eliciting attention from others. Heterosexuals scored higher on abasement and deference. No significant differences between children on IQ, sexual identity, gender role preferences, family and peer group relations, and adjustment to the single-parent families. Some differences in traditional sex-typed standards in girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No controls for lesbians in a live-in romantic relationship</li> <li>•No controls for separated/divorced vs. never married women</li> <li>•No controls for other adult females living in the home</li> <li>•Some statistical information missing</li> </ul>

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Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Harris, M., & Turner, P. (1986)	39	13 lesbian mothers & 10 gay male fathers	16 heterosexual single parents	Author-designed questionnaire	Parenting problems, sex roles, reported interactions with child, family, and personal demographics	Parent's sexual orientation	Few differences found between gay, lesbian, and heterosexual parents. More heterosexuals lived alone. More heterosexuals made an effort to provide an opposite-sex role model for their children. No differences seen in parenting concerns and relationship with child in terms of communication, cooperation, and discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire had not been previously tested for reliability &amp; validity</li> <li>• Sample was highly educated and overwhelmingly white and not representative of the general population</li> <li>• Self-selected sample</li> <li>• No matching of subjects and comparison group</li> <li>• Research involves self-rating, subject to bias</li> </ul>
Hoefler, B. (1981)	40 mothers; 40 children	Lesbians and their only or oldest child, age 6-9, with no male adult living with them	Heterosexual single mothers and their only or oldest child, age 6-9, with no male adult living with them	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toy Preference Test</li> <li>• Fling &amp; Manoshevit Parental Interview</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block's Toy Preference Test</li> </ul>	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement of sex role behavior</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex role behavior</li> </ul>	Mother's sexual orientation, child's gender	Heterosexual mothers preferred same-sex toys for their children more than lesbian mothers, though both groups' preferences were in the same direction (higher for same-gender toys and lower for opposite-gender toys). Boys in both groups preferred masculine toys. Girls in both groups preferred feminine toys. Boys were more sex-typed than girls regardless of mother's sexual orientation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No controls for lesbians living with another woman</li> <li>• No controls for divorced/separated vs. widowed vs. never married</li> <li>• Limited generalizability as sample was White and from the San Francisco area</li> </ul>

appendix continues

Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Hotvedt, M., & Mandel, J. (1982)	83 children; 70 mothers	50 lesbian mothers and their 58 children, ages 3-11, with no adult male in the home	20 single heterosexual mothers and their 25 children, ages 3-11, with no adult male in the home	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author designed questionnaire</li> <li>• Bem Sex Role Inventory</li> <li>• Jackson PRF</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPPSI, WISC-R</li> <li>• Green's sex-role behavior tests (not specifically named)</li> <li>• Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test</li> </ul>	<p>MOTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of single parenting &amp; role orientation</li> </ul> <p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial adjustment</li> <li>• Gender Identity/sex role orientation</li> </ul>	Sexual orientation of mother, child's gender	No significant difference between 2 groups of boys for all tests and measurements. Daughters of lesbians scored as less traditionally feminine, but not masculine, on a few items. Daughters of heterosexual mothers had a stronger preference for traditionally feminine play than did daughters of lesbians. No other significant differences in girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some measures not explained</li> <li>• Small control group; control group had a large number of drop outs or nonresponders</li> <li>• No control for lesbians with live-in lovers</li> <li>• Some subjects not matched to controls</li> </ul>
Huggins, S. (1989)	36	Adolescent children of divorced lesbians; 9 boys and 9 girls	Adolescent children of divorced heterosexual women; 9 boys and 9 girls	Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory	Self-esteem	Mother's sexual orientation, mother's current living situation (e.g., remarried or repartnered)	No significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual groups in self-esteem measure. Results indicate higher self-esteem scores for children if their mother lived with a lover or was remarried than if their mother was single regardless of mother's sexual orientation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small sample</li> <li>• All subjects were White and from Southern California, limiting generalizability</li> </ul>

appendix continues

Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Kirkpatrick, M., Smith, C., & Roy, R. (1981)	40	10 boys, 10 girls, ages 5-12, living with lesbian mothers	10 boys, 10 girls, ages 5-12, living with heterosexual single mothers	MOTHERS •Developmental history of child  CHILDREN •WISC •Holtzman Ink-blot technique •HFD •Semistructured interview	Gender development and psychological functioning	Sexual orientation of mother	No significant difference between groups in gender development and emotional health.	•Statistics not described in journal article •Used projective techniques which are difficult to quantify
Miller, J., Jacobson, R., & Bigler, J. (1981)	81	34 lesbian mothers and their children age 6-18	47 heterosexual mothers and their children age 6-18	Author-designed questionnaire and presentation/response to slide show	Home environment of child, caregiving role of mother	Mother's sexual orientation	Children in lesbian households were of a lower SES. A strong child development orientation was found among lesbians.	•Insufficient validity and reliability studies •Population was not matched for partnered/not partnered women
Patterson, C. (1994)	37	37 families with 4-9 year olds born to or adopted by lesbian mothers who came out before they had their children	Normative sample	•Achenbach & Edelbrock Child Behavior Checklist •Eder Children's Self-View Questionnaire •Interview	Child's social competence, degree of behavior problems, self concept, sex role preference	Mother's sexual orientation	When compared to Achenbach and Edelbrock's sample, children of lesbians scored in the normal range for all measures. When compared to Eder's normative sample, children of lesbians felt more stress and a greater sense of well-being.	•No control group: normative sample from standardized tests used, therefore Anova could not be calculated (normative raw data unavailable) •Limited generalizability: highly educated population, predominantly White

appendix continues

Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Puryear, D/ (1983)	30	Lesbian divorced mothers and their 7 to 12-year-old children, living with no father in the home	Heterosexual divorced mothers and their 7- to 12-year-old children living with no father in the home	MOTHERS • Author designed Family Questionnaire CHILDREN • Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale • Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children • Kinetic Family Drawing	Child's self concept, internal-external locus of control, self- and family view	Mother's sexual orientation, child's gender	No difference between groups in self concept, locus of control orientation or self- and family views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited generalizability as sample consisted only of divorced women</li> <li>• No controls for adult females living in the home as roommates/family members</li> <li>• No controls for lesbians in a live-in romantic relationship</li> <li>• Sample highly educated and not representative of general population</li> </ul>
Rand, C., Graham, D., & Rawlings, E. (1982)	25	Lesbian mothers	A standardized sample of presumably heterosexual mothers	California Psychological Inventory (select subtests), Affectometer	Psychological adjustment	Mother's sexual orientation	No significant difference between lesbian mothers and larger standardized sample. There was a positive correlation among lesbians between psychological health and overt expression of lesbianism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used previously standardized control group</li> <li>• Sample not representative of general population</li> </ul>

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Author	N	Subjects	Comparison Group	Measure Used	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Results	Methodological Weakness/Limitations
Rudolph, J. (1989)	52	21 mental health trainees and practitioners who had attended a workshop on gay male and lesbian counseling	Control group of 31 mental health workers and trainees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Index of Attitudes Towards Homosexuals</li> <li>• Homosexual Attitude Scale</li> <li>• Counseling Effectiveness Measure (CEM)</li> </ul>	Attitude toward homosexuals	Attendance at a training workshop	A multimodal treatment consisting of information about homosexual and gay male/lesbian counseling, when of sufficient length and comprehensive content, can result in significant positive modification of attitudes toward homosexuals and probable greater therapeutic effectiveness in working with gay male and lesbian clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training was not explained fully</li> <li>• Results didn't separate attitudes toward lesbians vs. gay men</li> </ul>
Thompson, N., McCandless, B., & Strickland, B. (1971)	428	127 gay men; 84 lesbians	123 heterosexual men, 94 heterosexual women	Adjective Checklist, Personal Adjustment Measure	Defensiveness, personal adjustment, self-confidence, self concept	Sexual orientation, gender	<p>No significant differences between groups in personal adjustment or self-evaluation. Gay men were less defensive and less self-confident than heterosexual men. Lesbians were more self-confident than heterosexual women. Homosexuals were more self-concerned than heterosexuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited statistical analysis</li> <li>• Limited generalizability; subjects were White, well-educated, and in their 20s</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

### Clinical Studies

Author	N	Subjects	Issue Addressed In Study	Results
Casper, V., Schultz, S., & Wickens, E. (1992)	34	12 lesbian mothers and 5 gay male fathers, 9 teachers and 8 administrators who work with their children	School staff's attitudes toward gay parents, parents' reactions to school staff	This exploratory study discussed school staff and individual parents' feelings about coming out and role models. Most staff members were concerned about appropriate male and female role models for the children, especially assuming that lesbian mothers would not expose their children to men.
Green, R. (1978)	37	21 children of lesbians, 7 children of male to female transsexuals, 9 children of female to male transsexuals	Children's sexual orientation, gender-identity	36 children reported or recalled childhood toy, game clothing, and peer group preferences typical for their sex, the older children reported heterosexual orientation.
Kirkpatrick, M. (1987)	8	Lesbian mothers, their partners, and their children. Analogous heterosexual families	Concerns of lesbian mothers	Therapy with lesbian mothers was seen as similar to therapy with heterosexual divorced mothers in most respects. Differences were seen in custody fears and fear of social discrimination. Lesbians were concerned with coming-out issues. Children of lesbians benefitted from peer support groups.
Lewin, E., & Lyons, T. (1982)	80	43 single lesbian mothers and 37 single heterosexual mothers	Adaptation to single motherhood	Lesbians and heterosexuals adapted similarly to single parenthood. Sallence of motherhood was similar. Both had personal networks of friends and family. Both groups had concerns about how intimate relationships with another adult would affect the children. Both groups wanted to have child continue relationship with father. Lesbians were concerned over custody.
Lewis, K. (1980)	21	21 children, ages 9 to 26 from eight families whose mothers are lesbian	Children's perception of parents' divorce and mothers' disclosure of lesbianism	Children tended to intellectually accept their mother's lesbianism and to emotionally be defensive about it. All children agreed that parental breakup was more traumatic than their mother's disclosure of her sexual orientation.
Pagelow, M. (1980)	43	20 lesbian mothers, 23 heterosexual single mothers with children 6 months to 18 years	Comparison of problems, coping and solutions of heterosexual and lesbian single mothers	Lesbians and heterosexual women were similar in relation to housing, income, and employment. Differences were seen in their concern over perceived oppression and child custody.
Pennington, S. (1987)	32	32 children from 28 lesbian mother families treated by the author	Discussion of issues and problems of children of lesbians including disclosure, relationship issues, custody, societal attitudes, and implications for therapist	The children's problems and family psychopathology was not necessarily correlated to the mother's sexual orientation. Quality of parenting/quality of relationships in the household coupled with societal homophobia were found to be the primary problems.

appendix continues

Author	N	Subjects	Issue Addressed In Study	Results
Turner, P., Scadden, L., & Harris, M. (1990)	21	10 gay male fathers, 11 lesbian mothers	Parenting in gay and male lesbian families	Lesbian mothers had a lower income than gay male fathers, had more multiple marriages, were less likely to live with a lover, were more likely to tell their children about their sexuality, and were more likely to have difficulty reconciling their homosexual and parenting roles. The authors note child rearing issues of lesbian and gay male parents appear to be similar to those of heterosexuals.
Wyers, N. (1990)	66	Lesbian and gay male parents who are separated or divorced	Personal characteristics, marital history, parenting issues, dealing with being homosexual	Men and women divorced and separated for different reasons; most women for incompatibility and most men because of self-knowledge of being homosexual. Women were usually unaware that they were homosexual at the time of marriage; most men knew. Men had a harder time coming out to children. Both groups experienced severe stress upon divorcing.

## Appendix C

## Teacher Cover Letter

Dear Colleague,

I am currently involved in research on teachers' attitudes towards lesbian mothers and their children and am asking for your participation and help. I would appreciate it if you could take ten minutes to fill out the attached form. The survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous but I do hope you choose to complete it.

Please put the completed form in xxxxxxxxxxxxxx's mailbox or, if you prefer, mail it to me at the following address:

Sincerely,

## Appendix D

## School Psychologist Cover Letter (for pilot)

Dear Colleague,

I am currently involved in research on teachers' and school psychologists' attitudes towards lesbian mothers and their children. A small sample of school psychologists has been randomly selected to complete the attached survey. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to fill out. It is entirely voluntary and anonymous but I do hope you choose to complete it.

Please mail back the form in the enclosed, pre-addressed envelope. If you are interested, results should be available in the winter of 1992.

Thank you for your contribution to this work.

Sincerely,

Appendix E  
ATLMAC Survey/Demographic Data (for Pilot)

This survey is designed to measure your attitude towards lesbian mothers and their children. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond as honestly as possible, with your first impression. Thank you very much for your contribution to this research.

-----  
Please circle the number below each of the following statements that best matches your beliefs or feelings. The scale is rated as follows:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree /Undecided  
4 = Agree  
5 = Strongly Agree

1. Children who have lesbian mothers are more likely to grow up to be gay than other children.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

2. Children with lesbian mothers are not more disturbed than children with heterosexual mothers. **R**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

3. Children of lesbian mothers have a low self image.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

4. A lesbian mother should not bring another lesbian into the house while her children are there.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

5. Heterosexual and homosexual single mothers' problems are more alike than different. **R**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

6. Children of lesbians are more likely to have academic problems than children of heterosexual mothers.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

7. Lesbians should not have children.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

8. A lesbian should not hide her sexual orientation from her child. **R**
- 1            2            3            4            5
9. Lesbians have some sort of psychological disorder.
- 1            2            3            4            5
10. Lesbians' maternal instincts are not as strong as those of heterosexual women.
- 1            2            3            4            5
11. A lesbian mother's live-in partner should have equal decision-making in regard to the child as a father would. **R**
- 1            2            3            4            5
12. Children of lesbians are more likely to play with opposite sex-type toys than are children of heterosexuals.
- 1            2            3            4            5
13. Children of lesbians are more likely to have behavior problems than children of heterosexual women.
- 1            2            3            4            5
14. Lesbian mothers and their children should be in therapy.
- 1            2            3            4            5
15. Lesbian mothers are more likely to molest their children than are heterosexual mothers.
- 1            2            3            4            5
16. Children with a lesbian mother will be so socially stigmatized by peers that it will severely affect them emotionally.
- 1            2            3            4            5
17. Children of lesbians feel less popular than other children.
- 1            2            3            4            5

note: **R** = reverse coded

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Age:                    20-29      30-39      40-49      50-59      60 and over

Gender:                    Male                    Female

Geographic Location  
of Employment:      Urban                    Suburban                    Rural

School of primary  
Employment                    Elementary                    Jr. High                    High School

Have you ever met a lesbian parent?    yes      no      don't know

Do you know any lesbians?                    yes      no      don't know

(If yes, check the relationship/s that best describes her/them to you. Check as many as apply.)

- . Immediate relative (sibling, child, etc.)      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Other relative (cousin, aunt, etc.)      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Friend      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Neighbor      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Coworker      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Service person (lawyer, store clerk, etc.)      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Self      \_\_\_\_\_
- . Other \_\_\_\_\_

Check the term that best describes your social views:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Liberal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat liberal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Moderate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat conservative
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conservative

Religion:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Protestant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (                    )
- \_\_\_\_\_ None
- \_\_\_\_\_ Choose not to answer

Race:

- \_\_\_\_\_ White
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black/African American
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- \_\_\_\_\_ Asian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (                    )
- \_\_\_\_\_ Choose not to answer

Profession

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_ School Psychologist

## Appendix F

School Psychologist Cover Letter (for current research)

Dear Colleague,

I am currently researching school psychologists' attitudes toward lesbians, lesbian mothers, their children and other related variables. A nationwide sample of school psychologists has been randomly selected to complete the attached surveys. The surveys should take about 20-30 minutes to fill out. It is entirely voluntary but I hope you choose to complete it.

The first 4 pages consist of statements about lesbians and lesbian mothers which you will rate, from strongly disagree to strongly agree (e.g., "Lesbian mothers and their children should be in therapy"). Page 5 asks about your social contact with lesbians, to be answered in a yes/no format. The next section presents 16 topics which you rate by your degree of agreement (e.g., chastity, flag burning). Page 7 lists adjectives which you are to rate as true or untrue about yourself (e.g., efficient, outgoing). The final section consists of biographical and demographic questions.

Please mail back the packet in the enclosed, pre-addressed envelope. Your responses will be completely anonymous. Thank you so much for your contribution to this work.

Sincerely,

## Appendix G

## ATLMAC Survey (for current research)

This survey is designed to measure your attitudes toward lesbian mothers and their children. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond as honestly as possible, with your first impression.

-----  
Please circle the number below each of the following statements that best matches your beliefs or feelings. The scale is rated as follows.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree/ Undecided  
4 = Agree  
5 = Strongly Agree

1. Children who have lesbian mothers are more likely to grow up to be gay than other children.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
2. Children with lesbian mothers are not more disturbed than children with heterosexual mothers. **R**  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
3. Children of lesbian mothers have a low self image.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
4. A lesbian mother should not bring another lesbian into the house while her children are there.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
5. Heterosexual and homosexual single mothers' problems are more alike than different. **R**  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
6. Children of lesbians are more likely to have academic problems than children of heterosexual mothers.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
7. Lesbians should not have children.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=undecided 4=agree 5=strongly agree

8. A lesbian should not hide her sexual orientation from her child. **R**

1 2 3 4 5

9. Lesbians have some sort of psychological disorder.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Lesbians' maternal instincts are not as strong as those of heterosexual women.

1 2 3 4 5

11. A lesbian mother's live-in partner should have equal decision-making in regard to the child as a father would. **R**

1 2 3 4 5

12. Children of lesbians are more likely to play with opposite sex-type toys than are children of heterosexuals.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Children of lesbians are more likely to have behavior problems than children of heterosexual women.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Lesbian mothers and their children should be in therapy.

1 2 3 4 5

15. Lesbian mothers are more likely to molest their children than are heterosexual mothers.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Children with a lesbian mother will be so socially stigmatized by peers that it will severely affect them emotionally.

1 2 3 4 5

17. Children of lesbians feel less popular than other children.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix H  
Attitudes Toward Lesbians Subscale (Herek)+  
the Attribution Survey

This section of the survey is designed to measure your attitudes toward lesbians and is answered in the same fashion as the first. Again, please respond as honestly as possible, with your first opinion.

-----  
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=undecided 4=agree  
5=strongly agree

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Lesbians just can't fit into our society.   |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation. <b>R</b>           |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural division between sexes. |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | State laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behavior should be loosened.                            |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Female homosexuality is a sin. <b>R</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in American morals.                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem. <b>R</b>     |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.                                |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=undecided 4=agree

5=strongly agree

9. Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
10. Lesbians are sick.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
11. Lesbianism is largely biologically determined. **R**
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
12. A lesbian can have a satisfying heterosexual relationship if she is motivated to change her lifestyle.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
13. Lesbianism is an inborn, natural sexual variation. **R**
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
14. A woman is more likely to become a lesbian if she is taught acceptance of lesbians as a child.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
15. Some women may think they are lesbians but they are not.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
16. It is nearly impossible for a lesbian to give up a lesbian lifestyle, even if she thinks it is "wrong". **R**
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|

Appendix I  
Social Contact

Please answer the following questions by circling either Yes or No. Be careful, the questions seem similar but are not.

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. I know at least one person, in more than a casual relationship who is a lesbian.  | Yes | No |
| 2. I have at least one friend who is a lesbian.  | Yes | No |
| 3. I have a close friend who is a lesbian.   | Yes | No |
| 4. I have a sister who is a lesbian.   | Yes | No |
| 5. I have a daughter who is a lesbian.   | Yes | No |
| 6. I have a close relative, other than my sister or daughter, who is a lesbian.  | Yes | No |
| 7. I have frequent contact with at least one lesbian in other than a professional capacity (i.e., client, mother of student).  | Yes | No |
| 8. I have frequent contact with more than one lesbian in other than a professional capacity (i.e., client, mother of student). | Yes | No |

## Appendix J

## Short-Form Conservatism Scale

This section of the survey is designed to measure your attitudes toward a variety of topics, presented as single words or short phrases. Please answer in the same fashion as the other surveys using a five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Again, please respond as honestly as possible, with your first impression.

**1 = strongly disagree/disapprove 2 = disagree/disapprove**  
**3 = undecided 4 = agree/approve 5 = strongly agree/approve**

1. Flag burning	1	2	3	4	5
2. Chastity	1	2	3	4	5
3. Legalized abortion	1	2	3	4	5
4. Premarital virginity	1	2	3	4	5
5. Casual sex	1	2	3	4	5
6. Church Authority	1	2	3	4	5
7. Punk Rockers	1	2	3	4	5
8. Patriotism	1	2	3	4	5
9. Heavy metal music	1	2	3	4	5
10. ROTC	1	2	3	4	5
11. Strip Shows	1	2	3	4	5
12. Evolutionary theory	1	2	3	4	5
13. Female clergy	1	2	3	4	5
14. Fundamental religion	1	2	3	4	5
15. Bible truth	1	2	3	4	5
16. Divorce	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix K  
Gill et al.'s Expressiveness/Instrumentality Scale

Please rate yourself on each of the following adjectives, using the following scale. Please answer as honestly as possible, with your first impression.

Scale

1. very true of me
2. somewhat true of me
3. somewhat untrue of me
4. very untrue of me

1. Independent	1	2	3	4	18. Obliging	1	2	3	4
2. Planful	1	2	3	4	19. Stern	1	2	3	4
3. Industrious	1	2	3	4	20. Adventurous	1	2	3	4
4. Warm	1	2	3	4	21. Forceful	1	2	3	4
5. Pleasant	1	2	3	4	22. Thorough	1	2	3	4
6. Assertive	1	2	3	4	23. Daring	1	2	3	4
7. Considerate	1	2	3	4					
8. Active	1	2	3	4					
9. Efficient	1	2	3	4					
10. Rational	1	2	3	4					
11. Foresighted	1	2	3	4					
12. Understanding	1	2	3	4					
13. Outgoing	1	2	3	4					
14. Sympathetic	1	2	3	4					
15. Good-natured	1	2	3	4					
16. Analytical	1	2	3	4					
17. Aggressive	1	2	3	4					



Appendix M  
Intercorrelations of Measures and Significant Demographic Variables

	ATLMAC	ATL	SCQ	SFCS	ATTRIBUTE	EXPRESS	AGE
ATLMAC	1.00	0.76	-0.32	0.59	0.26	-0.18	0.04
	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.52
ATL		1.00	-0.29	0.66	0.61	-0.21	0.01
		p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.89
SCQ			1.00	-0.25	-0.22	0.14	-0.05
			p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.03	p= 0.40
SFCS				1.00	0.41	-0.11	0.01
				p= 0.00	p= 0.00	p= 0.09	p= 0.89
ATTRIBUTE					1.00	-0.09	0.04
					p= 0.00	p= 0.14	p= 0.52
EXPRESS						1.00	-0.06
						p= 0.00	p= 0.33
AGE							1.00
							p= 0.00
GENDER							
MAR.STATUS							
CHILDREN							
ORIENTATION							
VIEW							
RELIGION							
REL.CONV.							

Key on page 173.

appendix continues

	GENDER	MAR.STATUS	CHILDREN	ORIENTATION	VIEW	RELIGION	REL.CONV.
ATLMAC	0.12 p= 0.05	-0.16 p= 0.01	0.09 p= 0.15	0.20 p= 0.00	0.40 p= 0.00	0.22 p= 0.00	0.25 p= 0.00
ATL	0.10 p= 0.12	-0.15 p= 0.01	0.07 p= 0.27	0.20 p= 0.00	0.55 p= 0.00	0.30 p= 0.00	0.40 p= 0.00
SCQ	-0.08 p= 0.21	0.01 p= 0.83	-0.13 p= 0.03	-0.25 p= 0.00	-0.29 p= 0.00	-0.14 p= 0.03	-0.09 p= 0.14
SFCS	0.04 p= 0.51	-0.12 p= 0.05	0.14 p= 0.02	0.25 p= 0.00	0.59 p= 0.00	0.32 p= 0.00	0.59 p= 0.00
ATTRIBUTE	0.12 p= 0.05	0.00 p= 0.96	0.07 p= 0.25	0.18 p= 0.00	0.26 p= 0.00	0.11 p= 0.07	0.06 p= 0.38
EXPRESS	-0.20 p= 0.00	0.11 p= 0.07	-0.04 p= 0.55	-0.05 p= 0.41	-0.18 p= 0.00	-0.05 p= 0.44	-0.06 p= 0.38
AGE	0.00 p= 0.97	0.00 p= 0.98	0.25 p= 0.00	0.05 p= 0.50	-0.08 p= 0.21	-0.02 p= 0.73	-0.05 p= 0.42
GENDER	1.00 p= 0.00	-0.10 p= 0.12	0.07 p= 0.24	-0.06 p= 0.36	0.10 p= 0.10	-0.16 p= 0.00	-0.12 p= 0.06
MAR.STATUS	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.40	-0.05 p= 0.40	-0.21 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.97	0.06 p= 0.33	-0.06 p= 0.33
CHILDREN	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	0.25 p= 0.00	0.03 p= 0.60	0.02 p= 0.70	0.05 p= 0.41
ORIENTATION	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	0.09 p= 0.16	0.13 p= 0.03	0.13 p= 0.04
VIEW	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	0.19 p= 0.00	0.28 p= 0.00
RELIGION	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	0.31 p= 0.00
REL.CONV.	1.00 p= 0.00	0.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00	1.00 p= 0.00

Key on page 173.

appendix continues

Key to Appendix M

ATLMAC = Attitudes Toward Lesbian Mothers and Their Children, higher Score = less tolerance

ATL = Attitudes Toward Lesbians, higher score = less tolerance

SCQ = Social Contact Questionnaire, higher score = more contact with lesbians

ATTRIBUTE = Attribution Scale, higher score = attributing lesbianism to be unchangeable

EXPRESS = Gill's Expressive Subscale, higher score = more expressiveness

AGE = participant's age

GENDER = 1 = male, 0 = female

MAR. STATUS = marital status, 1 = separated/divorced, 0 = all others

CHILDREN = if respondents have children, 1 = yes, 0 = no

ORIENTATION = sexual orientation, 1 = heterosexual, 0 = homosexual or bisexual

VIEW = singular self-rating of a liberal to conservative scale, higher score = more conservative

RELIGION = 1 = Protestant, 0 = all others

REL.CONV. = self-rated religious conviction, higher score = stronger conviction

## Appendix N

## Description of Continuous Variables

Variable	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>	<u>Valid N</u>
Age	45.97	7.80	41	32	73	263
View *	2.36	1.04	4	1	5	264
Religious Conviction **	2.66	.88	3	1	4	260
Social Contact Questionnaire	2.06	1.70	5	0	5	269
Attribution Survey	12.53	3.60	20	5	25	268
Expressiveness	22.94	4.02	21	7	28	264
Conservatism Scale	47.28	7.95	49	27	76	259
ATL	18.94	7.33	38	10	48	264
ATLMAC	35.97	9.28	51	16	67	260

\*self-rating on singular liberal (1) to conservative (5) scale

\*\*self-rating on a none (1) to strong (4) scale

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