Title
Protective Normalcy: Experience and Management of Stigma in LGBT Families with Children.

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2sp627w0

Author
Colonna, Rafael Joseph

Publication Date
2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Protective Normalcy: Experience and Management of Stigma
in LGBT Families with Children.

By

Rafael Joseph Colonna

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender and Sexuality

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:
Professor Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Chair
Professor Sandra Smith
Professor Melinda Y Chen

Fall 2015

Abstract

Protective Normalcy: Experience and Management of Stigma in LGBT Families with Children.

by

Rafael Joseph Colonna

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender and Sexuality

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Chair

This dissertation explores explores how LGBT families with children experience and manage stigma in a sociohistorical moment marked by tensions between growing legal recognition and cultural acceptance and the persisting realities of heterosexism and homophobia. Drawing on intensive interviews with LGBT identified parents from 51 families, I find that, despite parents' low reports of direct hostility and overt discrimination in their daily lives, subtle expressions of stigma continue to shape the creation and day-to-day practice of their family relations. These experiences can be broken down into two categories: (1) anticipated stigmas, or the fear that oneself or one's family will encounter violence, discrimination, or prejudice on the basis of their LGBT identities or queer family structure in the immediate or distant future; and (2) microaggressions, or subtle forms of insults, invalidations, and modes of discrimination that are consciously and unconsciously deployed in day-to-day interactions. Building on insights from the family practices and accounts scholarship in sociology, I found that parents manage these subtle forms of stigma through a range of family practices including: methods for having children, legal interventions taken in family building, how children refer to their parents, naming children, where they live, which schools their children attend, parent volunteerism in schools, and the degree to which a family is out in public spaces. I also found that parents' stigma management strategies varied according position in family cycle and age of children. Parents with young children engaged in stigma management for their families directly and prepared children for future discriminatory encounters. Parents with adolescent and young adult children engaged in practices that, rather than directly manage stigma, provide children with a broad range of stigma management strategies that they may deploy in their day-to-day lives. These experiences of stigma and stigma management are also heavily shaped by normative expectations of monoracial families, whiteness, middle class norms, and biogenetic ties. However, I find in many cases that parents' investment with normative cultural beliefs to be a pragmatic one that is marked with ambivalence. It is a stigma management strategy, a form of

"protective normalcy" whose practice is, at least in part, motivated by concerns of heterosexism and homophobia that their families may encounter, now and in the future. This work has important implications for developing a better understanding of the subtle stigma experiences of LGBT families and other marginalized populations, even as overt discrimination and regressive policies diminish. It also expands theoretical understandings of stigma by closely examining how individuals think about stigma in relation to time. In other words, it is not just that experiences change over time but also how present day actions are shaped by hopes, fears, and aspirations for the near and distant future.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

As I finish the final stages of writing this dissertation, often viewed as the accomplishment of an individual, I am reminded of all the people who have helped make the completion of this project possible. Although I am solely responsible for any shortcomings in this work, I want to express my gratitude and acknowledge those contributions.

None of this work would have been possible without the kindness, generosity, and openness of the families that volunteered to participate in this project. They welcomed me into their homes and shared intimate details about their families, their lives, the joys and conflicts of the past and present, and their hopes and fears for the future. I am humbled and forever grateful for their generosity and their trust. Thank you so much for honoring me with the gift of their stories. I hope this work does them justice.

I have also benefited from outstanding faculty mentorship at UC Berkeley. I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Sandra Smith, and Mel Chen, for their support, mentorship, and feedback throughout this project. I would also like to thank Kim Voss, Cybelle Fox, Cristina Mora, Kristin Luker, David Kirp, Charis Thompson, Juana Rodriguez, and Davitt Moroney for their interest, encouragement, and feedback at various points in the research and writing process.

I extend special thanks to my dissertation chair, Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, for her willingness to join my committee midway through the project. Despite her late entrance, Jenna left an indelible mark on this work and my development as a scholar through her careful attention and feedback on chapter drafts, valuable analytical insights, and encouragement to expand my theoretical thinking. She has been gracious with her time and care paid to my success and I am forever grateful.

Special thanks also goes to Barrie Thorne, who initially came on board as my dissertation chair and stepped down midway to begin her much deserved retirement. Barrie was one of the first faculty mentors I had at Cal, serving on both my Masters thesis and Qualifying Exams committees. Barrie taught me to pay attention to the social meanings, and emotions, embedded in small moments of everyday life and kinship. Whether it was in her classes, dinners she hosted for colleagues and students, or the research groups she helped bring together, Barrie cultivated an intellectually and emotionally nourishing community for scholars studying gender, families, and sexualities. Without these spaces, and Barrie's direct mentorship, this dissertation would not have been possible.

Several portions of this project were written with the support, and under the careful eyes, of several writing groups. I would like to thank my colleagues in the 2014-2015 Berkeley Connect Sociology cohort, Margo Mahan, Fidan Elcioglo, Kara Young, and Angela Fillingim, for their generous, thoughtful feedback on chapter drafts and warm camaraderie. Similar thanks goes to everyone in Mel Chen's Spring 2013 dissertation writing seminar: Wanda Alacaron, Alisa Sanchez, April Katherine, Ragini Srinivasan, Katrina Dodson, Hentyle Yapp, and Tala Khanmalek, and Ugo Edu. Special thanks also goes to the other students who made up Barrie's last cohort of PhD students for the valuable feedback received in our writing group. In particular, I thank Jessica Cobb, Freeden Oeur, Louise Ly, and John Kaiser. Early stages of this project benefited from feedback and encouragement from members of the Interdisciplinary Families Studies Working Group at Cal. IFSWG had dozens of members throughout its years, many of whom offered some measure of feedback or encouragement through the years for which I am

Ch 1: Introduction

> I feel as long as my kids are secure in who they are and who their family is and knowing that they are loved I am doing okay. But I think that is a challenge for any family, anywhere. So my kids are comfortable with who they are and who we are. It's very cute. I told them someone was coming over this morning and they said, "Well who?" And I said, "Oh, it is a sociology student and he is doing a study on gay families like ours." And Riley said, "Well why?" And I said, "Well he is studying to see—." And he said, "Well, does he expect our family to be different or something?" He was seriously puzzled. And I feel okay then. If my kid has no idea why you would want to study us. We are doing okay. ~Glenn Frye, lesbian mother of 11 year old twin sons

Glenn's comment is illustrative of the responses I received while interviewing LGBT[1] parents regarding issues their families' experiences as a result of their queer identities. Most participating parents insisted that they, and, most importantly, their children, generally do not experience their families as any different from heterosexual families around them. Although minor issues may arise in their day-to-day lives, they are infrequent and/or inconsequential in the grand scheme of things. Reflecting this theme, Larry Keyser, living in an idyllic suburb in the California Bay Area with his husband, 8 year old son, and 7 year old daughter, commented, "We forget we are gay. We are not self-conscious about our life. As parents, as partners, as husbands. We are really lucky."

The sense that their families are "lucky" was a persistent theme. Parents felt that increasing acceptance of LGBT people, and specifically for LGBT people raising children, has improved their quality of life. Their sense of increasing acceptance has been shaped by changing laws, increasingly positive portrayals of LGBT people in mainstream media, and changes in the attitudes of people they interact with day-to-day. Reflecting Larry's comments, these improving conditions have led some to describe the present as "post-gay," or a period in which sexual identity no longer has any bearing on the quality of one's life or the opportunities available to them. Similar, though highly debatable, comments have also been made following President Obama's election, claiming it is a signifier of a "post-racial" America.

"Lucky," however, not only connotes good fortune on its recipient, but good fortune in comparison to others or what is expected to happen to someone in a similar position. Just as families discussed their own good fortune and sense of growing LGBT acceptance in their lifetime, they also told harrowing stories of homophobia and discrimination experienced by other LGBT parents. Although these stories typically did not reflect their personal experiences, often recounted as anecdotes from acquaintances, friends of friends, lawyers, and news reports, these stories reminded parents of the fragility of their comparatively good fortune and uncertainty of its persistence.

Sometimes in the same breath that participants discussed their good fortune they mentioned potential problems lurking just beyond the horizon. For instance, just after Glenn described her son's blissful ignorance as to why a sociologist would be interested in their family, she adds, "We have been fortunate, I think. They're eleven, you know. Going forward, I don't know...I certainly hope they never have any issues because of their family structure but I can't

---

1 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. See chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of my usage of the terms "LGBT parent" and "LGBT families."

help but be aware, and wonder, and listen." Paradoxically, respondents reporting their luck and good fortune in terms of their family's acceptance, and how this has broadly improved for LGBT families over time, just as they also grimly accept that it is likely that there will come a time when this good fortune will falter.

In *Protective Normalcy*, I explore tensions between conflicting narratives of growing social and legal acceptance of LGBT families alongside the persisting realities of heterosexism and homophobia. I also consider the implications they have for the lives of the LGBT parent families, both in the present and in the future. To this end, I ask 3 broad questions. First, how do LGBT families with children experience stigma? Second, what kinds of stigma management strategies do they use? Third, how do their experiences and management of stigma vary at different points of family life cycle?

Drawing on intensive interviews with LGBT identified parents from 51 families, I argue that, despite parents' low reports of direct hostility and overt discrimination in their daily lives, a deeper exploration of their accounts reveal that microaggressions experienced by families, as well as the fear of being stigmatized by others in the near and distant future, heavily shapes the creation and day-to-day practices of LGBT families. These experiences of stigma and stigma management are also heavily shaped by normative expectations of monoracial families, whiteness, middle class norms, and biogenetic ties. However, I find in many cases that parents' investment with normative cultural beliefs to be a pragmatic one, marked with ambivalence. It is a stigma management strategy, a form of "protective normalcy" whose practice is, at least in part, motivated by concerns of heterosexism and homophobia their families may encounter, now and in the future.

This work has important implications for developing a better understanding of the subtle stigma experiences of LGBT families and other marginalized populations, even as overt discrimination and regressive policies diminish. It also pushes the boundaries of how stigma research has utilized the concept of anticipated stigma up to this point. Both in terms of populations discussed, strategies of stigma management utilized, and how anticipated stigma has been temporally framed.

The remainder of this chapter sets up this investigation. I describe how parents' narratives of increasing acceptance, yet persisting danger, fit into the current historical moment. Rather than thinking about these as conflicting narratives, I discuss how "post-gay" society in the United States embodies both a period of increasing rights and acceptance for (some) LGBT people amidst a backdrop of persisting stigma and potential violence. I then turn my attention to the sociological scholarship on stigma to illustrate both how the experiences of LGBT families fits into the framework of stigma as well as the shortcomings that classical conceptions of stigma have in explaining the the subtle and persisting effects of heterosexism and homophobia for LGBT people in "post-gay" society. I will make the case that LGBT families remain stigmatized and that this has subtle, but broad reaching, consequences for the creation and daily experiences of LGBT families. I will also discuss how the stigma management strategies of LGBT families, which draw primarily on normative cultural beliefs of what families "are" or "ought to be," limits the transformative potential of LGBT families and highlights the homonormativity of their practices. Finally, I discuss how an exploration into these experiences and behaviors provide a crucial lens into how structural and cultural constraints pragmatically shape the practices of LGBT families.

It Gets Better?

In many ways my respondents' perceptions that the quality of life and acceptance for LGBT people and families are improving is not surprising as it does reflect growing trends toward greater visibility and acceptance of LGBT people in the United States occurring in their lifetimes. Although public conversations have described these positive changes as a shift to a "post-gay society," sociological work more modestly (and realistically) describes as a transition to a "post-closet" culture. Post-closet culture refers to a cultural turn in U.S. society, beginning roughly in the 1990s and building into the present, where the centrality of life for LGB people was not about "the Closet," or hiding one's sexual identity (Seidman, 2002). In other words, a small amount of space was carved in mainstream culture for the inclusion and participation of out LGB individuals. This inclusion is also reflected in a growing social intolerance and public sanctions for overt and hostile expressions of homophobia (Dean, 2014; Seidman, 2002), reflecting both an increasingly positive public attitude toward homosexuals (Hicks and Lee, 2006) and growing inclusion of same-sex couples in conceptions of family (Powell et al, 2010). Furthermore, when individuals do hold negative opinions about LGB people, they feel pressure to keep those opinions to themselves or express them in private spaces with like-minded individuals (Dean, 2014).

There is also evidence that the growth of post-closet culture has created some of the conditions described for a "post-gay" society. In particular, that sexual identity is becoming increasingly less relevant in many spheres of everyday life (Seidman, 2002) with a growing number of young adults and youth eschewing sexual identity labels altogether (Savin-Williams, 2005). The growth of post-closet culture has also had implications for straight men and women, who have greater opportunities to enact gendered heterosexualities that challenge normative gender practices, straight privilege, and heterosexual/homosexual binaries (Dean, 2014).

However, as Steven Seidman (2002) notes, "Gay life today is defined by a contradiction: *many individuals can choose to live beyond the closet but they still must live and participate in a world where most institutions maintain heterosexual domination"* (p.6, emphasis author's). In other words, LGB(and to a much lesser extent, T) individuals may be visible in public and in contemporary culture under the condition that their presence does not challenge existing systems of power predicated on heterosexism or heterosexual/homosexual binaries. This is observed in the double-bind experienced by LGBT people: the persistence of stereotypes about LGBT people that reify a heterosexual/homosexual binary while also punishing individuals who conform to those stereotypes (Dean, 2014; Williams, Giuffre, and Dellinger, 2009; Yoshino, 2006). LGB individuals report experiencing post-closet culture as an ambiguous "middle zone" somewhere between hostile homophobia and acceptance from individuals and inclusion into mainstream society (Orne, 2013). The contradiction of growing acceptance and continuing heterosexism and homophobia, observed in media, politics, and other depictions of everyday life, also mirror and reinforce the contradictions reported by LGBT families I interviewed.

Visibility and positive depictions of LGBT people have increased dramatically through the lifetimes of my respondents; and at a seemingly accelerated pace in the past few years. The 1990s saw a shift in depictions of gays and lesbians in film and television from negative ones that drew on themes of pathos and disease to characters portrayed as "normal human beings" (Seidman, 2002; Walters, 2012). Normal both in the sense of these characters having similar feelings and aspirations as straight Americans, and also in that they are expected to exhibit "normative traits," such as conventional gender expressions and a commitment to normative

pursuits, such as home, career, and nation. In recent years, the frequency of LGBT characters in film and movies has also increased. The percentage of LGBT recurring characters in prime-time, scripted, broadcast television has increased from 1.4% to 3.9% from 2005 to 2014[2] (GLAAD, 2014). Gay and lesbian parents have also broken into prime time with prominent gay parent characters starring in highly popular and award winning television shows, such as *Modern Families* and *The Fosters*. Another example is the success of the critically acclaimed film, *The Kids Are Alright* (2010), which brought a nuanced depiction of a lesbian couple with 2 teenagers conceived using donor insemination to the silver screen.

There has also been an upward, trend of legislation offering LGBT people protections and rights over the past forty years that has recently accelerated to an unimagined pace. Just in the past ten years sodomy laws have been declared unconstitutional, LGB people can serve openly in the military, and, with the 2015 Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges,* same-sex marriages are now legally recognized throughout the United States. Although the degree to which these specific gains should be celebrated as the advancement of civil rights for LGBT people or mourned as examples of homonormativity and homonationalism is a matter of ongoing debate (Duggan, 2003; Puar, 2007; Vaid, 2004; Warner, 1999), they do reflect a growing trend toward acceptance, for at least some, LGBT people.

Just as the families I interviewed exhibited a growing optimism that was mirrored in the changes that they have witnessed in their lives, their feelings of future danger, for themselves and their children, were also reflected. Just as they saw laws recognizing and protecting their families come into being, they have seen in their lifetimes how quickly those same rights and protections can be taken away in moments of political backlash. For instance, in 1996, Hawaii briefly became the first state to allow same-sex marriage, triggering a conservative backlash that led to numerous states, including Hawaii, passing laws prohibiting same-sex marriage. It also led to the creation of the Federal Defense of Marriage Act, ensuring that the federal government would not recognize same-sex marriages and that states did not have recognize the same-sex marriages of other states. A more recent example includes the passage of Proposition 8, a state amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage in California, less than 6 months after the California Supreme Court ruled the state's previous same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional. Although the Federal Defense of Marriage Act and Proposition 8 have since been overturned by the United States Supreme Court, families I interviewed expressed an awareness that laws can change, in both positive and negative directions. Reflecting this awareness, many of them mentioned the deliberate efforts they made to keep up to date on the current social, political and legal climate for LGBT people, both locally and nationally.

Despite interviewed parents reporting few encounters with overt violence based on their sexual identities, and those that did noting that these happened long before they had children, there was still a sense that violence and hate looms like a shadow over LGBT people at large. According to the FBI's Annual Uniform Crime Reports, from 1996 to 2013, the number of victims reporting hate crimes on the basis of an LGB sexual orientation has been relatively constant (see Table 1). Roughly 10 in 100000 LGB people report being victims of hate motivated crimes against their persons (as opposed to their property) on the basis of sexual orientation; a figure twice as high, per capita, as victims reporting similar crimes motivated by anti-black or anti-Semitic sentiments (Stotzer 2012). In a random sample of LGB people living in the U.S., Gregory Herek (2009) finds that 1 in 5 report being a victim of personal or property crime, about

---

2 The record high was in 2012 with 4.4% of series regular characters identifying as LGBT.

1 in 4 report being threatened, and nearly one-half of the sample report experiencing verbal harassment on the basis of their sexual orientation at some point in their lives.

Table 1: Annual Number of Victims in Reported Hate Crimes based on Sexual Orientation, 1996-2013

Year	Number of Victims Reported	Percentage out of all Reported Hate Crimes
1996	1281	11.6%
1997	1401	13.7%
1998	1488	15.3%
1999	1558	15.9%
2000	1558	15.7%
2001	1592	13.2%
2002	1464	15.9%
2003	1430	15.7%
2004	1406	14.8%
2005	1213	13.8%
2006	1472	15.3%
2007	1512	15.9%
2008	1706	17.6%
2009	1482	17.8%
2010	1528	18.6%
2011	1508	20.8%
2012	1318	19.2%
2013[3]	1402	20.8%

Source: FBI Uniform Crime reports, 1996-2013[4]

---

3 This is the first year data was also reported on victims of reported hate crimes on the basis of gender identity. 33 reported victims of hate crimes based on gender identity, making up 0.5% of all reported hate crime victims.
4 https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-publications#Hate

Limited, systematic and comprehensive data has been collected on the experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming people. However, existing research indicates a high lifetime probability of multiple instances of victimization for this population (Stotzer, 2009). The National Coalition of Antiviolence Programs reports, between 1997-2006, an average of 213 anti-transgender hate crimes reported to their programs per year in the United States (Stotzer, 2009). In a study of MTFs and FTMs in Chicago, Gretchen Kenagy and Wendy Bostwick (2005) found that 56% reported feeling unsafe in public being transgendered. According to media reports collected by Transgender Day of Remembrance[5], between 2002-2012, an average of 13 murders motivated by anti-transgender violence per year were committed in the United States. Although it is difficult to ascertain from existing reports and data a concrete estimate of the actual prevalence of such crimes among sexual minorities in the United States, as it is likely much goes unreported or miscategorized (Herek, 2009; Stotzer, 2009), it does contextualize the sense of ongoing violence experienced by the LGBT community noted by the parents I interviewed, even when it does not reflect their immediate experiences.

Even when families I spoke to were "lucky" in regard to the lack of negative experiences they have experienced, they recounted "horror stories" of uncommon, but terrifying incidents that have happened to other LGBT families. High profile examples include Karen Thompson, who after her partner, Sharon Kowalski, was left with permanent physical disabilities and reduced mental capabilities from a car accident involving a drunk driver in 1983, was embroiled in nearly a decade of contentious legal battles with Kowalski's parents over guardianship and visitation rights. Another example includes the 1991 court case, *Alison D. v. Virginia M.*, in which the court denied visitation rights to Alison D., a lesbian social parent, after separation from her former partner, Virginia M.. Another is the recent custody case involving Janet Jenkins, whose former partner, Lisa Miller, refused to comply with court ordered visitation rights to see their daughter, Isabella, and ultimately fled the country with their daughter. Families I spoke to either directly referenced these cases, or the scenarios they illustrate, as major reasons for why they sought as many legal protections as possible. In many cases, they also reported feeling exceptionally fortunate for the support they receive from each other's families.

Sometimes these messages of growing acceptance and danger are produced hand-in-hand. A telling example is the "It Gets Better" Project. Founded by Dan Savage and his partner, Terry Miller, in 2010 in response to a series of teenage suicides based on their (presumed) gay identities. These high profile suicides, taken up by mainstream media, also built on existing (though contested [Savin-Williams, 2005]) statistics indicating that LGBT adolescents have higher rates of suicide compared to heterosexual ones. As part of the project, LGBT-identified adults created videos discussing their own experiences with homophobia and bullying growing up and how their lives improved over time. Heterosexual allies also submitted videos expressing their support as part of the project. As of 2013, over 50000 videos have been submitted, including several celebrities and high profile public figures, such as President Barack Obama. The video entries have received over 50 million views. Although the project has been critiqued for not addressing the structural conditions that perpetuate bullying and violence on LGBT and sexual non-conforming youth, particularly for youth of color and youth living in low-income areas, the mainstream praise and participation in the project illustrate that, as a narrative of culturally assumed normative experiences of LGBT youth and adults, it carries resonance.

---

5 tdor.info/statistics

In many ways, the "It Gets Better" Project draws on the same narratives of growing acceptance, yet persisting danger, that I found among the families I interviewed. On one hand, the motivations for the project are the real and perceived dangers that LGBT and gender nonconforming youth experience as a result of homophobia and bullying. On the other hand, the way the project addresses this concern is through narratives of how the quality of life has (and continues) to improve for the individuals (mostly adults) producing these videos. Even the name of the project, "It Gets Better", reflects this narrative of ongoing improvement.

These seemingly contradictory themes were also embedded in the narratives of the parents I interviewed. Reconciling this simultaneous sense that "it's getting better" for LGBT people at large with the persisting dangers that exist for LGBT people, particularly LGBT youth (and I would extend to the children of LGBT people), are central to understanding LGBT parenting. To better understand the scope and implications these contradictory narratives have for LGBT families, I argue that we need to more closely examine the influence of stigma for LGBT families and the strategies they use to manage it. Experiences of growing acceptance and the possibility of persisting danger heavily shape the creation and experiences of families as early as prospective parenthood through children's adolescence and teenage years. However, danger is mapped both temporally and spatially as well, with the timing and strategies of practices also contingent on locations in which families live and how they spatially map danger. In order to explore these experiences, however, we need a framework for understanding the persistence of stigma for LGBT families and how it subtly manifests in post-closet society.

What is Stigma?

Most sociological definitions of stigma begin, and frequently end, with Erving Goffman's (1963) foundational text, *Stigma*. Goffman broadly defines stigma as "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from social acceptance" (1963, Preface)**.** He notes, "Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of categories" (2). In other words, society has normative expectations for the attributes an individual of a particular social identity should embody and practice. Furthermore, because these expectations are felt to be ordinary and natural, most people will not even be aware they are using these normative criteria to categorize and judge themselves and others. For the purposes of Goffman's analysis, focused on the construction of social identity and maintenance of social life through daily interactions and activities, when the perceived attributes of an individual corresponds with a social identity that is not highly regarded, presumed to be immoral, or perceived to be dangerous, those attributes are defined as a stigma. As a result, there are two important features to the study of stigma: (1) the normative expectations society has for different individuals and the corresponding status associated with them; and (2) that stigma is not static, it is negotiated in social interactions through the visibility of "stigma symbols" associated with particular social identities.

Although Goffman's (1963) work on stigma has been foundational for the study of stigma across a wide range of disciplines and scholarship, the definitions and conceptual framing of stigma following Goffman has been widespread and diverse. As a result, definitions of stigma have varied, sparking debates about what kinds of experiences constitute stigma and the analytical rigor of the concept. Bruce Link and Jo Phelan (2001), identifying these conceptual vagaries, comprehensively define stigma as "elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination [occurring] together in a power situation" (p.377). While some of

these elements, such as labeling and stereotyping, appear in most definitions of stigma, Link and Phelan argue that all of these components must be in place for stigma to exist.

Labeling refers to the identification of particular human differences (e.g. skin color, sexual preferences, gender identity) as socially important. Stereotyping is when negative attributes are associated with a particular label. Separation is when social labels "connote a separation between 'us' and 'them'" (p.370). In other words, it is the process through which individuals who have been affixed a stereotyped label are deemed fundamentally different (and usually inferior) from the rest of society. Examples include heterosexuals versus non-heterosexuals, whites versus blacks, felons versus non-criminalized members of society.

Status loss and discrimination both reflect ways in which labeled individuals' life chances are negatively affected. Status loss refers to the lower regard and position in social hierarchies experienced by people with a stereotyped label. Discrimination refers to the rejection and/or exclusion individuals experience from aspects of social life. Aside from justifying more overt forms of discrimination, the expectations held for lower status individuals are negatively shaped in subtle ways that affect how people regard their behavior and performance in a myriad of activities. Link and Phelan (2001) argue this is one of the key components of stigma lacking in many definitions. They identify three broad types of discrimination related to stigma.

The first is individual discrimination, or when person A, on the basis of labeling and negative stereotypes, discriminates against person B. Individual discrimination is the most common type of discrimination discussed in stigma scholarship and, as I will discuss later, limited in the extent to which it can describe the stigma experiences of LGBT families in post-closet culture. Moving beyond a model of stigma that focuses on individual discrimination allows for a broader understanding of how cultural beliefs and ideologies operate in relation to stigma.

Second is structural discrimination, defined as organization structures, logics, and practices that reflect negative stereotypes and a loss (or inability to gain) status for those discreditably marked. One arena in which this occurs is in the workplace; where the effects of institutionalized racism and the gendered organization of work create disadvantages for racially marginalized groups and women that limit their ability to be hired or promoted, even in the absence of any individually motivated discrimination or prejudice (Acker, 1990; Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967).

The third type is "discrimination that operates through the stigmatized person's beliefs and behaviors" (p.379). Discrimination operating through stigmatized individuals occurs through a number of venues including: stereotype threat, "the threat that others' judgments or their own actions will negatively stereotype them in the domain" (p.613) (Steele, 1997); internalized, or self-stigma, when an individual accepts the negative stereotypes associated with them as true (Goffman,1963; Herek 2007; Pinel, 1999); and felt, or anticipated stigma, when the stigmatized individual's expectation of encountering individual and/or structural stigma shapes behavior, regardless of whether it actually occurs (Scambler and Hopkins, 1986; Quinn and Chaudoir, 2009.) This mode of discrimination, especially anticipated stigma, I argue is crucial to understanding LGBT families experiences of stigma and will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

Finally, Link and Phelan (2001) argue that the effects of status loss and discrimination must occur in the context of a power relationship for it to be considered stigma. They assert:

> Stigmatization is entirely contingent on access to social, economic, and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories, and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination (2001, p.367).

In other words, power differences must exist between dominant and subordinated groups for stigma to systematically occur. Without social, economic, or political power, the dominant group is without the tools to inflict lasting discriminatory consequences for the stereotyped group. Even ensuring that a label, and negative stereotypes associated with it, are broadly recognized by society and enforced requires power, although this power may still be diffuse and difficult to pin on a specific individuals, groups, or institutions (Foucault, 1977).

Although Link and Phelan argue that stigma must include all of these components, they also seem reticent to push this definition too far. For example, although they assert that the absence of a power relationship indicates that "some of the cognitive component of stigma might be in place, but what we generally mean by stigma would not exist" (p.376), they note elsewhere that the extent to which individual components of their definition are present can also reflect different degrees of intensity of stigma in different contexts or across different stigmatized groups. This may reflect their overall ambivalence in creating an ironclad definition of stigma, noting that stigma is a broad social phenomenon utilized by a range of disciplines focusing on different components. They also note that this approach is okay as long as researchers clearly define what they mean by stigma. In the next section, I use Link and Phelan's (2001) conceptualization of stigma to identify LGBT families as a stigmatized group and to illustrate the ways in which stigma affects their lives.

Stigmatization of LGBT Families

Reflecting both Goffman's (1963) and Link and Phelan's (2001) conceptualizations of stigma, LGBT identified parents and their families are socially labeled as different. Many of these differences are driven by deeply held, widespread cultural beliefs of what families "are" or "ought to be." Dorothy Smith (1993) describes these beliefs as the hegemonic family ideology of the Standard North American Family (SNAF), which idealizes heterosexual, nuclear families, with a male breadwinner, a female homemaker, and biologically conceived children. SNAF is mutually reinforced by heteronormativity, an implicit value system that valorizes heterosexuality, gender conventionality, and family traditionalism (Butler, 2002; Oswald et al, 2005). The SNAF ideological code organizes discourses and practices affecting daily family life, national family policies, and academic research. It is also embedded in a sense of what families "traditionally" have been in the past and, as a result, how they "ought to be" in the present. However, frequently these beliefs have little bearing on the actual conditions of the past and more accurately represent present-day anxieties over economic and social instabilities that are projected into nostalgia for a non-existent past (Coontz, 1992; Fischer and Hout, 2006; Gillis, 1996; Stacey, 1996). While it has become increasingly clear that the majority of families in the United States do not match SNAF images, these ideological beliefs continue to shape ideas about family legitimacy.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, SNAF ideologies heavily influence how family relationships are practiced and understood. George Herbert Mead (1934) argues that the self is formed through the definitions of others in society, referred to in amalgam as the "generalized other." It is only by internalizing these definitions through the acquisition of

language and viewing oneself as others do that a sense of self and identity emerge. Successfully enacting an identity also requires that others recognize and accept it. Goffman (1959) notes that individuals communicate their identities to others using signs and cues. These signs, infused with symbolic meaning, often occur in taken-for-granted, trivial forms that are implicitly read in the course of daily social interaction (Baxter, 1987; Garfinkel, 1967). However, in order for those signs to be successful they also have to be recognizable to others. In relation to parenting identities and family relationships, the internalized views of the generalized other typically correspond with SNAF ideologies. As a result, family relationships more closely aligned with SNAF ideals tend to be naturalized, obscuring their social construction through everyday practices.

LGBT families are not the only families labeled as different and devalued under SNAF. Families on the periphery of what kinship normatively "is" struggle to find ways in which to meaningfully practice their kin relationships and are subject to heightened scrutiny and prejudice. For instance, stepfamilies experience greater tension and higher divorce rates because everyday language, law, and custom presumes that families consist of first marriages with children who are biologically related to both partners with no additional parents (Cherlin, 1978). As a result, stepfamilies struggle finding proper kinship terms to define relationships between family members, establishing parenting norms (e.g, how much authority does a stepparent have over their spouse's child?), and handling complex kin relations that result from previous and current marriages (Cherlin, 1978; Kellas et al, 2008). In addition to stepfamilies, other marginalized family forms, including single mother households (Hays, 2003), families with fathers as primary caregivers (Doucet, 2006), adoptive families (Howell, 2006), and multiracial families (DaCosta, 2007), also experience a lack of institutional and cultural support.

The idealization of SNAF devalues LGBT families by pathologizing them through the attribution of negative stereotypes that frames them as different and inferior to other heterosexual parent families. At the most basic level, LGBT people in general have been historically stereotyped as anti-family and unfit to parent (Eskridge, 1996; Lewin, 2009). The belief that LGBT identities are incompatible with parenting, and families in general, has deep roots that trace back both to conservative arguments against homosexuality as well as radical queer movements and thought critical of family as an institution of state control and sexual suppression (Lewin, 2009; D'Emilio, 1983). The devaluation of LGBT-identified parents and same-sex couples raising children is also reflected in presumptions that children need to be raised by both a mother and a father, that LGBT people are trying to convert children to be LGBT themselves, and that having an LGBT parent will lead to gender and sexual identity confusion for children (Eskridge, 1996; Biblarz and Stacey, 2010; Stacey and Biblarz, 2001).

These stereotypes have resulted in status loss and discrimination for LGBT-identified parents and families. Historically, these stereotypes have had a number of consequences for LGBT identified parents and families including child custody loss of children and have been used to legally justify denying same-sex couples access to marriage and adoption (Eskridge, 1996). Although these stereotypes have been thoroughly debunked (Biblarz and Stacey, 2010; Stacey and Biblarz, 2001) and the social and legal validity of these stereotypes are losing traction

over time[6] (Eskridge, 1996), they contentiously continue to appear in popular discussion regarding LGBT families. The persistence of these stereotypes
affects LGBT families in a number of ways including: the decision to become parents (Lewin, 2009; Mezey, 2008; Stacey, 2006), day-to-day family practices (Almack, 2005; Benkov, 1994), and whether family, friends, and strangers will recognize and respond favorably to them as parents (Powell et al, 2010; Sullivan, 2004; Weston, 1991).

SNAF ideologies, entrenched in heteronormativity, mark LGBT families as deviant just as they are simultaneously used by LGBT people to shape their own families in the face this deviance. For example, narratives produced by gay males discussing their desires to become parents showed tensions between desires for children and the fear of being a single parent (Stacey, 2006). This tension is informed by SNAF ideals of a two-parent household, making gay men feel it is appropriate to wait until they are in a stable relationship before having children, a challenge heightened by stigma associated with being an LGBT parent. This can is also observed in accounts from some gay fathers who frame having children as means to grow up, compared to their depictions of other gay men they know who choose to remain childless, characterizing them as "self-involved" or "immature" (Lewin, 2009).

LGBT families are also immersed in a cultural context that devalues any nonheterosexual identities, associated with families or not. Herek (2007) argues that sexual minorities experience sexual stigma, defined as "the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to any nonheterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (p.906). Sexual stigma manifests structurally and individually with nonheterosexuals considered abnormal, inferior, require explanation, and are appropriate targets for aggression, differential treatment, and discrimination. Although sexual discrimination is increasingly considered inappropriate, subtle heterosexism remain ubiquitous throughout society and overtly strong in some contexts, including high school (Pascoe, 2007), in rural areas (Gray, 2009; Stein, 2001), and sport cultures[7] (Anderson, 2002; Messner, 1992).

Despite challenges to its legitimacy, the persisting acceptance of heterosexism and the tacit ways it continues to be rewarded in society plays a strong part in LGBT parents' feelings that their lives are improving but that they still must exercise caution. Although overt and hostile expressions of homophobia and discrimination are infrequent for LGBT families, I argue that many families still feel they must be on guard and prepare for the worst. Furthermore, heteronormative SNAF ideologies continue to affect the degree of recognition and respect they are accorded in interactions with family, friends, teachers, doctors, and other people they encounter in everyday life. LGBT people and families may not be as powerless as they were in the past, but they remain a vulnerable segment of society that strategically mobilizes available social, cultural, and material resources in order to offset this vulnerability. Furthemore, the most efficacious way to reduce this vulnerability is, ironically, through complicity with norms associated with SNAF and heteronormativity. In order to understand the ways in which LGBT families experience and manage this sense of vulnerability, we need to understand the subtle and

6 A more recent example of this is seen in the recent court cases regarding same-sex marriage. For example, in Perry v Schwarzenegger (2009), which overturned California's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, the court's decision explicitly rejects the validity of arguments same-sex parents are inferior to opposite-sex parents or intrinsically harmful to children . Judge Walker's decision notes: "The evidence does not support a finding that California has an interest in preferring opposite-sex parents over same-sex parents. Indeed, the evidence shows beyond any doubt that parents' genders are irrelevant to children's developmental outcomes (P.130)."
7Though, even here, there is evidence that homophobia in sports culture is waning (Anderson, 2011).

diffuse ways in which stigma permeates their lives. In the next section, I explore how we can understand these experiences in relation to stigma and other scholarship on discrimination.

Beyond Overt Discrimination, Subtle Enactments of Stigma

       In order to understand the full range of stigma experienced by LGBT families and the depth of their stigma management strategies, we need to move past standard accounts of homophobia and discrimination. The stigmatizing experiences of LGBT families go beyond moments of individuals directly discriminating against them. Scholarship on LGBT families finds that reports of direct stigma or overt homophobia are uncommon (Almack, 2007; Mercier and Harold, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Suter et al; 2008). Instead, their experiences of stigma tend to be diffuse and embedded in the lack of formal and informal recognition they receive as couples, as parents, and as families. This is reflected, for instance, in public moments in which same-sex couples are presumed to be friends, a child is presumed to have a mother and a father, or, when by a parent is by themselves in public, they presumed to have a different-sex partner. It is also reflected in the normative assumptions and judgements that LGBT families encounter in conversations with others about their families. Common questions include, "Where did you get your kid?" and, "Which one of you is the "real" parent?".

       These subtle, and often unconscious, expressions of SNAF and heteronormativity parallel microaggressions experienced by other marginalized groups (Shelton and Delgado-Romero, 2011; Sue, 2010). Microaggressions refer to diffuse forms of subtle insults and discrimination, consciously and unconsciously deployed in day-to-day interactions, that promote an environment of hostility, exclusion, and confusion (Solorzano and Bernal, 2001; Sue, 2010). The similarity lies in both the subtlety and ambiguity in which they occur; leading parents to be unsure if the individual's comment or behavior was meant to be hostile towards them, based on implicit heterosexism or homophobia, or merely a coincidence. The uncertainty is furthered by the fact that these incidents can occur without conscious or malicious intent from the perpetrator. Individuals unthinkingly enact deeply ingrained cultural beliefs, such as heteronormativity or SNAF, in a ubiquitous range of daily behaviors, organizational logics, and ways of thinking. The consequences are also similar; both cultivate a sense of ambiguous hostility and non-belonging that, through small, but frequent enactments, cumulatively wear on individuals and add an additional element of stress and alienation to everyday social interactions.

       Although there are few reports of direct hostility and overt discrimination in scholarship on LGBT families, LGBT parents report being concerned that they, and especially their children, *may* still encounter direct hostility or discrimination in daily social interactions with strangers in public settings, with institutional authorities, such as doctors and teachers, and with families of origin (Almack, 2007; Benkov, 1994; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008; Suter et al, 2008). I use the concept of anticipated stigma to highlight how LGBT parents' concerns, driven by the past and ongoing devaluation of LGBT people and families, continues to affect the lives of their families in a historical moment of growing, but incomplete and sometimes ambiguous, social and legal acceptance.

       Anticipated stigma, also referred to in stigma scholarship as felt stigma, is the expectation that someone with a stigmatized attribute or identity holds that they will experience discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping, regardless of whether or not it actually occurs (Markowitz, 1998; Scambler and Hopkins, 1986). It is distinct from *internalized stigma*, defined as the extent to which an individual with a stigmatized identity or attribute believes stereotypes

associated with their stigma and devalues themselves (Earnshaw and Quinn, 2012). It is also distinct from *experienced stigma*, or the extent to which individuals have encountered discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping due to an identity or attribute (Earnshaw and Quinn, 2012). In other words, anticipated stigma refers to the ways in which awareness of possible negative treatment connected to one's identity or a stigmatized attribute affects behavior and general well-being, regardless of whether one actively experiences negative treatment or not.

Although scholarship explicitly discussing anticipated stigma in relation to LGBT populations is limited (exceptions include Almack, 2007; Herek, 2007), I argue that it's deeply interwoven into the fabric of contemporary LGBT family life. Applying this analytical lens to past research on LGBT families, managing anticipated stigma is interwoven into a range of family practices including: methods of having children (Lewin, 2009); donor selection (Benkov, 1994; Lewin, 2009; Suter et al, 2008; Weston, 1991); children's surnames (Almack, 2005; Benkov, 1994; Suter et al, 2008; Weston, 1991); where they live (Lewin, 2009); family coming out strategies (Almack, 2007; Armesto and Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008); and whether to have children at all (Mezey, 2008).

Exploring LGBT families' experiences can also broaden our understanding of the populations affected by anticipated stigma as well the range of management strategies used to address it. Research on anticipated stigma has primarily focused on the ways in which individuals with concealable stigmas, aware of how individuals with their stigmatized attribute or identity are stereotyped and negatively treated, conceal markers of their stigma and avoid social interactions in which these attributes and identities would be most salient (Quinn and Chaudoir, 2009). In other words, these studies find that individuals who anticipate stigma typically utilize strategies of concealment to avoid possible status loss and discrimination. Populations studied have included people with mental illnesses (Link et al, 1989; Rosenfeld, 1997), chronic illnesses (Earnshaw and Quinn, 2012); epilepsy (Jacoby, 1994; Scambler and Hopkins, 1986; Westbrook, Bauman, and Shinnar, 1992), HIV positive status (Katz and Nevid, 2005), and lesbian parent families (Almack, 2007). This body of research also finds that anticipated stigma, independent of experienced and internalized stigma, is connected to higher levels of psychological distress (Quinn and Chaudoir, 2009). However, considering the findings of this scholarship, it remains unclear whether the only strategies for handling anticipated stigma are strategies of concealment?

Perhaps one of the reasons that research has found concealment to be the main strategy for responding to anticipated stigma is because it has focused on discreditable stigma identities with little attention to how it may affect discredited stigmas. Where scholarship on discredited identities has loosely touched on anticipated stigma has been in building theories of stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) and stigma consciousness, defined as the extent to which individuals expect to be discriminated against (Pinel, 1999). While both of these concepts do get at the same underlying issue as anticipated stigma, awareness that others may stereotype and discriminate against you based on a particular social identity, they do not delve into how this awareness shapes how one might strategically mitigate or attempt to avoid such stigma; and the existing scholarship on anticipated stigma does not go much further than discussing strategies of concealment.

LGBT families also occupy an interesting position in relation to discreditable and discredited identities. LGBT identities are usually considered a discreditable identity, with individuals having the opportunity to conceal markers of those identities and "pass" as "normal".

However, for many LGBT families, particularly ones that include a same-sex couple, recognition as a family also includes recognition of their queer identities. Although moments exist when families report that they could pass, such as when parents are not together in public or by claiming, either explicitly or tacitly, another type of relation, such as friends or an extended kin relation, they report little desire to do so. Parents note that doing so makes their family feel inauthentic and express concerns that this will send a message to children that something is wrong with their families that should be hidden (Almack, 2007; Armesto and Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008). As a result, I argue that LGBT families are more likely to incorporate stigma management strategies related to discredited identities when dealing with anticipated stigma.

Racial socialization strategies might provide some insight into the ways in which discredited groups may respond to anticipated stigma. Racial socialization refers to the ways in which racially marginalized groups maintain their children's self-esteem and prepare them for racial discrimination they will encounter in their lives (Hughes et al, 2006). Empirical research on racial socialization has focused primarily on the experiences of African-American families and finds that the two most common strategies are *cultural socialization*, practices that teach children their racial heritage and history and foster a sense pride in that identity, and *preparation for bias*, raising children's awareness of racial discrimination and preparing them to cope with it (for thorough reviews of racial socialization literature, see Hughes et al, 2006; Snyder, 2012). Although racial socialization is an ongoing practice that responds both to expected and ongoing experiences of racial discrimination encountered by both parents and children, the preemptive elements of it, such as cultural socialization of young children, are informative of non-passing strategies for mitigating anticipated stigma.

The literature on anticipated stigma and racial socialization are also informative for one another of the empirical limitations of each. Anticipated stigma, up to this point, has focused on discreditable identities and has not considered the far scope in which it may affect individuals lives (i.e. parenting strategies and transmission of culture across generations). Racial socialization literature, however, has examined a limited range of strategies that are mostly conversational (i.e. directly talking to their children about discrimination or racial heritage) with more limited discussion of other, more indirect ways parents may try to bolster or protect their children from discrimination (such as neighborhood selection and selecting where children go to school.) Research on LGBT families may help provide a template for expanding our understanding of ways to address anticipated stigma, especially concerns that arise regarding children.

One limitation with much of the research on anticipated stigma is the heavy correlation it makes with internalized stigma, despite the analytical distinction between the two concepts. In particular, studies looking at anticipated stigma tend to report that higher rates of anticipated stigma are associated with worse psychological well-being and greater shame associated with their stigmatized identity. These findings build on Goffman's (1963) assertion that, to some degree, stigmatized individuals internalize stereotypes held about their identity or group. Although Goffman does note that it is possible for some stigmatized individuals or groups to bear a stigma yet remain internally untouched by it, he notes that in America "stigmatized individuals tend to hold the same beliefs about identity" (1963, p.7) as those held by society at large. In other words, stigmatized individuals will, to some extent, internalize negative

stereotypes associated with their identity and come to believe them as a legitimate reason for lower status.

However, this correlation is inconsistent with recent findings on stigma experiences of LGBT people and families, particularly in relation to experiences of anticipated stigma. Although anticipated stigma is predicated on an awareness of the negative stereotypes associated with an aspect of one's identity, this is distinct from internalizing and accepting those negative stereotypes as true. Herek (2007), for example, distinguishes between one's awareness that LGBT people are stigmatized and whether an LGBT-identified person believes the negative stereotypes associated with their identity, manifesting as internalized homophobia and heterosexism. Elizabeth Pinel (1999) notes a similar awareness of negative stereotypes associated with one's identity and the possibility of experiencing discrimination as "stigma consciousness." Similarly, Kathryn Almack (2007) notes that the lesbian parents she interviewed were "stigma resistant" in that they were aware of negative societal stereotypes about lesbians and lesbian parents but did not accept them. Instead of blaming themselves or other LGBT people for discrimination they experience or might experience in the future, blame is put on the ignorance and intolerance of strangers and resisted through attempts to educate and inform (Almack, 2007; Orne, 2013).

Although these findings agree with Goffman (1963) to the extent that LGBT people, as members of society, are aware of the general attitudes, stereotypes, and valuations accorded to them, it does not mean they believe these stereotypes are true or that discrimination against them is validated. Rather than internalizing this view as the only lens through which they perceive society, it is similar to Mead's (1934) theory of reflexive individuals who internalize the collective views of society but whose consciousness is an ongoing internal dialogue with this "generalized other" and their own collective experiences and attitudes of themselves. In other words, LGBT people (and other marginalized groups) can hold multiple perspectives of themselves, both as object and subject, and that their perception of self and how that motivates action is based on the negotiation of these different attitudes. These multiple perspectives may also reflect the erosion of heterosexim's dominance in the society's collective consciousness, creating space for alternative valuations of nonheterosexual identites.

Building on W. E. B. Du Bois' (1903) theory of double consciousness among African Americans, recent scholarship describes a similar phenomenon among LGBT-identified people who are able to simultaneously view themselves from the perspective of the margins and the perspectives of the powerful (Mezey, 2008; Orne, 2013). Using this "queer double consciousness" (Orne, 2013), LGBT people anticipate the kinds of heteronormative stereotypes and prejudices they might encounter in social interactions while at the same time holding a divergent view of themselves that is insulated from these stigmatizing views. Although a queer double consciousness might explain how LGBT families can incorporate an understanding of stigma imposed on them that informs their expectations of anticipated stigma without internalizing a sense of lower status or shame, a closer analysis of how they negotiate both a "heteronormative conscious" and a queer consciousness into their stigma management strategies is needed.

Also missing from both the anticipated stigma scholarship and the research on LGBT families is a sense of how family practices and stigma management vary at different moments in family life cycle. For example, just as we can see a difference in coming out strategies between prospective parents and parents with young children, some studies focusing on experiences of

stigma in school settings and with teenage children of LGBT parents suggest that different strategies might further develop or change over time (Del Mino et al, 2007; Lindsay et al, 2006; Lubbe, 2008; Welsh, 2011). Recognizing this absence, I build on this past research by considering how stigma experiences and management strategies change over time.

Furthermore, I push the temporal boundaries of research on LGBT families and stigma by examining how individuals think about stigma and families temporally. In other words, it is not just that experiences change over time for families but also how present day actions are shaped by hopes, fears, and aspirations for the near and distant future. I argue that the ordering of time among families, and subsequently their perception and management of stigma, is largely structured around the development of children, children's increasing agency that comes as they grow older, and children's movement into new spaces and contexts. In doing so I build on Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische's (1998) theory of agency as a "temporally embedded process of social engagement" informed by the past as well as the capability to imagine alternative, future outcomes "within the contingencies of the moment" (p.963). Applying this dynamic and temporally nested view of human action to the management of stigma for LGBT families opens the door to consider the broad implications such temporally nested concerns have on array of family practices.

Finally, even if LGBT parents are found to be largely stigma resistant, what about their children? And what effects do the resistance or internalization of stigma by children over time have for how families respond to stigma? In other words, we need a more nuanced and complex way of looking at how families navigate diffuse experiences of enacted and anticipated stigma in their day-to-day lives.

Normal, or Transformative, Families?

Understanding the stigma management strategies of LGBT families requires a closer understanding of the ways in which they engage with normative beliefs regarding what families "are" or "ought to be." The heteronormativity of cultural scripts for understanding and practicing family relations poses challenges for LGBT families. For example, SNAF, as a set of beliefs and expectations that define the cultural lens through which families are understood, recognized, and attributed social value, is an instigator for stigma that LGBT families encounter, or expect to encounter, from others. However, even as SNAF marginalizes LGBT families, it also demarcates the cultural field through which they meaningfully enact kinship and respond to family related stigma. The ways in which LGBT families think about and enact family relations in a heteronormative cultural milieu is revealing of the underlying social meanings embedded in all family practices. These families show careful thought, reflection, and creative flexibility in doing family that can be instructive of new ways of thinking about kinship for society are large. However, they also show the capacity for LGBT family practices to reinforce SNAF ideologies.

The capacity to transform, as well as reinforce, normative conceptions of family are both represented in scholarship and political discourse on LGBT families (Clarke, 2002; Weston, 1991). Transformative themes emphasize the capacity for LGBT parents and families, through gender sameness and their position as cultural family outsiders, to disrupt heteronormative family practices and create new ways of doing family. Normative themes highlight the ways in which the creation and practice of LGBT family relationships reinforce normative family ideologies. In doing so, normative themes examine the ways in which SNAF ideologies delimit understandings of what constitutes family and meaningful ways to practice those relationships. It

also highlights how many LGBT family practices, while carving out a space for (some) LGBT inclusion, is often through support of classist or racist framings of family or ones that privilege biogenetic relatedness. These two themes are not unique to research and politics on LGBT families but can be seen as part of a larger, much older, and ongoing debate between assimilation and separatism in LGBTQ communities and social movements (D'Emilio, and Freedman. 1988; Sullivan, 1995; Warner, 1999 ; Yoshino, 2006).

Transformative themes have been most apparent in studies of the division of domestic labor and parenting in same-sex couple households, arguing that they are more egalitarian than heterosexual ones (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Harry, 1984; Segal-Skylar, 1995; Slater, 1995). It has also been discussed in regards to parenting. In particular, the potential for same-sex couples[8] to challenge gendered expectations and models of parenting (Dunne, 2000; Padavic and Butterfield, 2011; Sullivan, 2004). Some of the scholarship on queer families also argues that LGBT people demonstrate expanding kinship possibilities and agency in choosing who makes up their families. Kath Weston (1991), conducting ethnographic research on LGB people living in the California Bay Area, argues that the estrangement and discrimination queer people experience in everyday life has prompted them to embrace an expansive definition of family beyond blood and marriage that includes, among others, friends, former lovers, and neighbors. These "families we choose" emphasize the possibility and radical potential of queer families to create kin networks outside of normative cultural constraints and do so based on love, affection, and mutual support (Weston, 1991).

The transformative potential attributed to queer kinship and "families we choose" is also reflected in some aspects of Giddens' (1993) observations on the changing norms of intimacy in the last half of the 20th century and the rise of "pure relationships." He defines "pure relationships" as an ideal type of relationships pursued for the sake of the relationship itself, free from societal expectations and institutional constraints. Although Giddens' definition captures the potential for new forms of relationships and kinship emerging outside of gendered and heteronormative constraints, his emphasis on freedom from cultural and institutional constraints ironically ignores how estrangement from dominant cultural beliefs and institutional structures, and the consequences thereof, is often what actually motivates creative configurations of kinship. For queer people, the freedom of a "pure relationship" emerges out of this estrangement which also propels the need to find new sources of care and support.

The idea that structural constraint and marginalization drives family innovation and change has also been broadly illustrated in family scholarship. Innovation in family configurations has frequently come from families on the margins and in times of economic decline when enacting normative family ideals is not possible (Fischer and Hout, 2006). Just as Weston (1991) illustrates that queer people rely on expanded notions of kinship and networks of care, we see similar responses to cultural and economic marginalization among low-income black communities (Stack, 1974), divorced families (Stacey, 1990), and single people (Rubin, 1985). These strategies have also become increasingly common among more "normative" family structures. For example, working and middle-class white families creating extended webs of support beyond their nuclear families to balance competing demands of work and family in periods of economic uncertainty (Hansen, 2004).

Recent survey data also identifies a growing paradigm shift in what "counts" as family in the United States. Although more "conservative" definitions of family that almost exclusively

8 Though most of the existing research has focused primarily on lesbian parent families.

focus on heterosexual couples with children persist, there is a growing portion of the population that holds more "liberal" definitions that include "chosen families" on the basis of who we decide to mutually care for and support (Powell et al, 2010). The growth of these "liberal" definitions of family further demonstrate the possible transformative influence that the rise of LGBT families, and other non-SNAF family arrangements, has on the cultural imaginary of family.

Despite some relatively recent changes in how family relations are defined and practiced, it is also important to consider the enduring strength of normative conceptions of family among marginalized populations and how their family practices may bolster these dominant cultural lenses. Normative themes in LGBT families scholarship highlights the tendency for families, despite being marginalized by SNAF, to continue to feel invested in it. It highlights the pervasiveness of SNAF in LGBT family practices and the power it holds in conferring personal and social recognition (Almack, 2005; Carrington, 1999; Suter et al, 2008). From a Bourdieusian perspective, SNAF operates as a form of doxa, defining the field of family practices, whether it is embraced, resisted, or reconfigured (Bourdieu, 1977).

Just as family innovation is most likely to occur in times of economic constraint and uncertainty, in times of economic prosperity families are more homogenous in configuration and tend to more strictly adhere to SNAF cultural ideals (Fischer and Hout, 2006). In other words, when people have the economic and cultural resources, the families they "choose" are very normative. David Miller (2007) similarly notes the tendency for individuals to utilize the creative capacity and flexibility of family practices to realign with, rather than transform, normative expectations of kinship: "The flexibility is almost always used to find ways to make a complex situation, where the rules are unclear, accord with and remain analogous to the basic principles generated by formal kinship" (P.539). As Miller notes, it is rare that families create new ways to do family wholecloth or out of a desire to reject current cultural paradigms. Instead, they draw on an array of practices that approximate normative expectations of family to emphasize their legitimacy and display their family relations.

Reflecting Miller's observations, LGBT families, without full access to cultural and legal resources for recognition and legitimacy of parental ties and kinship, develop approximate practices that loosely align them with SNAF. Many families acknowledge utilizing specific family symbols and practices to have their family relationships more easily recognized in social spaces and institutions (Almack, 2005; Benkov, 1994; Mamo, 2008; Suter et al, 2008.) For example, some families use gamete donors with similar physical characteristics to social parents in order to create a "loose" genetic connection between parent and child (Mamo, 2008; Sullivan, 2004). Although all of these practices involve creative uses of family practices to bolster kin ties of parents without biological ties to children, in doing so they are still trying to approximate a SNAF family, either for their own sense of feeling like a family or because these are the qualities that allow others to best recognize them as a family.

The normativity of LGBT families is also critiqued for the ways in which it reinforces the centrality of monogamous relationships, marriage, and reproductive families in everyday life. It supports an organization of society and understanding of life course through reproduction and childrearing (Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 2005). Reflecting Gayle Rubin's (1993) hierarchy of sexual value, the valorization of marriage and having children has the side effect of contributing to the continued stigmatization of single people, nonmonogamous relationships, and nonreproductive families (Warner, 1999). For example, the political emphasis on same-sex

marriage, as a vehicle for basic protections and rights for LGBT people, privileges individuals who more closely align SNAF rather than "decoupling" these benefits from marriage and making them broadly available to (queer) individuals who remain outside of the normative expectations of family (Vaid, 1999).

Another critique, emerging from queer theory, focuses on the "homonormativity" of LGBT families and how their practices reinforce systems of heteronormativity and other oppressive cultural systems and institutions. Lisa Duggan (2000) defines homonormativity as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (pg.50). In other words, homonormativity refers the ways in which some individuals with marginalized sexual identities do not challenge, but reify, existing systems of control and domination (white privilege, military industrial complex, nationalism, heterosexism, etc.) (Duggan, 2000; Puar, 2008). LGBT families, for instance, limited by heteronormativity, may draw on sources of cultural recognition and privilege available to them (whether based on class, race, citizenship, or biological relatedness) to legitimize family relations. As a result, the ways in which they challenge SNAF, and other systems of inequality, remain limited, with only a small subsection of LGBT people provided a tenuous degree of inclusion.

Although LGBT families have been critiqued for their homonormativity and assimilationist tendencies, more nuanced approaches to understanding experiences and practices of these LGBT families consider how they both challenge and reinforce normative cultural beliefs about families. For example, Dana Berkowitz (2009) argues that these normative critiques frequently ignore the complex, contradictory ways in which LGBT families simultaneously problematize heteronormativity. Berkovitz encourages viewing the lives and practices of LGBT families through a "queer lens" that acknowledges both the homonormative and transgressive aspects of their kinship practices and how these contradictions can "coexist, overlap, challenge, and compete with one another" (pg.127). Taking Berkovitz's argument one more step further, it is not enough to acknowledge the contradictory actions of LGBT families, we need to understand their motivations and sources, both in terms of individual investments in normative family meanings but also how the creation and practice of LGBT families are shaped and constrained by institutional and cultural forces.

One practice that involves negotiating SNAF discourses, and desires for social recognition is the selection of a child's surname. One option for lesbian parents using donor insemination involves using a social mother's surname for the child. This practice acknowledges the relationship between the social mother and child through their shared surname while the biological mother's relationship persists through blood ties and experiences shared with the child including birthing and breastfeeding (Sullivan, 2004.) Laura Benkov (1994) notes this practice is frequently used so social mothers are more easily recognized as a legitimate parent by institutions, such as schools and doctor's offices. In states where legal recognition through second parent adoption is (or has been) unavailable to LGBT parents, this implicit social acceptance of family relationships through shared names becomes even more valuable.

On one hand, this practice challenges the heteronormativity of SNAF ideologies by making claims for lesbian social mothers as legitimate parents and pushes their visibility as such in social interactions. On the other hand, the social recognition granted by these practices continues to draw on deeply held SNAF assumptions about how kinship is displayed. These

practices draw legitimacy from the assumption that shared surnames equate to legal, if not biogenetic, family ties, allowing parent status to be implicitly recognized. The underlying power relations in couples, such as the greater authority of biological mothers in deciding whether or not children will use their social mother's surname in the first place also reflect deeply embedded SNAF assumptions in terms of legal power and informal authority in couples (Almack, 2005). This practice also assumes that biological mothers in these cases, not sharing a surname with children, will be able to draw on their blood and/or legal ties to children to account for their parenting legitimacy in similar situations. As a result, while these surname practices may challenge heteronormativity by making claims to legitimacy for lesbian, social mothers, they also draw their authority from the same SNAF frameworks that initially deny their legitimacy.

The above example highlights how the same set of family practices can have both transformative and normative elements. It also acknowledges how externally imposed constraints, such as a lack of legal recognition as a parent or fear of experiencing discrimination in day-to-day interactions, can pragmatically motivate normative behaviors. Dana Rosenfeld (2009) reports similar findings among gay and lesbian seniors who report strategically drawing on homonormative practices, such as remaining publicly in the closet and practicing and enforcing gender conformity in others, as pragmatic resources for navigating hostile, homophobic social worlds. These practices illustrate that homonormative behavior is not motivated merely by internalized homophobia or an ideological commitment to heteronormative assimilation (though these can still be influential), these behaviors can also be prompted by pragmatic reasons grounded in local context and constraints.

This perspective relates to the broader picture I found regarding why LGBT parents draw on SNAF and homonormative practices in the creation daily enactment of family life. While some families expressed a personal and emotional investment in normative practices and beliefs regarding families, others noted an ambivalent investment, engaging in these normative practices strategically to offset the consequences of discrimination and prejudice their families might experience. In other words, for many families, normalcy is something pragmatically enacted in their family practices. It is a stigma management strategy, whose achievement might mean inoculating children from internalizing a sense of lower status based on their parents' sexual identities or their queer family structures. Interestingly, many parents engage in a balancing act as they navigate these concerns about stigma. Parents attempt to downplay the sense of difference that they, and their children, may experience as a queer family in a heteronormative world. However, in doing so, they also attempt to maintain a certain threshold of visibility in public spaces so as not to give children (or others) the sense that their families need to be hidden.

Normalcy is, as Glenn notes at the start of the chapter, a benchmark for parents to assess their success in preparing their children to interact in an improving, but persistently heteronormative world. In this way I am arguing that many families are practicing what I call "protective normalcy", in which the motivation for their actions are, in a Weberian sense, not motivated in their belief in the moral rightness of normalcy or SNAF. Instead, protective normalcy is operates as a strategic, rational choice to try to shield their families from heterosexism and homophobia and keep their children from internalizing a sense of difference and lowered esteem for themselves or their families (Weber, 1978).

By exploring the meanings and motivation behind actions for LGBT families, I am also responding to Ellen Lewin's (2009) call that amidst discussions of whether queer families are too heteronormative or conservative, that we move our focus to understanding the "moral worlds" of

LGBT families to better understand their rationales and motivations for family creation and practices. While this approach does not absolve families of the ways in which they may be complicit in larger systems of oppression, it grants us a better understanding of what motivates their actions, and, if any meaningful change is to occur, what kinds of cultural and institutional constraints must be removed from families.

Chapter Summaries

The remainder of the dissertation aims to address three related questions. First, how do LGBT families with children experience stigma? Second, how do families manage that stigma? Third, how do their experiences of stigma, and the ways they manage it, change over time? Using data collected from interviews with LGBT identified parents from 51 families living in Northern California, I develop a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which stigma affects LGBT families through a range of practices including process for having children, how children refer to their parents, naming children, parent volunteerism in schools, and the degree to which a family is out. I also explore how stigma experiences vary over time from acquisition of children, to experiences of early parenthood, and as children enter adolescence and young adulthood.

Chapter 2 discusses the methodological organization of the project and the sample of interviewed families in greater detail. Topics discussed include the choice to use in-depth interviews as a method of inquiry, the parent recruitment and interview process, characteristics of families and benefits and limitations of the sample. Special attention is also paid to the local contexts in which families were recruited. In particular, sampling families from a mix of urban, suburban, and rural locations in Northern California illustrates how local family cultures, attitudes toward LGBT people, and the presence of other queer families and organizations affects the stigma management of families, despite having access to the same state level legal rights and recognitions.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 explores how LGBT families experiences stigma in absence of overt hostility and discrimination. Each chapter explores a different facet of the stigma LGBT parents experience and how the management of this is stigma is deeply embedded in the creation and day-to-day practices of their families. In particular, I look at experiences of anticipated stigma and microaggressions. I also explore how parents spatially and temporally map stigma and how the stigma management strategies they use differ through family life course. In all 3 chapters, the management strategies used by parents to address these microaggressions and anticipated moments of stigma also reveal the complex ways in which LGBT families struggle with alienation from normative conceptions of family by practicing a protective form of normalcy, drawing from these ideologies in other ways, such as class status, the importance placed on blood ties, and racial presumptions about families to diminish the impact of their stigma experiences related to sexual identity and queer family structures.

Chapter 3 examines how anticipated stigma influences LGBT family creation and early family building practices. I use the concept of anticipated stigma to explore the changing character of stigma experienced by LGBT families. It helps to illustrate the subtle persistence of stigma in a historical moment where LGBT people, and families, experience a growing, but incomplete (and, at times, ambiguous), social and legal acceptance. While anticipated stigma is not, of course, the only concern reported by respondents, or cited by prior research,what makes

these concerns stand out is that they are not focused on the process of acquiring children itself, or even on the present, but on the implications of their choices for their family's future.

Two sets of future-oriented concerns heavily influenced how families planned and acquired children. The first set of concerns revolved around maintaining parent rights and custody of children in the future. LGBT parents not only consider how their stigmatized status affects their parenting rights in the present, but also, given the ambiguity of existing laws and the possibility that political and cultural backlash could repeal protections presently in place, how issues of custody and recognition as parents may arise in the future. Dealing with the uncertainty of future laws and cultural attitudes, respondents sought multiple and overlapping ways through which to legally clarify and protect their parent status in uncertain futures. The second set revolved around issues of social recognition, both from intimates, such as extended families, and from outsiders, such as acquaintances and strangers. Parents sought social recognition from others both for validation of their parent identities and family relationships as well as to try to reduce instances in which parents and children are harassed or stigmatized by others based on their family structure. Respondents also sought to reduce their children's sense of difference from other families in the future; and the internalized stigma associated with those feelings of difference. Both sets of concerns shaped a number of prospective parenting practices including: method for acquiring children, who provides biological material or carries children, selecting gamete donors and surrogates, adoption criteria, legal interventions taken, and surname selection for both parents and children.

Chapter 4 explores how LGBT parents with young children navigate informal challenges to their day-to-day social recognition. Although LGBT parents with young children report low levels of hostility and overt discrimination, subtle forms persist. I draw on the microaggressions literature to better understand the ambiguous, diffuse, and hard to quantify forms of marginalization that make up these experiences and identify them as expressions of stigma. I identify two common manifestations of stigma experienced by LGBT parents with young children: the invisibility/illegibility of LGBT family relations in public, which I refer to as *misrecognition*; and, when family relations are recognized, the hypervisibility and denial of privacy they experience in public spaces, or what I refer to as *hyperscrutiny*. The findings of this chapter highlight the persistence and changing configurations of stigma as those attributed with a spoiled identity receive growing, though not complete, social acceptance and protections under the law. It also highlights the subtle implications these expressions of stigma have for the day-to-day lives of families and the construction of parent identities.

However, families did not passively endure moments of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. I use the selection and usage of parent terms as a lens through which to understand how new LGBT parents experience and respond to microaggressions related to social recognition. Synthesizing the scholarship on accounts and the "doing family" literature, I illustrate how parent terms are a family practice linked to issues of personal and social recognition as a parent; operating as mode of display for parent identities, both for parents and those observing them. However, these practices can present their own challenges as families negotiate both the personal, affective meanings they associate with different terms and with a term's public legibility.

Building on chapters 3 and 4, chapter 5 explores how parents spatially and temporally map anticipated stigma and how those perceptions shape family practices. Exploring parents' spatially and temporally contingent strategies for helping their children feel normal also reveals

how such practices alleviate parents' own anxieties about stigma that they anticipate their children will face in the future. The first half of this chapter explores how families manage anticipated stigma for their children through careful selection and control of the environments their families inhabit. Three common themes observed in selection include: (1) finding locations with other LGBT families; (2) embedding themselves in communities with a diverse array of families; and (3) inhabiting safe spaces where they feel others will be supportive of them. These accounts also reveal how parents not only locate the threat of stigma in the future but in specific locations.

The second half of the chapter examines how parents negotiate being out in public spaces as a strategy to both shield children from stigmatizing experiences in the present and prepare them for anticipated encounters with stigma as they grow older. Although these strategies are both primarily focused on stigma parents anticipate their children will/do encounter as adolescents, the shape these practices vary at different points in family life course and change over time. When children are young, parents practice *preemptive outness,* a strategy of public disclosure in which they disclose their family configurations and sexual identities upon entering new social contexts or meeting new people. As children grow older and/or began to experience negative, stigmatizing interactions on their own, parents shifted from practicing preemptive outness to *selective outness*. Selective outness is a stigma management strategy in which parents move, at least partially, back into the closet in some contexts so that their children can choose whether or not to disclose their family configurations based on their own comfort and assessment of a given moment. Both strategies illustrate the importance of contextualizing experiences of stigma and stigma management for LGBT families in respect to time and life course.

Finally, chapter 6 revisits the central question of this project: how do LGBT families experience and manage stigma? Synthesizing the findings from previous chapters, I highlight how, despite parents' low reports of overt, hostile expressions of homophobia and heterosexism in the present, their accounts illustrate the subtle persistence of stigma in the form of microaggressions and anticipated stigma for their families in the near and distant future. I also elaborate on what these findings can tell us about the changing face of stigma as overt expressions of prejudice and discrimination increasingly become socially objectionable and disfavored. In doing so, I highlight the implications these findings can have for scholarship on family practices and for work on stigma management.

This chapter also revisits the tenuous relationship interviewed LGBT families have with normative family ideologies. Faced with a lack of institutional and cultural support for their families and identities, interviewed families at the same time draw on many of the same normative ideologies in practicing their family relationships in ways that are personally and publicly meaningful. I argue that more a nuanced view of the meanings of and motivations for normalcy LGBT families children better situates critiques of homonormativity, and normative family practices in general, by understanding the pragmatic ambivalence in which many marginalized families enact normalcy. In doing so, I highlight the importance of addressing cultural and structural constraints that motivate LGBT families to practice protective normalcy and create stronger possibilities for transformative change in their family practices and (possibly) in mainstream culture.

Chapter 2: Method and Sample

  In order to better understand the stigma experiences of LGBT families and how they relate to the issues raised in the previous chapter, I interviewed LGBT identified parents from 51 families living in Northern California. This chapter provides further detail on the methodological organization of the project and the sample of families interviewed. I break this discussion up into five sections. The first section explains the decision to use in-depth interviews as a method of inquiry. The second section defines the population recruited for interviews. The third section describes the locations in which sampled families live and explains the reasons for including a mix of urban, suburban and rural contexts in Northern California. The fourth section outlines the interview process and discusses the benefits and drawbacks to using group interviews. Finally, the fifth section reviews the characteristics of the interviewed parents and their families as well as the benefits and limitations of the sample.

Why Interviewing?

  I chose to use an in-depth interviewing methodology because I am not only interested in families' daily experiences but also meanings they attach to those experiences and how seemingly mundane and daily activities may be strategically mobilized to address issues of stigma. Due to the exploratory nature of my research question, surveys would be too limited an approach to explore the easily overlooked and subtle ways in which respondents experience and manage stigma. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews are better suited for delving into these subtle moments in which stigma can manifest and shape family practices.

  Similarly, participant observation would be difficult, given the range of activities and contexts in which stigma manifests for families. These limitations are most salient in institutional spaces, such as schools and doctor's offices, where my presence may intrude on social interactions and be restricted both by parents and institutional authorities. I am also interested in how individuals interpret and narrate the events in their lives that they see as important to understanding their families' experiences. The focus on internal experiences of respondents, both past and present, emphasize the importance of in-depth interviews over observation of events (Weiss, 1994). By organizing interviews in ways that encourage respondents to recount events they see as salient to the topics at hand, I obtained narratives influenced by the concerns, interests, and ideological framings of my respondents (Reissman,1993).

  Reflecting these interests, I conducted loosely structured, open-ended interviews to facilitate the gathering of conversational narratives about family life, while continuing to ensure that I broached important questions and topics, ensuring some degree of comparison across interviews. I also spoke to a range of families in a roughly systematic manner while at the same time having the opportunity to interact, probe for deeper responses, and encourage rich narratives from participating families.

Defining Sample/Recruitment

  Requirements for participation included self-identification as an "LGBT parent." All families lived in Northern California at the time of interview and, with the exception of six families, raised their children exclusively in California[9]. Children either lived with parents full-

---

9 Only 2 families raised their children, in the context of a same-gender couple, for an extended period of time out of state. Three families moved to California when children were under 3 years old and one parent raised two of her three children primarily in Texas but in a heterosexual marriage. Her youngest, 18 years old at time of interview, was

time or part-time within 2 years of the interview. This is to ensure that participants are able to describe recently occurring, daily family practices, in addition to retrospective experiences.

Open-ended definitions of parenthood and families also acknowledge the diversity of LGBT family forms. Although most participating families involved a same-gender couple, the sample also includes divorced parents, remarried couples, single parents, and lesbians and gay men who chose to have children together[10]. Participants also utilized a variety of methods for acquiring children including reproductive assistance (such as donor insemination and surrogacy), adoption (including foster care adoption, private, and international adoption), children conceived from previous heterosexual relationships, and, in one case, an older sibling and partner caring for younger siblings.

I recruited participants for my study by sending out information via e-mail to a variety of sources including: (1) LGBT organizations affiliated with universities in Northern California; (2) LGBT organizations in Northern California including city LGBT centers, PFLAG chapters, Our Family Coalition, and local LGBT family groups; (3) parenting groups and forums, such as the Berkeley Parents Network; and (4) professional and personal contacts in LGBT communities throughout California. Using a combination of sources focused on LGBT populations and families alongside more general sources, such as general parenting forums, was especially important in reaching out to families less politically active or enmeshed in LGBT communities. I also used snowball sampling to extend the reach of my sampling beyond the organizations I initially contacted. At the end of interviews I asked participants if they would recommend other parents that I could contact and if they would spread my recruitment e-mails through their own networks.

I recruited a convenience sample, rather a random sample of families, for two reasons. First, it would have been difficult to obtain a random sample because LGBT families make up a small portion of the general population and are also not always comfortable disclosing their sexual identities to researchers (Sullivan, 2004). Second, making broad generalizations (which typically requires a random sample) was not a goal in this project. I was more interested in exploring how families produce meaning through the unique, interconnected contexts of their own lives.

It is important to clarify my usage of the terms "LGBT parent" and "LGBT family" in this project. I use these terms in two instances, in my calls for participants and in my writing. In my call for participants, I use the term "LGBT parent" as a commonly used acronym to reference individuals who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. The acronym LGBT (short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) was also commonly used by the organizations and listservs through which much of my initial recruitment was conducted. However, it is important to realize the limitations of this idea of an "LGBT community," which in itself is an imagined construct, both by some individuals presumed to be a part of it and as a means of mobilizing or imagining the mobilization of a population for various ends. Applied usages and conceptions of an "LGBT community" also frequently ignore the intersectionality of other aspects of a person's identity (such as class position or racial/ethnic identity) that may affect their communal affinities and disconnections as well as how politics are framed in the name of the imagined community (Moore, 2008; Ward, 2008).

---

raised primarily in California in the context of a same-gender couple.

10 One population that is missing from this study are bisexual parents in different-gender couples.

I also use these terms in my descriptive and analytic writing. I use these terms not only because they reflect the terms used to recruit participants, but also for the sake of brevity when referring to sample with a broad range of sexual and gender identities. Other scholars studying lesbian-parent families have also acknowledged the challenge in both acknowledging participants' complex array of sexual identities in ways that allow for clear and concise writing (Almack, 2007; Jones, 2005; Lindsay et al, 2006). While the sample I interviewed includes individuals who identified with specific identities named in the acronym, there were also individuals who, while acknowledging being non-heterosexual, identified themselves with other terms, such as queer, or felt ambivalent about describing their sexuality in terms of identities and labels altogether. Following the work of other scholars writing about similar populations (Almack, 2007; Jones, 2005; Lindsay et al, 2006), unless an individual's specific sexual identity is especially relevant to the point being made, I use the term "LGBT parent" to refer in general to participants, and the broad population from which they are sampled, who do not identify as heterosexual and/or cisgender without making specific references to their specific identities.

Furthermore, while the majority of respondents discuss their concerns in relation to sexual identity, or for many of them, parenting as a same-sex couple, the sample also includes two families with parents who identify as transgender. Although the experiences of transgender parents are complex and cannot be completely paralleled to the experiences of LGB parents, in this study I do highlight ways in which similarities and differences emerge[11].

Although I am broadly interested in the stigma experiences and management of LGBT families with children, I focus on the accounts of parents and did not interview children. I exclude children from the study for a number of reasons. First, I focus on parents to fully flesh out what their specific experiences of stigma and management look like and the implications this has for their family practices. What I learn about children's experiences is filtered through parent's expectations and understandings, which in turn is what also affects parents' day-to-day decisions. Although this approach limits what I learn about children's experiences to the what parents know, it allows me to stay true to the unique perspectives that LGBT parents have to offer and what motivates their specific practices. However, I do at times refer to existing scholarship that has focused on, or includes, the accounts of children to better contextualize the experiences reported by parents in my sample, especially when they attempt to describe their children's experiences with stigma (Gelderen et al, 2012; Lindsay et al, 2006; Lubbe, 2008; Welsh, 2011).

Logistical and ethical issues also arise when interviewing children. For instance, the broad age range of children among the families I interviewed presented another logistical challenge. While some of the families I spoke to include teenagers and young adults, the majority of children were elementary school age and younger. Interviews with young children requires specialized approaches to interviewing to ensure validity of responses and age appropriate engagement with the topics. Further, it became clear early in my interviews that while some parents would have been fine with me talking to their children, many would not. Finally, ethical

---

11 Both families with transgender respondents are also same-sex couples, which may lead one to question the extent to which these findings merely reveal more about experiences based on sexual identity and same-sex partnerships rather than experiences of transgender parenting. However, accounts that appear in later chapters will also highlight how transgender identities add additional dimensions to the issues discussed that, I argue, highlight how transphobia and cultural beliefs about the gendered embodiment of parenting add complexity to their stigma experiences and how they manage it through family practices.

considerations emerge when talking to children, especially children from marginalized families. As discussed in chapter 1, parents report many of their younger children not feeling different or marginalized based on their family structure. This is also described as something generally desirable by families. I worried that interviews with children seeking to explore stigma experiences and management may on some level highlight some of the very prejudices parents were trying to avoid exposing to their children. For these reasons, I decided to focus on the accounts of parents and not conduct interviews with children.

Finally, this study expands on the prior research on LGBT families by not placing gender restrictions on participation. Doing so helps build on the burgeoning, though still limited, scholarship on gay fathers and two-dad families. Although the amount of scholarship focusing on gay fathers is growing (examples include: Arnesto and Shapiro, 2011; Berkowitz and Marsiglio, 2007; Gianino, 2008; Lewin, 2009; Stacey, 2011), the vast majority of research on LGBT families has focused on lesbian mothers and two-mom families (Biblarz and Stacey, 2010). Very few studies also incorporate the experiences of both gay and lesbian parents into their research, creating conceptual gaps and redundancies in the separated literatures (Berkovitz, 2009). This study not only includes male-identified parents in its sample but provides a crucial point of analysis that allows for comparison with research on lesbian mothers.

Exploring possible differences, or lack thereof, between experiences of two-mom and two-dad families also develops a broader understanding of the dynamics of gendered parenting, particularly for fathers. Although existing scholarship has emphasized that men, despite little early socialization toward childrearing (Chodorow, 1978), can be capable primary caregivers (Risman, 1998), it has also finds that fathers parent with a distinct model of nurturance (Doucet, 2006). Men may not only approach parenting differently, but are also received as parents differently than women based on the greater parenting recognition, perceived competence, and status accorded to mothers over fathers (Doucet, 2006; Fox, 2009).

Locations Sampled

To better explore how different resources and contexts influence families' experiences of stigma, respondents were recruited throughout Northern California. Focusing on California, where LGBT families have a wide range of legal rights and protections, provides a context to consider the extent to which LGBT families benefit from such laws and to examine forms of stigma that persist in spite of them. In order to better understand how local context affects stigma experiences and management, I also recruited families from a diverse range of locations throughout Northern California[12].

Families were recruited from 3 different locations in Northern California: (1) the Bay Area, (2) the Greater Sacramento Area, and (3) the San Joaquin Valley. Of the 51 families interviewed, 32 lived in the Bay Area, 13 lived in the Greater Sacramento Area, and 6 lived in the San Joaquin Valley or other rural/semi-rural parts of the state[13]. Table 2 identifies the

---

12 My outreach to families living in rural and semi-rural portions of the state occurred primarily through personal contacts in those communities, reaching out through LGBT centers at local universities, and contacting chapter representatives for national organizations (such as PFLAG). I focused on these methods due to the lack of LGBT local organizations and my difficulty finding general parenting groups receptive to my project. I discuss the implications of the different local resources and organizations available to LGBT families in rural/semi-rural locations in chapter 5.

13 This number includes one family that lived several hours north of Sacramento in a small rural community in Butte County. I include that family with the San Joaquin Valley group because the demographics of location, as well

respective counties for each of these locations and the specific counties in which respondents lived.

Table 2: Counties in Sampled Locations

Region and Contained Counties	Counties Included in Sample	Number of Families in County
California Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa. San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma	Alameda	22
	Contra Costa	1
	San Francisco	7
	San Mateo	1
	Santa Clara	1
Greater Sacramento Area: El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba	Sacramento	9
	Yolo	5
San Joaquin Valley: Butte[14], Fresno, Kings, Kern, Merced, Madera, San Luis Obispo, Tulare, San Joaquin,	Butte	1
	Merced	1
	San Joaquin	1
	Stanislaus	3

Although families in these locations currently have access to the same legal rights and recognitions (although access to those rights at particular points in family life course have varied), each of these locations are drastically different in terms of visibility of LGBT populations and families, density of LGBT organizations and support services, and cultural beliefs regarding LGBT people and families in general. As I show in later chapters, these differences affect experiences of stigma and shape the strategies families use to manage them.

---

as their experiences, better match that group of respondents.
14 Butte county is not in San Joaquin Valley but clustered in that location for reasons described in footnote 4.

The size and visibility of local LGBT populations in each of these locations varies drastically. According to American Community Survey data , several Bay Area counties boast some of the highest concentrations of same-gender couples in the state. However, the percentages of same-gender couples drops in the Greater Sacramento Area and even further in San Joaquin Valley (see Table 3). Although these figures do not specifically identify the population of LGBT parents in a population, they do provide a rough indicator of possibly similar concentrations of LGBT families and the general visibility of LGBT populations in daily life.

Table 3: Percentage of Same-sex Couple Households by County

Location	County	Percentage of Same-sex Couple Households
California Bay Area	Alameda	1% (5391)
	Contra Costa	.7% (2612)
	San Francisco	2.6% (8861)
	San Mateo	.8% (2058)
	Santa Clara	.5% (3022)
Greater Sacramento Area[15]	Sacramento	.8% (4099)
	Yolo	.7% (490)
San Joaquin Valley	Butte	.5% (425)
	Merced	.2% (148)
	San Joaquin	.4% (854)
	Stanislaus	.5% (829)

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012, 5 Year Estimates

Families in these locations also have differential access to LGBT family organizations to use as resources for information, access to other LGBT families, and as a means for mobilizing over shared concerns and interests. For instance, the California Bay Area houses numerous high profile LGBT family organizations including Our Family Coalition, Adoption SF, and Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents Everywhere (COLAGE). It is also home to several small social groups for LGBT families, such as Mamas and Papas in Alameda and Castro Dads in San

---

15 The two counties in the Greater Sacramento Area with interviewed families had the highest percentages of same-gender couple households in the location. While these percentages may seem high compared to some of the Bay Area counties, they remain much lower than the highest concentrations found in the Bay Area.

Francisco. These groups provide opportunities to share resources and information about having children or being a queer parent as well as chances for LGBT families to build social networks with each other. However, these organizations tend to be centralized in the Bay Area and are notably absent in the other two locations. In Sacramento, there was the Sacramento LGBT Center, which included limited support and programming for LGBT families. In the San Joaquin Valley, there are no organizations I am aware of that provide support for LGBT families; families living in these areas either forgo these resources or travel notable distances for access[16]. The experiences of these families correspond with findings from other scholarly research on LGBT people living in rural spaces which note that one of the "worst" reported aspects of where they live include weak and fragmented LGBT networks that offer limited resources (Cody and Welch, 1997), especially for same-gender couples or LGBT parents and their children (Oswald and Coulton, 2003).

A connected issue to the concentration of LGBT people and organizations in an area are local attitudes toward LGBT people and families. LGBT families living in different areas encounter different family cultures in regards to the recognition of their relationships and acceptance from the communities in which they reside. For instance, prior research on LGBT families in the California Bay Area has noted the positive and affirming atmosphere of the area toward LGBT families and family diversity in general (Sullivan, 2004; Weston, 1991). This celebrated attitude toward LGBT families affects the ease in which they have children and live their lives. While the local cultures and attitudes in Sacramento and the San Joaquin Valley are less studied, there are some indicators that attitudes are different than in the Bay Area, or at least much more stratified and contingent on specific towns and neighborhoods in those locations.

One litmus test for how different communities in California may vary in attitude toward LGBT families are voting patterns for Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to not recognize same-gender marriage in 2008 (and was struck down by the United States Supreme Court in 2013). As Table 4 illustrates, Bay Area Counties in which families lived all voted unequivocally against Proposition 8 while counties in the Greater Sacramento Area and San Joaquin Valley showed greater support for Proposition 8. These figures illustrate a striking difference in voters' willingness to recognize same-gender relationships and may also indicate deeper antipathies toward LGBT people and their families.

---

16 Based on my own outreach and reports from respondents.

Table 4: Percentage of Votes for Proposition 8 by County

Location	County	Percentage of Votes for Proposition 8
California Bay Area	Alameda	38%
	Contra Costa	44.6%
	San Francisco	24.8%
	San Mateo	38.2%
	Santa Clara	44.2%
Greater Sacramento Area	Sacramento	53.9%
	Yolo	41.3%
San Joaquin Valley	Butte	56.1%
	Merced	70.8%
	San Joaquin	65.5%
	Stanislaus	67.9%

Source: sos.ca.gov

Recent scholarship drawing on nationally representative surveys also reveals some locational trends for understanding how people think about LGBT families. For instance, the 2003 Constructing the Family Survey asked a nationally representative sample of respondents "what living arrangements count as family" and found that only 55% of respondents counted two women with children and 53% counted two men with children as family compared to 100% that counted a wife, husband and children and even 93.1% that counted a husband and wife without children as family (Powell et al, 2010.) One factor that influenced whether definitions of family were inclusive or exclusive of same-gender couples was where individuals lived. People living in more rural areas were more likely to have definitions of family that excluded same-gender couples while individuals living in urban areas were more likely to hold inclusive definitions. This pattern might also map onto the more urban Bay Area, largely suburban Greater Sacramento Area, and suburban and rural counties in San Joaquin Valley.

Inclusive family cultures, like those noted in the Bay Area, may also be connected to the social concentration of LGBT people and families. Survey respondents with inclusive definitions of family were more likely to note having gay friends or relatives. Similarly, individuals with definitions of family that exclude same-gender couples are more likely to claim no contact with gays and lesbians at all (Powell et al, 2010). Following that logic, if an area has a greater

concentration of LGBT families then there would be a higher frequency of contact and visibility which may in turn affect the community's definitions of family toward greater inclusion.

One might be critical of the extent to which LGBT families living in a state like California, with access to state recognition of same-gender relationships and complex forms of family recognition, experience any relevant stigma; especially compared to states with laws that actively discriminate against LGBT people and their families. I challenge such assumptions on two levels. First, although LGBT families in California may benefit from a range of newly acquired legal recognitions and protections, the social climates and cultures that families experience vary drastically throughout the state. Second, the fact that these families do have access to these legal benefits is precisely why we should examine the kinds of stigma they experience. As laws granting greater legal recognition to LGBT families continue to grow across the nation, one can glimpse the face of stigma and discrimination that will likely become commonplace for the rest of the country. Finally, the diverse array of locations in California, from politically liberal, urban cities in the Bay Area to the culturally conservative rural towns in the San Joaquin Valley, provide a window into how different local cultures and attitudes toward LGBT people in other states will intersect with growing legal recognition.

Interview Structure

Interviews followed a semi-structured guide to facilitate conversations with participants. Less structured than a survey questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide lists topics and lines of inquiry to provide a loose structure to the conversation with respondents and ensure that the same broad range of topics are covered in all of the interviews (Weiss, 1994). An open-ended structure also allows room for respondents to elaborate on issues that they see as important and develop more nuanced narratives over aspects of their family lives. Topics explored in the interviews include information about participants' families of origin, past and current romantic relationships, process of acquiring children, legal status of parents with regard to one another and children, family naming practices, childcare arrangements, experiences with schools, social and familial networks, experiences of homophobia and discrimination, and parenting resources. Interviews were transcribed and then coded with special attention to themes that emerged through the course of the interviews.

Through the course of conducting the interviews several respondents noted the similarities between the interview structure and content with other interviews they had to participate in as part of the process of adopting their children. Although this was not planned, the result is that several respondents already had occasions in which to think critically on the interview topics and begin to construct a shared, initial narrative prior to meeting with me. If anything, I see this as a potential advantage, as parents were able to be thoughtful and articulate about questions they had already thought about. However, it is important to reflect on the conditions in which these narratives emerge and that similar accounts may not come from parents who had not experienced as much formal and informal scrutiny on their family relations. For instance, an emphasis on the normality of their families, or possibly downplaying of experiences of heterosexism and homophobia, trends noticed throughout the course of the interviews, may reflect concerns about how to present one's family to social workers or agents of the state.

Interviews typically ranged from an hour and a half to 3 hours in a location of respondents' choosing, often their homes. When possible, interviews were conducted with all

parents present at once. However, it was not always possible to interview all parents together due to partner separation, busy schedules, illness, family emergencies, etc. When issues arose, efforts were made to conduct separate interviews, but this was not always possible. Five interviews were conducted with only one parent from a couple, 2 interviews were conducted with members of a couple separately, 5 with only one parent from a separated couple, and one case where both parents from a separated couple were interviewed separately.

Although there are strengths and weaknesses to joint or group interviews, they can provide a rich dialogue not only between the participants and interviewer, but also between participants (Allan, 1980; Arksey, 1996.) Joint interviews also provide an opportunity to explore negotiated and conflicting views between members of a family, showing that family life is not static or experienced the same by all members (Thorne, 1992.) One possible drawback to joint interviews is that one voice may dominate and participants may not feel as comfortable being candid about their relationships when amongst other family members (Allan, 1980; Arksey, 1996; Carrington, 1999.) However, other projects exploring LGBT parenting and family life using joint and group interviews have found that parents were willing to argue and contradict one another during interviews, adding richness to the overall narrative (Sullivan, 2004; Mezey, 2008).

In my interviews, I have also found this to be the case. Respondents were also very interested in what their partners and co-parents had to say, often posing additional questions or probing responses more deeply than I felt comfortable doing in my capacity as a researcher, providing richer data. I have also found that since most of the interviews took place in the home of participants, there were moments when one participant would get up to attend to some matter in the house, which gave me opportunities to ask follow-up questions with participants who may not have had a full chance to address a topic earlier. I also began interviews with questions that prompt discussion of each individual's experiences growing up and relationships. These questions prompted each respondent to speak individually, helping to offset any patterns of only one parent or partner speaking on all matters. As a result, all participants had opportunities to become accustomed speaking to me directly and build rapport before moving into the more pressing questions in my interview guide.

My own identity as a comparatively young (mid-20s at the time of interview), white, gay, cisgender male, nonparent, graduate student from a well-known (and for many respondents, local) university also framed parents' interactions with me as an interviewer. Qualitative researchers both benefit and are hindered by insider and outsider statuses (Weiss, 1994; Weston, 1991). Insider status helps to establish access to marginalized communities, provides a basis for initial trust and rapport in interviews. However, insider status also presumes a level of base knowledge or shared cultural attitudes that can limit the scope and depth in which some topics can be discussed in interviews. Outsiders benefit from expected ignorance on a topic or group and, as a result, have greater latitude in asking seemingly "simple" or "obvious" questions. They may encounter trouble though in terms of building initial trust and rapport with respondents, who may be more guarded in revealing information related to their group identity, especially if it casts them in a negative light.

That said, insider and outsider statuses are not mutually exclusive. Many interviewers frequently find themselves in the position of being an insider in some ways and an outsider in others (Weiss, 1994). This was my experience as well. My gay identity, which was stated in my recruitment information and flagged in conversation with respondents by referring to my

"boyfriend" or "partner", helped position me as an insider in terms of our shared ties as LGBT. For instance, knowing that I shared in the political stakes of how my findings would be received helped put some respondents at ease, who sometimes admitted they would have been more concerned about how I planned to use the data if that had not been the case. There were also moments in which rapport was built through shared experiences through our LGBT identities and, for many families, our shared experiences being in same-gender relationships.

However, not having children of my own, I am an outsider to the world of parenting. I was frequently asked by respondents at some point in the interview process if I was a parent. Knowing that my firsthand knowledge of the process of having children through adoption and/or ART was limited, I was able to ask detailed questions about process. Being a young, gay man in a long-term relationship though seemed to impart status as a future or prospective insider. Once respondents discovered I had no children, they frequently followed up with asking if I planned to have children. I usually responded that I was not sure if wanted kids but it is something I am considering for later in life. As a result, some information and accounts came to be framed in the form of advice, such as reflections about timing of having children or routes to acquire them. As a result, sometimes the dynamic of the interview was shaped by an intergenerational, advisory context.

Sample Characteristics

In total, 96 parents from 51 different families were interviewed from July 2008 to February 2012. The sample includes 15 male couples, 26 female couples, one female couple that shares custody with a gay, biological father, one joint parenting arrangement between a gay man and a lesbian, and 9 single women, 7 of whom had children with a former partner and, to varying degrees, share custody, and 2 women who chose to have children alone[17]. Age of participants at time of interview ranged from late-twenties to mid-sixties with a median age of 42. Table 5 breaks down the number of children in sampled families. Gender of children included 33 daughters and 42 sons.

Table 5: Number of Children in Families

Number of Children	Number of Families
1	32[18]
2	15
3	3
4	1
Total	51

---

17 Two of the 7 women with children from a former partner were once together so, for the purposes of counting families, I count them as one.
18 Two of the families with only 1 child were also expecting another child at the time of interview.

Table 6 shows the racial/ethnic breakdown of parents in the sample. Although the sample is predominantly white, the sample includes a proportionately large number of interracial male couples. Twelve of the 15 male couples in the sample are interracial couples, compared to 3 among female couples. Although this does complicate direct comparisons between the majority white female couples and the primarily interracial male couples, the sample does include a sizable portion of interracial couples, which, as I will demonstrate in later chapters, adds additional dimensions to experiences of stigma and stigma management.

Table 6: Parents' Racial/Ethnic Identifications

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Parents
African-American	6
Asian-American	4
Latin@	4
Mixed race	3
White	79
Total	96

As Table 7 shows, the majority of parents in the sample had high levels of educational achievement. The combined household incomes of families also identify the sample as predominantly upper-middle to upper class. Combined household incomes ranged from $45,000 to $450,000 with a median income of $130,000. However, there were notable differences in household income between male and female couples in the sample. For men, it was $95,000 to $450,000 with median of $210,000. For female couples, it was $56,000 to $270,000 with a median of $120,000. For separated and single women, it was $40,000 to $200,000 with a median $85,000.

Table 7: Education Attainment of Parents

Highest Level of Education Attained	Number of Parents
High School	5
Technical School	2
College	33
Graduate or Professional School	56
Total	96

The families' combined household income and levels of education make clear that this is primarily a middle to upper class sample; missing are the voices of lower-middle and working class LGBT families with children. Studies of lesbian mothers have also noted challenges in obtaining class diverse samples (Mezey, 2008; Sullivan, 2004), which may be due to working-class and low income social conditions such as "inflexible work schedules, restricted access to support networks, and the high cost of donor insemination that limited their opportunities to become mothers" (Mezey, 2008, p.37). Indeed, many respondents from this sample noted that the high costs of reproductive interventions and adoption were among the greatest barriers they experienced in having children and a major reason many stopped at one child.

Despite the limited class diversity in the sample, class is a lens through which I examine the accounts of interviewed families. In particular, the kinds of narratives and practices available to families are influenced by their class position. Discussed in later chapters, practices utilized by families to negotiate stigma include living in costly, but LGBT family friendly, neighborhoods, sending their children to private schools where they had more control of school environments and curricula, and spending large amounts of hours volunteering at schools to maintain visibility as a family and watch over their children. The high financial and time costs associated with these practices are more easily negotiated by families with greater economic resources. Less affluent families, however, would enact these practices with greater relative costs or seek different practices to achieve the same ends (if they even desire the same ends.) Even access to adoption and ART, the primary methods through which intentional same-gender couples acquire children, are costly, time restrictive, and require navigating complex institutional settings where access is heavily shaped by class position (Mamo, 2007; Thompson, 2005).

The majority white sample also limits the scope to which findings speak to the experiences LGBT parents of color. However, race and ethnicity remain important lenses in my analysis. Race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality are interlocking identities that mutually construct and inform how individuals experience and interpret their social reality and those of others (Collins, 1990; Gray, 2009; Stein, 2001.) Race is also entwined in how people understand and experience their sexual identities, family relationships, and perceive the kin relations of others (Collins, 1990; Moore, 2011; Rubin 1994.) For example, Kimberly DaCosta (2007), studying multiracial identity and families, finds that interracial couples and their children frequently struggle for recognition in public settings and, when recognized, are subject to intense public gazes. These conditions arise from expectations that families are monoracial and, as a result, the belief that parents and children "should" appear to be the same race.

As a result, the implications of race appear in respondents' practices in a myriad of ways. For example, race influences many LGBT families use of ART and parameters for adoption in order to cultivate a shared racial appearance between parents and children. However, as I argue in the next chapter, some respondents' choices also reflect a desire to maintain white privilege for their families. The sizable proportion of interracial families in the sample also reveals ways in which managing racial difference inside and outside of families intersects with management of LGBT-related stigma.

Even with the noted limitations of the sample there is still much that can be learned from the experiences of these families. The families I interviewed are not meant to represent the full breadth of diversity of LGBT families, nor are they meant to represent the full array of practices used by this population. Instead, I use these parents' to explore the complex meanings, and clues

toward experiences and management of stigma, bound up in a range of contextually specific family practices.

Chapter 3: In the Eyes of Family and the State: Negotiating Anticipated Legal and Social Stigma in Family Building

This chapter examines how anticipated stigma, or the expectation that someone with a stigmatized identity holds that they will experience discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping, regardless of whether it actually occurs or not, influences LGBT family formation. While other research has explored social stigma and discrimination embedded in the process of having children for prospective LGBT parents (see Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012 and Gianino, 2008 for examples), this chapter focuses on how LGBT family creation and early family practices are influenced by prospective parents' concerns about future instances (e.g. once they are parents and children are older) in which discrimination and social stigma may occur. Even as early as prospective parenthood, LGBT parents, as a result of the steps taken to become parents amidst a culture of heterosexism and homophobia, attend to navigating future stigmas prior.

In this chapter, I use the concept of anticipated stigma to explore the changing character of stigma experienced by LGBT families. It helps to illustrate the subtle persistence of stigma in a historical moment where LGBT people, and families, experience a growing, but incomplete (and, at times, ambiguous), social and legal acceptance. I build on current understandings of anticipated stigma by pushing the temporal boundaries of the contexts in which individuals feel risks associated with stigma, as well as expanding on the ways in which managing anticipated stigma affects their lives. In particular, I will show how anticipated stigma affects the emotional management of family creation and day-to-day life for prospective and new LGBT parents. I also show how the law, operating both as a site for stigma and a tool for addressing it, shapes family relationships and the creation of parenting identities.

The findings of this chapter also encourage a broader consideration of the influence and quality of anticipated stigma for "discredited identities," in addition to "discreditable ones," especially as overt discrimination stemming from race and gender identity also increasingly face harsher scrutiny and public disapproval (Sue, 2010). LGBT parents families also occupy an interesting position where it is possible to conceal their queer family structure, but it is challenging in many contexts and, for many, an undesirable strategy (Almack, 2007; Armesto and Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008). As a result, their anticipated stigma management strategies, while at times including covering in certain contexts, are much more complex than what has been discussed.

Two sets of future-oriented concerns heavily influenced family planning and how they had children. The first set of concerns revolved around maintaining parent rights and custody of children in the future. The second set revolved around issues of social recognition, both from intimates, such as extended families, and from outsiders, such as acquaintances and strangers. I identify these sets of future-oriented concerns as instances of anticipated stigma because the primary reason that parents are concerned about custody or social recognition has to do with the potential for others to accord them lower status on the basis of their LGBT identities and nonnormative family structures. These concerns shaped a number of prospective parenting practices including: method for acquiring children, who provides biological material or carries children, selecting gamete donors and surrogates, adoption criteria, legal interventions taken, and surname selection for both parents and children. Focusing on each set of concerns in turn, this chapter looks at how respondents made choices by anticipating how family building decisions

would affect the possibility of legal or social issues in the future and their vulnerability should issues arise.

In order to better understand the anticipated stigma experienced by LGBT families and how it shapes family creation and day-to-day practices, I draw on temporally nested theories of social action (Emirbayer, and Mische, 1998; Mead, 1932; Schultz, 1967), in which all meaningful social action is oriented in relation to time; with some actions more oriented to the past, present, or the future, In particular, I draw on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) definition of agentic social action as a " temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments— the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (p.970). Using this framework, the same action may have multiple, nested, temporal contexts shaping it and providing meaning and motive. Emirbayer and Mische describe this as the "tri-chordal" model of agency in which social action includes, to some degree, all of these separate, but related elements, but some components will blend together and the degree of harmony between different elements may vary.

Using this framework, prospective and new parents may approach family building practices based on their past family experiences growing up, SNAF understandings of what reproductive family life course "should" be and, "queer temporalities" connected to future uncertainty and danger associated with queer lives and bodies (Halberstam, 2005). In particular, I find that the future, particularly uncertain ones where parents and children may be vulnerable to social stigma and discrimination, loom heavily in the present. Although there are other "chords" resonating in respondent's family building practices, these uncertain and potentially harmful futures ring strongly in shaping their actions.

It is important to note though that many of these concerns are not unique to LGBT parents. If anything, these are anxieties and concerns that could come up for any family having children using "alternative routes," like ART or adoption, where these processes situate families outside of normative views of what families "are" or "ought to be"; namely, a married, heterosexual couple with children biogenetically related to both of them. These concerns can also come up in step- and blended-family situations, where social and legal recognition, as well as the material demands of parenting, may be distributing across even more adults, multiple households, and differently among siblings (Cherlin, 1978).

Although these concerns are not unique to LGBT families, I argue that they are especially relevant to this population for two reasons. First, the use of ART and adoption are increasingly common routes for LGBT people to have children. Although many LGBT identified parents have children before identifying as LGBT (Stacey and Biblarz, 2001; Moore, 2011), ART and adoption have become increasingly common as individuals decide to have children after coming out or in a same-sex couple. While many of these concerns are not uniquely an LGBT parent issue, they affect a large portion of that population and are central to my respondents' accounts.

Second, as I will illustrate in this chapter, many of the concerns arising from ART and adoption, such legal ambiguity and uncertainty of parental rights over time, are exacerbated by the additional lack of social and legal recognition LGBT families face. Although there are a myriad of laws that exist to establish parental rights, many of these differ state to state and are up to judge arbitration, which may be influenced by SNAF views about the importance of biogenetic ties to parenting as well as anti-LGBT sentiments. Many of their fears as LGBT parents involve these uncertain and changing political landscapes. Furthermore, even though in

the broader scope of history rights have been gained for LGBT families, this has not been without backlashes in which laws have been repealed or new regressive laws put into practice. The important role that others— including judges, social workers, medical practitioners, lawyers, gamete donors, surrogates, progenitors putting children up for adoption, friends, and families of origin— play in the process of having children also leaves LGBT prospective parents vulnerable to any anti-LGBT sentiments or prejudices these individuals may have now or in the future.

As noted in chapter 2, all the families I interviewed already had children at time of interview. Although some were in the process of having more children, or were planning on having more in the near future, the majority of respondents spoke about the past. However, for some families this process was very recent, less than a year prior, while for others, with teenage and adult children, much more time had passed. Among the families included in this analysis, 10 had children between 1991-1999, 16 between 2000-2005, 16 between 2006-2010, and 8 families, with multiple children, had at least one child between 2000-2005 and another between 2006-2010. Despite the different social and legal contexts in which families were acquiring children between the early 1990s through the late 2000s, what is striking was the consistency of the concerns interviewed parents report, even as severity, strategies, and options available to their families for responding to these concerns varied.

Legal Recognition and Maintaining Custody of Children

Almost all of the respondents I interviewed indicated that some level of concern about their legal recognition as parents influenced their early family-building practices. Respondents felt that both their LGBT identities and use of "non-conventional" means for having children, such as adoption and ART, created a context of legal ambiguity in which their rights were limited and ambiguous, leaving them vulnerable to losing custody of their children. Respondents expressed a range of concerns about legal parent recognition including: fears that laws recognizing LGBT parents might change and, if they did, the State would take away their children; that non-biological parents would lose custody of children if their relationship with a biological parent ended through separation or death; and fears that gamete donors, surrogates, or biological progenitors would contest custody in the future. Although several respondents noted that such events were unlikely, such concerns and scenarios nonetheless shaped their decisions.

Shaping these concerns were earlier historical moments in which prohibitive custody laws for LGBT identified parents existed, high profile stories in which LGBT identified parents lost custody of their children due to an absence of legal recognitions, negative experiences of other LGBT parents in their social networks, uncertainty over the extent of their legal parenting rights as an LGBT parent and acquiring children through the use of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and adoption, and a general sense of vulnerability as LGBT identified individuals in a heterosexist society.

Most respondents acknowledged that they benefiting from the (mostly) positive changes in family law for their legal recognition as parents. However, several were also cautious, noting that laws can change, for better or for worse, and that gains have typically only been made in a few states. The remainder of this section lays out three strategies families enacted amidst early family creation to reinforce their legal recognition as parents and offset custody and parenting challenges that might be made against them in the future. First, several families privileged methods of acquiring children that established a biological and/or genetic tie between parents

and children. Second, families sought additional modes of legal recognition of parenthood, such as second parent adoption, that were presently redundant in their current state but provided additional layers of protection should laws change in the future or the family moves to a state with fewer protections for LGBT families. Third, families selected and shaped their interactions with donors and surrogates in ways to minimize the possibility that they might makes claims on children in the future, and if they did, those claims would be legally weaker. Finally, I show how a similar set of concerns shapes how adoptive families negotiate interactions with biological progenitors of children in cases of open adoption. I explore each of these strategies in turn.

Biological Relatedness as a Form of (Pseudo) Legal Protection

Respondents' concerns about legal recognition and custody strongly influenced their decisions as they had children and built their families. In particular, several families sought out methods of acquiring children that created biological and/or genetic ties between parents and children. Feeling uncertain about the stability, or in some cases the absence, of laws legally recognizing one or both parents they sought to build biological ties that make give them greater legal and social claims to parenthood. For instance, Bonnie Flory notes that fears of changing laws regarding custody and parenting rights for LGBT people influenced her decision to have a child using DI rather than adopt.

> Bonnie: It is interesting, deciding to have a child or adoption. Part of the—I guess I was a little bit worried about the culture—I was worried that if I adopted, at some point, society might decide that no gays or lesbians should be allowed to adopt and they might take the kids away from the adoptive parents. But if I had carried the child, if I was genetically tied to the child, even though I was gay or lesbian—even though I am a lesbian, they might say you do have ownership. I felt like I had stronger rights to keep my child if it was genetically linked to me. So that was a big part of why I was going to get pregnant. That was the major reason.

Bonnie's fears build on an understanding of LGBT people as vulnerable to changing laws as a result of their stigmatized status and the uncertainty of parenting rights the further one moves away from SNAF expectations of family. In particular, her concerns about adoption were informed by past legal prohibitions for LGBT parents and prospective parents, prohibitions still in place in some states, and the possibility that those laws could be expanded or adopted by other states in the future. Although few states had outright prohibitions against adoption by LGBT people at the time Bonnie was planning to have a child in late 1990s (as well as in the present[19]), adoption and custody decisions for LGBT people were, and in many states still are, subject to district level court interpretations and a hazy constellation of laws that shift with time and location (Human Rights Campaign, 2014; Eskridge, 1999.)

One also does not have to look far back to see a period in which LGBT identified individuals were denied custody and adoption rights. In the 1970s, many LGBT identified

---

[19]Florida's statute against "homosexuals" adopting children was adopted by Florida Legislature in 1977. The statute was declared unconstitutional by the Florida Court of Appeals in September 2010 (Human Rights Campaign, 2014.) Mississippi and Utah prohibit same-sex couples from adopting. In 2000, Utah enacted a law restricting unmarried couples from foster care and adoption and in 2007 passed another law that gives preference to married couples over single persons. Mississippi also passed a law in 2000 that prohibits adoptions by same-sex couples (National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, 2009.)

parents with children born in previous heterosexual relationships lost custody of their children in court battles with former spouses on the basis of their sexual orientation (Benkov, 1994; Eskridge, 1999). During this early period, when courts did award custody to LGBT parents, it was frequently under the condition that parents not live with any same-sex partners to shield children from their parents' "sexual deviance." The late 1970s and 1980s saw some improvement as courts started to move away from outright denying custody to gays and lesbians to establishing custody on the basis of "child's best interests," which called for direct evidence of harm to children and also took children's voiced custody preferences into account. However, this practice was a double-edged sword, as judges could arbitrarily consider a broad range of factors when determining "child's best interests", including homophobic behavior from the broader community in which a family resided and the impact of social stigma on a child's well-being (Eskridge, 1999.)

In order to better secure "ownership" of her prospective child against the possibility of a custody challenge in the future based on her lesbian identity, Bonnie opted to have a child using donor sperm. Children conceived and born with the help of ART, although fraught with its own issues regarding custody (discussed later in the chapter), aligns with SNAF understandings that biological ties are constitutive of parenthood (Johnson-Hanks and King, 2011). In this way, enacting normalcy, or sticking as close as possible to normative scripts of family and childrearing, operates as a means of preemptively protecting her own parenting rights and custody of her intended child. Laura Mamo (2007), in her work on prospective lesbian parents using donor insemination, describes these practices as "affinity ties," or informal strategies for bolstering personal and public recognition of kinship. Although the use of these normative scripts do not completely reconcile Bonnie's stigmatized, or incongruous, status as an LGBT parent, it does help bolster her social recognition as a mother.

Families were also concerned by the ambiguity of their legal rights under existing legal frameworks at the time they were planning to have children. Veronica Landon and Robin De Luca illustrate these concerns in their decision to have a child using Robin's eggs, fertilized and implanted in Veronica using IVF.

> Robin: [IVF] seemed to solve all of our issues. She got to be pregnant and I got to be biologically connected to the child because I was concerned about not having a tangible connection to the child. Here we were, in the eyes of the state, an unmarried couple, the child wasn't going to be related to me at all. I wanted the connection and so that worked for both of us.

Similar to Bonnie, Robin sees having a biological connection to her child in the absence of state recognition of her relationship with Veronica, or the child she planned to carry, as important. For both Robin and Bonnie, a biological tie is a "tangible," or material, tie between parent and child that is also socially recognized; which they felt would also bolster legal claims to their children in a legally ambiguous present and future. For Robin, these concerns were enough for her and Veronica, who wanted to experience pregnancy, to select costly and medically intrusive measures, such as IVF, to meet both of their desires.

However, not all families felt having biologically related children was the best way to secure and protect parental rights. These concerns primarily occurred among the (cisgender) male couples in my sample who could only have biological children with the help of a surrogate;

who has more lasting involvement through the process and also more legal power and authority to make claims on children. Reflecting these concerns, Paul Brenning and his partner, Bill Dente, decided to adopt rather than use a surrogate because they felt adoption was less risky, less legally complicated, and cheaper.

> Interviewer: You mentioned you were considering surrogacy at an earlier point. What ultimately led to the decision to adopt over using a surrogate?
> Paul: Number one the cost of surrogacy is very expensive and then there is no guarantee. Then there all of the legal issues that are around that and the things to deal with. We felt like adoption would be a better method for us.

In all three of these cases respondents tried to ensure that their legal rights as parents would be as clear and secure as possible. However, while Bonnie and Robin interpret having biological ties to their children as the best way to remove ambiguity regarding their rights in the present and in the future, Paul does not. In addition to the high financial costs of surrogacy (which can easily cost over $100,000), he takes greater comfort in adoption because the legal process involved in obtaining custody of children born through surrogacy is comparatively more complex and uncertain, specifically surrounding the termination of the surrogate's parental rights.

The different perceptions in the use of ART between Bonnie and Robin compared to Paul and Bill also highlights some of the unique issues faced by queer, cisgender men compared to queer, cisgender women in acquiring biologically-related children. These issues arise from the different contexts of having children using donor insemination compared to surrogacy and less ability to distance biological others from the birth process in surrogacy. As we will see later in the chapter, many couples having children using donor insemination note multiple layers of protections utilized to protect their parent status and autonomy, including the use of anonymous, or unknown sperm donors. However, the embodied presence and known identity of a surrogate impedes the acquisition of parental rights and leaves open the possibility that that the surrogate may refuse to give up parental rights after the child is born. This is compounded by more restrictive laws surrounding the pre-birth termination of parental rights in many states; which also affects some adoptive parents as well. Prospective parents using a surrogate also tend to conduct a national search for a surrogate match, subjecting them to a complex array of state surrogacy laws that are not comparable to using donor sperm, which were typically from local sources, and, even when from out of state, once acquired, subject only to local laws. As a result, the queer, cisgender men in my sample were at a real disadvantage compared to the women in terms of the tools they had at their disposal to safeguard their future legal recognition as parents.

Second Parent Adoption and Overlapping Legal Recognitions

In addition to shaping how some families chose to have children, concerns over custody also influenced the ways in which respondents sought formal, legal recognitions as parents. However, the extent and means through which parents are able to obtain legal recognition varies across states and, in reference to the parents I interviewed, the time in which they had children. In states that recognize same-sex marriage or some legal equivalent, same-sex couples have access to the same procedures (or lack thereof) to create legal parent-child relationships as heterosexual couples. They can jointly adopt children, apply for stepparent adoptions, and have both of their names included on a child's birth certificate. In California, where the majority of

respondents had children, same-sex couples can both be recognized as legal parents from time of child's birth as long as they both socially demonstrate "intent to parent"[20]. As a result, same-sex parents in California do not even need to be in a legally recognized relationship or still together at time of childbirth as long as the intent for both individuals to act as parents can be demonstrated. Legally this comes up in instances in which a couple conceives a child and then separates before the child is born. However, couples without access to marriage or equivalents, due to the location or legal conditions at the time in which they had children, are limited to other legal procedures to extend parental rights to non-biological partners or secondary partners in adoptions.

The most common route for an unmarried, same-sex couples to gain equal as parents is through a second-parent adoption. Second parent adoption is a court procedure that, mirroring step-parent adoptions, allows an individual to adopt a partner's child without termination of the primary parent's legal rights. Early second-parent adoptions first appeared in the 1980s on a case-by-case basis through district level court cases, typically in major metropolitan areas (Shapiro, 1999). At the present, second parent adoptions are broadly available to same-sex couples in 22 states[21] (and the District of Columbia), prohibited in 8[22], and unclear in the 22 other states, where the status of LGBT adoption rights remain undefined and determinations are still made on a case-by-case basis (Human Rights Campaign, 2014).

However, several respondents who were legally recognized as parents by their state without undergoing a second parent adoption, still decided to petition for a second parent adoption. Amanda Nolan and Brooke Garner explain why Brooke, despite being considered a legal parent in California by virtue of her domestic partnership to Amanda, chose do a second parent adoption.

> Interviewer: So looking at the legal aspect of custody and things like that, did you all have to do a second parent adoption also?
> Amanda: That's a good question. We did. When he was born--
> Brooke: We didn't have to though.
> Amanda: --when he was born Brooke signed a form as the second parent according to California. She is on the birth certificate.
> Brooke: I think that is a new thing AB...
> Interviewer: AB 205[23]?
> Brooke: AB 205. Yeah. So we knew that.
> Amanda: Yeah. That we knew. We went ahead and did second parent adoption because of a couple of things. One, we don't know if we will always stay in California. Two,

---

20 "Intent to parent" is a legal definition referring to " an individual, married or unmarried, who manifests the intent to be legally bound as the parent of a child resulting from assisted reproduction" (CA FAMILY CODE §7960).
21California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.
22Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Utah, and Wisconsin.
23Assembly Bill 205 (AB 205 for short) is the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2003. The majority of the bill's provisions went into effect at the start of 2005 stating that "[r]egistered domestic partners shall have the same rights, protections, and benefits, and shall be subject to the same responsibilities, obligations, and duties under [California state] law, whether they derive from statutes, administrative regulations, court rules, government policies, common law, or any other provisions or sources of law, as are granted to and imposed upon spouses."(Cal. Fam. Code § 297.5(a).)

> we travel a lot outside of California. Three, we just want to make sure that everyone recognizes Brooke as the second parent.

Amanda and Brooke's reasons for doing a second parent adoption, in spite of the recognition they already receive in California without extra procedures, were common among respondents. Although Amanda and Brooke emphasize their understanding that a second parent adoption was not necessary for Brooke to be legally recognized as a parent, the legal ambiguity outside of California made seeking multiple layers of recognition desirable. Second parent adoption, although granted on a state level, is also federally recognized and, under the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution, other states are required to recognize these adoptions. This recognition, as Brooke points out, has been legally tested and required states that do not legally recognize same-sex couples or allow second parent adoption to recognize the parent status of both parents equally (National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2015). The ambiguity of the strength of their parenting claims if they ever left the state, whether relocating or merely traveling, was enough for them to seek petition for a second parent adoption and ensure that they kept documents (such as amended birth certificates and adoption paperwork) on hand whenever they left the state.

Conversations among couples about second parent adoption also brought up another layer of custody concerns—protecting parenting rights from each other in the future. Couples noted another reason for undertaking a second parent adoption was to ensure both parents were equally recognized in case they ever separated and a custody battle occurred. Emily Flynn explains how these concerns influenced her decision to pursue a second parent adoption.

> Emily: I think we would have probably still done a second parent adoption because in other states if they don't recognize it then somebody takes your kid away. So we really did it to protect ourselves. We didn't have to do it from a legal standpoint. From the rest of the world standpoint we didn't have to do it. But we did it to protect ourselves so that if we split up we can't run off—one of us can't run off with the baby—is really why we did it. Or that my parents couldn't try to take it away or her parents.

Similar to Amanda and Brooke, Emily notes that the second parent adoption was not legally necessary for recognition in the present but was an extra layer of insurance against unlikely, but still possible, futures in which her and her partner separate and have a custody battle.

These concerns were also grounded in respondents' awareness that such cases have occurred in the past and the results have been disastrous for some non-biological mothers. An older, but frequently referenced case by respondents is *Alison D. v. Virginia M.*. In 1991, the court denied visitation rights to Alison D., a lesbian social parent, after separation from her former partner, Virginia M.. Another is the recent case involving Janet Jenkins, whose former partner, Lisa Miller, refused to comply with court ordered visitation rights to see their daughter, Isabella. Over the past 10 years, Miller, the biological parent, attempted to cut Jenkins out of their daughter's life in numerous ways. She moved from Vermont (where the court custody was determined and the couple were previously recognized in a civil union) to Virginia where she tried to use Virginia's more restrictive courts to remove Jenkin's custody rights. Ultimately, Miller fled the country with Isabella in 2010 when the court awarded custody to Jenkins because

Miller refused to comply with visitation orders. As such cases demonstrated for parents like Amanda, Brooke, and Emily, not only do they have to safeguard their parental rights against potential threats from outside their family but also threats that might come from future versions of themselves and their partners.

Although most families described the scenarios that prompted them to pursue a second parent adoption as unlikely, they were pressing enough for couples to undertake these extra measures, in spite of the basic level of protections many of them already had and the extra costs involved. Brooke and Amanda, for example, noted legal expenses for Brooke's second parent adoption costing about two thousand dollars, in addition to time lost unto the procedure due to court time, home studies, paperwork, etc. The process as a whole also involves outside agents, such as a lawyers, social workers, and judges, assessing of one's family, which several respondents found intrusive and insulting. Again, it is notable that these costs and discomforts are not paid to further increase any recognition a parent has at the present, but as an additional form of protection, an insurance, against possible negative scenarios that might occur if a couple ever relocates, a partner dies, if they separate, or if state laws ever change.

These concerns, and the conversations and practices they generate among interviewed couples, highlight an important way in which the context of stigma and discrimination uniquely affects LGBT families compared to heterosexual ones acquiring children through ART or adoption. The reality that their mutual recognition as parents can be state dependent, legally ambiguous, and vary drastically based on a judge's interpretation with limited established precedence, means that not only do same-sex couples seek as many layers of legal recognition as possible, they have to do so considering the implications of their relationships ending and dealing with the worst possible future versions of each other and their extended families. While relationship dissolution, divorce, and the death of a partner are very real possibilities for all couples, the lack of clear and stable recognitions for same-sex couples means that the stakes of these scenarios are raised and many of the families in my sample were compelled to confront them in sobering ways during what would otherwise be the joyous occasion of starting a new family.

Another strategy used by some families amidst legal ambiguity and custody concerns was to socially display their mutual intent to parent as much as possible. Claire and Noreen Wishon, for example, were concerned that, should they separate, they could receive discriminatory treatment as a same-sex couple and were especially worried that Claire, who is transgender, would be extra vulnerable to mistreatment. Claire explains how these concerns prompted her and Noreen to use a shared surname to further clarify that they are both parents.

> Claire: I think also having heard some stories about families that separate, because, you know, I hope that never happens but it is always a possibility, that this [having a shared surname] clarifies our intention further and no judge could look at us and say, "Well, were you really interested in having this child?"

What is especially interesting in this example are the conditions in which Claire and Noreen are clarifying mutual parent statuses. Compared to most of the other families I spoke to, their legal claims, on the surface, were stronger. They were married when their daughter was born, both were biological parents, and each was legally declared a parent without any additional procedures. However, concerns surrounding unfair treatment and Claire's heightened

vulnerability to transphobia led them to look for additional ways to declare their intent as equal parents and as a family should issues arise in the future, such as the couple separating and going to court to negotiate custody.

Several respondents also expressed concern, or at least considered, whether or not their own families of origin could be a threat to their parenting rights. Shelia Turner describes how concerns about her and partner's families of origin encroaching on their parenting autonomy pushed her to seek out extra layers of legal recognition, as well as their decision to use an unknown donor.

> Shelia: I think because I had such a bad relationship with her parents—it was getting better, but still—I didn't trust them enough or something if anything happened to Lori. This was before the change in domestic partnership laws. But now you can have the baby with both domestic partners. But then you had to wait six months. And for six months my biggest fear in the world was that something would happen to her in those six months and I would fight with her parents over him. So trust me I did everything. I adopted him. I put him in my will. I did the same thing with him too [referring to her younger son]. I was basically like crossing the "t"s and dotting the "i"s. I just never wanted it to be an issue.

Shelia's concerns related to families of origin and custody reflect the interweaving vulnerability both as an LGBT parent and as a non-legal parent. Shelia's bad relationship with Lori's parents was based on her parents longstanding disapproval of Lori's queer identity and same-sex relationship. It was this bad relationship with Lori's parents that made Shelia feel that, if anything happened to Lori, her parents might try to claim custody of the children from Shelia in the window in which she was not recognized by the State as a legal parent. Conversely, other families I interviewed who disclosed that they had not completed a second parent adoption, usually noted that they plan to but "just had not got around to it", accounting for their procrastination by noting that they would have been more on top of that if their families were less supportive of their relationship.

Unlike married heterosexual couples using ART or adoption to have children, the legal recognitions granted to both members of same-sex couples are more uncertain and may not apply if they travel or move in the future. As a result, same-sex couples sought out multiple layers of, currently redundant, legal recognition to protect their parental rights in an uncertain and potentially risky future. In doing so, early in their family building they confront ugly possibilities of how their relationship might end and prepare to deal with the worst future versions of themselves and their families.

Donor and Surrogate Selection Shaped by Future Concerns

Just as respondents managed concerns that extended family members might challenge for custody of children in the future, some were also concerned that gamete donors and surrogates might also have a change of heart in the future and make parental claims. As a result, these concerns shaped the selection and process of using a donor and/or a surrogate in order to minimize the likelihood that they will feel they have a tie to a child and weaken the legal strength of possible parental claims in the future. However, these practices were frequently in conflict with respondents' interest in maintaining some degree of knowledge and ongoing contact with

donors and surrogates in case their children ever have questions about their biological origins. This conflict was most clearly illustrated in debates over the use of a known versus an unknown sperm donor.

Deciding whether or not to use a known or unknown donor was a serious consideration among all respondents using a sperm donor. Respondents' decisions were influenced by their views of the future ramifications of each. On one hand, several families noted that using a known donor was desirable because of the culturally emphasized importance placed on knowing one's biological and cultural origins. Other studies of adoption and kinship have also noted the cultural fascination and importance placed on knowing biological and cultural "roots" (Howell, 2006; Mason, 2008). Families discussed the benefit of that knowledge and also the idea that children could develop some form of relationship with donors to keep them from becoming an unknown figure in their lives. Children are able to get to know their donor as they grow older and place them in the greater context of their lives and donors are available to answer any questions children might have about their biological ancestry as they grow older. For these reasons respondents noted that choosing a family member as a donor was a desirable possibility. Other studies of lesbian parent families describe similar findings, noting that using a family member as a donor is seen as a way to create a "loose genetic tie" between social parents and their children; presuming that their siblings would share a similar genetic similarity to them and ensuring their children are connected to their larger biogenetic family (Benkov, 1994; Mamo 2007; Sullivan 2004).

On the other hand, known donors, especially when they are extended family members, come with their own sets of complications. Whereas the anonymity of an unknown donor provides both intended parents and the donor with a powerful layer of legal protection, the greater knowledge and contact that children frequently have with known donors can shape the expectations of donors and bolster their capability to make legal claims on children. The ideological presumptions and valorization of biological parenthood are tenacious and can shape both social understandings of the expectations held by donors (and parents) as well as how their rights can be determined in the courts. It was for these reasons that Shelia, discussed earlier, decided she and Lori should use an unknown donor instead of her brother.

> Shelia: On the one hand it would have been nice to have a known donor. But at the same time I didn't want to have to deal with the legal complications. What if something happens? What if one day he decides, well, you know, I signed the document that said that I'm not the parent, but what if he just changes the mind? We didn't want to deal with that. So even after that we could have still looked for a known donor but I didn't want to deal with that. I didn't want to deal with a situation years down the line. He changes his mind and I would have to deal with court and all of this other stuff. Being a lawyer I get to hear all of the horror stories.

For Shelia, the benefits that would come from having her brother as a known donor do not outweigh the possibility of her brother either socially or legally imposing himself as a parent. What is also notable in Shelia's comments is her sense, guided in part by her understanding as a lawyer, that these issues may come up "down the line" as people change their mind about the kinds of relationships they wish to have with children produced from their biological material

and the power those claims can have in courts, even with the current legal protections and recognitions provided to parents by the State.

Shelia's concern over the potential pitfalls of using her brother as a donor were also articulated by other families in broader conversations about using a known or unknown donor. Deanna and Jan Smith discuss the concerns that shaped many of the responses given by families who decided to use an unknown sperm donor.

> Deanna: Yeah, we decided to go to the [sperm bank] because we wanted our kids to be our kids and not have anyone have rights or responsibilities or-
> Jan: We didn't want another family also. We didn't want to have to worry about anyone severing parental rights when the baby was born.
> Deanna: We had a family friend of mine who offered obliquely a few times. I just want it to be simple. We are pretty united on that and wanted to have an identity release donor.

Similar to Shelia, the use of an unknown donor was primarily framed as a way to avoid any ambiguity regarding Deanna and Jan's legal recognition as parents. However, their use of a donor who consented to "identity release," meaning that once children are legally adults they may contact the fertility clinic who will release to them contact information for their donor, can be seen as a compromise between the legal protections of an unknown donor and the benefits families saw to children being able to meet and know the donor. As table 1 illustrates, the majority of families using a sperm donor opted to use an unknown donor, and of those using an unknown donor most selected one who had agreed to identity release (see table 8). The high usage of identity release donors is another reminder of the societal importance placed on knowing one's biological origins and the degree to which parents, projecting that their children not having access this information in the future will negatively affect them, try to accommodate those future, potential desires.

Table 8: Known versus Unknown Donor Selections

Types of Donors	Number of Families
Known Donor	6
Unknown with Identity Release	14
Unknown without Identity Release	6[24]
Total	26

These concerns are not limited to parents using donor insemination. Similar concerns were also conveyed among two-dad families with children born through surrogacy.As noted earlier in the chapter, cisgender gay men do not have the same range of options available to women using donor insemination for distancing additional biological actors, putting them in a more vulnerable

---

24 Two families noted that they were not aware that identity release was a possibility at the time.

position. Given material and legal constraints, an anonymous surrogate would be very difficult, and, based on the desire to be involved in the birth process conveyed by respondents, undesirable. However, gay male respondents having children with the help of a surrogate had a few strategies for addressing their concerns regarding custody and social claims to parenthood.

First, some families had children through gestational surrogacy, in which the egg donor and surrogate are different individuals. By dissembling the biological and genetic ties, respondents tried to dilute identification or claims to parenthood by donors and surrogates. Interestingly, this same IVF practice is used by some of the female couples in my study, in which one partner's egg is fertilized and carried by the other, as a means to expand claims of biological motherhood to both parents. Such practices, given meaning by their intent and interpretation by parents, fertility clinics, and courts, is a reminder of the importance of the "ontological choreography," or the interplay between between biological, legal, and social understandings of kinship, at work in the production of parent-child relationships via ART and adoption, rather than any essentialized claim to parenthood (Thompson, 2005). In other words, the same practices can be instilled with different meanings based on the intent of the actors and organizations involved, as well as how they are interpreted through normative lenses of kinship and gendered parenting.

Second, families using surrogacy also tried to select surrogates that they felt would be less inclined to make any claims to parenthood, or, at the most extreme end, would decide to keep the child after birth. Gary Ly describes how such considerations influenced he and his partner, Charles Dunne's, choice on a surrogate.

> Gary: She's very outgoing, she's very open and, we liked her, and we liked her energy, and she wanted to be a traditional surrogate. She wanted it to be--she didn't want to do the IVF thing. And she has 4 kids already and she's married, and so we thought 'Well, it's probably safer, because there's no chance she'll change her mind and want to keep the kid.' And I think the other reason why some people don't want the traditional surrogacy is because of that fear. And of course we're a little concerned about that, but we figure she has 4 children already I can't imagine she wants more [laughs].

Although the surrogate they chose wanted to be a "traditional surrogate", meaning their own egg is used, which, as previously discussed, is considered more risky, Gary and Charles were comforted by the fact that the surrogate already had four kids, feeling it was unlikely she would want another. However, it is worth noting that although this was a comfort for them, it did not take away the worry and the vulnerability that families discussed regarding traditional surrogacy.

These kind of negotiations and compromises are also found among families who used known sperm donors. Although many families used unknown donors because they felt it granted them the most legal protection, several families noted that this increased protection was not worth the tradeoff of not knowing the donor's identity. Glenn Frye explains why she wasn't interested in using an anonymous donor:

> Glenn: I just personally couldn't imagine a conversation with my kids of when they say, "Who is my father?" and I say, "I don't know." To explain that. To me it just didn't make sense. So I wanted it to be someone we knew.

As Glenn and many of these other accounts illustrate, parents are balancing a dual set of concerns. On one hand, respondents acknowledge the cultural importance placed on knowing the identity of biological progenitors and how this can be meaningful and important for adopted children and DI-conceived children. Parents do not want to cause children duress in the future or make them feel like they are deprived of a crucial piece of understanding who they are. However, this is balanced with the possible risks in terms of parental custody and autonomy associated with using a known donor or having an open adoption.

Glenn and her partner, Drew Frye, ended up asking Drew's brother-in-law to be their donor. Similar to Gary and Charles' surrogate selection, Glenn notes that he was an ideal choice for a number of reasons that they felt would make him less likely to feel like a parent to their children:

> Glenn: They already two [kids] of their own. Her sister had fertility issues and therefore had explored a lot of options in her own experience—although she didn't have to exercise any of them—so her mind was very open. Her family has always said that we should have kids so I knew they would be supportive. It was perfect. Yet they lived in Idaho so he wasn't going—he wasn't looking to parent, I was hoping not.

In addition to Drew's sister and brother-in-law's open-mindedness and support of them having kids, Drew's brother-in-law was also an ideal candidate because he already children and lived far away. Similar to Charles and Gary feeling that their surrogates' already established family with several children would make it unlikely she would want to keep the child, Glenn felt that Drew's brother-in-law's existing family would diminish his desire to be a parent to this child. The geographic distance between their families also reduces his capability to be involved in day-to-day parenting decisions, even if he wanted to be later on. Although this strategy does fully resolve the concerns about custody and autonomy, it does reduce their likelihood and, as a result, reduce the anxiety that Glenn and Drew feel over selecting a known donor.

As with surrogacy, families using known sperm donors call on medical and legal authorities to help clarify and define their parenting claims in case donors ever challenge their parental rights in the future. In doing so, a series of seemingly simple actions are incorporated into a complex choreography involving additional actors, institutional interventions, and additional bureaucratic scrutiny that instill these practices with new layers of meaning. Tasha McClure illustrates what this added complexity can look like by outlining the steps she and her partner, Rhonda Berg, took to legally protect themselves when they used a friend as a known donor.

> Tasha: In the beginning we were very careful. We did the legal agreement. Also, I have a bunch of friends who happen to be physicians and they said to me, "You should probably have one of us come over when he gives you the sperm sample in the cup. Have him hand it to me and I will hand it to you. And then you can go home and do the insemination. That way if he ever got you in court it could be said to be a medical procedure because there was a physician involved." In the beginning we also had me pay for it. Even though he didn't want any money. I would write a

check for a dollar and hand it to him every time. We were trying to cover as many little ducks in a row as we could. I paid for it, a doctor took it, and we got this contract.

Through this choreography Tasha draws on three sources to bolster her claim to her intended child and weaken potential claims the donor could make. They had a legal agreement drawn up between her and the donor clarifying the rights of each party. She brought in a physician to oversee and participate the process, medicalizing it. Finally, she transformed the process into an economic exchange by paying a small, symbolic, amount of money for each sperm sample.

As these examples illustrate, the selection of donors and surrogates was also shaped by concerns of potential challenges to parenting autonomy in the future. While these concerns are primarily driven by respondents' use of ART to have children, and as such, similar concerns are likely to manifest for heterosexual parents using ART as well, they remain a crucial factor shaping how LGBT families, who almost all rely on or must negotiate their children having biological ties to people outside of their immediate family context. However, these concerns are also negotiated amidst a parallel set of concerns about maintaining some degree of knowledge and/or contact with donors and surrogates in case their children have questions about their biological origins in the future.

Negotiating Biological Family in Adoptive Families

Although most of the cases discussed so far have focused primarily on issues of known donors and surrogates, adoptive families expressed similar concerns related to open adoption. Open adoption refers to adoptions in which adoptive parents and the children's biological family have some degree of mutual knowledge of one another's identities and maintain contact with each other. The promotion and practice of open adoptions has been on the rise since the 1980s with the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act in 1980, which reshaped adoption priorities toward keeping children in contact with biological family members (Berry et al, 1998). This was also reflected in a broader shift in adoption discourse, which moved from believing that it was in the best interests of children (and adoptive parents) to keep adoptions secret and birth records closed in order to avoid stigma associated with adoption toward believing that healthy psychological development requires that individuals know, or at least have access to knowledge about, their biological and cultural origins (Howell, 2005; Wolfgram, 2008).

Although a growing body of literature finds that open adoption does not negatively affect placement and adjustment of children into adoptive families[25], open-adoptive parents express a mixture of positive feelings and concerns about maintaining ongoing contact with their children's biological families (Goldberg et al, 2011). Though research explicitly looking at open adoption among LGBT families is limited, there are some indicators that they are more receptive to open adoption than different-sex couples and experience fewer anxieties interacting with their children's biological families (Goldberg et al, 2011). This research finds that, compared to different-sex couples, same-sex couples who used open adoption express greater initial support for it and are more likely to see it as beneficial for their children. Different-sex couples who used open adoption express more reluctance about it but feel that few viable options existed for a closed adoption (Goldberg et al, 2011). Same-sex couples with children from open adoption are

25 For a detailed review of literature, see Wolfgram, 2008.

also more likely to include their children's biological families as a part of their extended family and feel like their positions as parents were less threatened by the involvement of biological parents (Goldberg et al, 2011)**.** In other words, compared to other routes of acquiring children, LGBT parents, compared to different-sex couples, seem to be have psychological and emotional advantage in terms of reception and adjustment to open adoption.

Although my study does not have a sample of different-sex couples through which to compare attitudes regarding open adoption, the attitudes of the queer parents I interviewed did correspond with Goldberg et al's (2011) findings. Among the 13 adoptive families, 9 had some degree of an open adoption and did so because they felt it was (or would be important) for their children to have knowledge, and to some extent a relationship, with their biological families. For example, Beverley Flores explains why having an open adoption was important to her:

> Beverley: For me, the open adoption made all of the difference because, for me, the problem with adoption was again this idea of the secret of it or the not knowing, you know. I knew that a child--I guess I felt really strongly that the child should have information about their biological origins and wanted to be in a position to facilitate that information.

Beverley's concerns reflect current discourses that the best interests of children involve having access to knowledge about biological origins. In other parts of the interview, Beverley notes these concerns being cemented after reading monographs from adult adopted children discussing their own struggles with identity later in life. By pursuing an open adoption she is hoping to preempt these issues for her son. The concerns that prompted Beverley to pursue an open adoption were also similar to the concerns that prompted the use of known sperm donors. For example, Glenn, discussed earlier in the chapter, noted that she opted for a known donor because did not want to be in a position where she was unable to tell her children the identity of their biological father. In both these cases Beverly and Glenn are acting based on what they imagine could be issues for their children in the future and act in ways to preempt them.

Although same-sex couples in general were likely to report positive feelings about open adoption compared to different-sex couples, Goldberg et al (2011) notes that gay men in their sample were most likely to report maintaining those positive feelings over time. To some degree, these findings parallel prior research on different-sex couples which has found that adoptive mothers are more likely than fathers to feel dissatisfied and less in control maintaining contact with their children's biological families (Grotevant et al, 1994). They are also more likely to report feeling that they are competing with biological parents for legitimacy (Sykes, 2011), perhaps due to the powerful social and emotional emphasis placed on motherhood as opposed to fatherhood (Sykes, 2011) and the fact that open-adoptive families are more likely to maintain contact with biological mothers and less so with biological fathers (Wolfgram, 2008).

Reflecting these findings, Goldberg et al (2011) note that more male couples engage in less work distinguishing between their parenting identities from those of biological progenitors due to the lack of competition for the identity of mother. Research on surrogacy reports a similar finding, noting that surrogacy lawyers and surrogates perceive gay men as desirable clients because they feel that there those clients will have fewer anxieties and no competition for mother identities (Berk, 2015.) Furthermore, several gay men, including men in my sample, reported that they liked the idea of maintaining contact with biological mothers specifically to ensure that their

children had a "mother figure" in their lives. However, it is important to note that I found similar instances of identifying known donors as "quasi father figures" among two-mom families as well. Among both male and female couple households, although these mother and father figures were never accorded the same authority or legitimacy as the primary parents, they operated as a means for children to socially name a "mother" in two-dad families or a "father" in two-mom families rather than having feeling like they are missing a mother or father, even if the exact relationship differs from the SNAF imaginary.

Although most adoptive families I spoke to stressed the importance and value of open adoptions, the ongoing practice of open adoption and maintaining contact with children's biological families were complex, varied, and changed over time. Even as parents stated a strong belief that open adoption was in their children's best interests, some expressed frustration coordinating it and were concerned about opening their family to people they often did not know well. Beverley discusses the general complexity and challenges that can emerge in an open adoption.

> Beverley: With open adoption, you are entering into a very long term relationship with someone that you know very little about...So as the child grows it is this constant negotiating process in terms of limits but I think—so it's harder. But, in some ways the hard part of negotiating these two very different familial constellations that are different in terms of race and class and all kinds of things. Open adoption means that adults are negotiating that all along. So by the time the kid is of age, some of that will be negotiated and figured out. So yeah, it can be difficult, but, you want a kid. So you have to—to not do it means you are punting the difficulty onto them for later.

Beverley notes that many of the challenges in open adoption arise in sorting out the relationships between two different families. She also notes the compounded difficulty of class and race discrepancies that frequently occur between adoptive parents and children's biological families (Raleigh, 2012). These challenges, however, do not diminish her feelings that open adoption is important for children. Instead, she notes that these issues would come up no matter what for adoptive children. However, adults dealing with these complexities when children are young means that these issues will at least be partially sorted out by the time children are older so they will not have to deal with it. It is a way of working through the complexity of building families and kinship through ART and adoption while children are young so they do not have to do the work of finding, sorting, and negotiating these biological ties and what they mean for them in the future.

However, respondents were quick to set limits and boundaries to maintain their authority as parents and maintain control over the extent to which they interact with children's biological families. For many families, this involved using an adoption agency as the initial medium through which contact with a child's biological family is maintained. Beverley describes how this worked for her family and how it changed over time.

> Beverley: I think, as an adoptive parent, you have much more power in the situation. So initially, all of our exchanges with [the birth mother] were through the adoption agency. So she didn't have my address. I didn't have her address. Nobody had

> anyone's phone number. I would send photographs to the agency and the agency would pass them along to her. When we moved to California I just kind of, at this point too, we just kind of sidestepped the agency and started communicating directly with her and that felt fine.

Reflecting Goldberg et al's (2011) findings, open-adoptive families tended to become more comfortable with being open with children's biological families over time as relationships are established and boundaries established. Before those relationships and boundaries are established though, many parents relied on adoption agencies as a mediator so adoptive and biological parents would not have to directly exchange contact information. These practices allowed for a gradual and bureaucratically controlled opening of their relationships. In some cases, such as with Beverley, once this relationships are established families bypass agencies and maintain direct contact with biological parents. However, as Beverley also noted, adoptive parents wield greater power in deciding whether to make this step.

Derek Correll and William Ballard, adoptive parents of four foster children, also note the challenges of maintaining contact with their children's biological families. Similar to Beverley, they note that maintaining contact is both "tricky and rewarding," with the unpredictability of children's biological families prompting them to maintain boundaries in their interactions.

> Derek: We learned early on in a relationship with one of the foster kids to be careful. We let our guards down way too far and that went badly and we sort of learned that we were coming in with open hearts to foster this child with all good intentions and they were a family going through crisis and we got sucked into their crisis. So we are more guarded now.
>
> William: So they don't have home phone number. They have our cell phone. They don't have our phone number. They don't have our address.
>
> Derek: No, they have our address. Because I have sent them letters with our address on them.
>
> William: Oh.
>
> Derek: So I trust them more than he does. [laughs].
>
> Interviewer: But there are still certain boundaries that you all keep as far as the arrangements--
>
> William: I've ended visits with Mayra's dad because he showed up smelling of alcohol. That's one of his problems. So I just said, that's it. We're done.
>
> Derek: But when we get together as a family as a whole group of people I don't care if he is drinking. And I know he has problems but he is a nice guy too.
>
> William: Mmm-hmm. It's complicated. [Laughs].

Although they are not using an agency as a mediator, William and Derek use similar practices to maintain boundaries and authority in interactions with children's biological families. After earlier issues with some of their children's biological parents, they maintain boundaries through the contact information provided (cell phone, no home number or address), and maintaining the authority to end a visit if a problem arises. However, their account also illustrates how boundaries shift over time as Derek reveals to William that he has disclosed their home address through letters sent to children's biological families and jokingly notes that he must trust them

more than William does. This exchange also highlights how attitudes can differ among a set of parents and is an important reminder that family members are not always unified in terms of attitudes, feelings and experiences (Thorne, 1992). Among the families I interviewed, for as strategic as couples frequently operated in managing family life and recognition, there were still disagreements and differences of opinion. William, for instance, elaborates more on his conflicted feelings regarding open adoption compared to Derek.

> William: And the difference in how the trust between the bio family creates a little tension here because Derek, and while I see his point, he thinks it is good for them to be involved and that they will be a good influence and that kind of stuff. But I'm like, they are inconsistent, they are flakey. Every time we do it there are issues. The children act up afterwards. I just want them to go away. While I do understand that it is good for them on many levels to have them even if they see the bad stuff. But I just wish they would go away. It makes things so much easier. But that is pure selfishness.

As William discloses, the practice of maintaining ties with biological parents, especially ones who otherwise do not provide care to children, can be very challenging. The unpredictable and chaotic conditions of their children's biological families, which they describe as frequently going through "crisis", prompts them to maintain boundaries but also manage emotions of frustration regarding the difficulty of maintaining these ties amidst chaos. However, like Beverley, William and Derek both believe it is in the best interest of their children to have ongoing contact with their biological families. Most adoptive families that I interviewed saw see this as necessary work and acknowledged the value of building these relationships now so children do not have to go through the difficult and messy work establishing and negotiating these relationships in the future.

<div align="center">***</div>

As the first half of this chapter illustrates, LGBT parents not only consider how their stigmatized status affects their parenting rights in the present, but also, given the ambiguity of existing laws and the possibility that political and cultural backlash could repeal protections in place today, how issues of custody and recognition as parents may arise in the future. Although many of these issues were presumed unlikely to occur, they nonetheless influenced respondents early family-building decisions, both to cut off issues that may come up in the future and also to bolster their chances of resisting any legal challenges that could come up. Dealing with the uncertainty of the laws and present cultural attitudes currently granting them recognition as parents, respondents sought multiple means through which to legally clarify and protect their parent status from legal and attitudinal shifts in the future. It also forced parents to gaze into the possibility of some negative aspects of family such as separation, death, and intra-family conflict, early in the creation of their own immediate families.

These practices also illustrate how legal recognition and protections, specifically their absence or ambiguity, can shape parent identities and how people in families relate to one another. The lack of stable legal recognitions and protections, which most families take for granted, shaped how respondents approached acquiring children and prompted them to seek legal recognition in multiple, usually redundant, ways. Parents were trying to avoid risks associated with a legally absent or vulnerable parent identity. These practices were also early steps toward

enacting a parenting identity itself. The law was not just a means through to protect a pre-existing parenting identity it also operates as a medium through which this identity is practiced and manifests.

Although these extra measures are, at face value, redundant at the present, they form a management strategy used by respondents for coping with the uncertainty of future stigma related to their LGBT identities and means through which they had children. In other words, these future-oriented practices actually deal with two issues. These practices address parents' legitimate concerns regarding legal parent recognition and custody that may come up in the future. They are also a means through which prospective and early parents manage a pervasive sense of anxiety that emerges from the currently ambiguous rights and support conferred to LGBT families. It is a form of emotion work (Hochschild, 1983), a way in which parents can socially manage negative emotions surrounding the risk of having children as an LGBT person and, for many, using ART and/or adoption. The practices discussed in this section allow parents to feel some sense of control over uncertain risks. This form of emotion work, where one engages in practices to cultivate a sense of normalcy and safety for oneself and their family is common for families outside of SNAF expectations (DeVault, 1999) and among families using surrogacy (Berk, 2015).

However, legal recognition was not the only concern shaping respondents' early family building. The next section examines parents' concerns about social recognition and acceptance and the steps they take to mitigate associated fears.

Social Recognition

While the first half of this chapter has focused on concerns related to legal recognition as parents and maintaining custody of children in the future, the second half looks at how early family building practices were also shaped by respondents' desire for social recognition and acceptance. Respondents sought social recognition from others both for validation of their parent identities and family relationships as well as to try to reduce instances in which parents and children are harassed or stigmatized by others based on their family structure. Respondents also sought to reduce their children's sense of difference from other families in the future; and the internalized stigma associated with those feelings of difference. Although these concerns, and responses to them, are not limited to early family formation (and are discussed in further detail in chapters 4 and 5), for many respondents they began prior to becoming parents and influenced early family creation.

Recognition from Extended Kin

Whether or not respondents thought that extended kin would acknowledge and accept their children, and their families in general, affected how some approached having children and other early family building activities. Frequently, these concerns came from respondents who previously had (or still have) difficult relationships with their families of origin related to their sexual and/or gender identities. Although in the long run most respondents reported that children became a means through which they became closer to their families of origin, having children was initially a point of contention. Given the complex ways in which LGBT families have children, as well as the broadly held belief that LGBT people should not be parents, respondents were afraid that their extended families would respond negatively and not recognize their children as kin. Parents preemptively tried to address these concerns by shaping how they had

children to better fit what they thought their families, and to a certain extent, themselves, imagine as "normal" and engaged in practices to build extra ties and strengthen kinship connections to them.

      Gary Ly and Charles Dunne provide an illustrative example of how relationships with families of origin influenced the specifics on how some families had children. In particular, their decision to use a surrogate over transnational adoption, as well as whose sperm to use, were influenced by the desires of Gary's mother.

> Gary: We eventually decided on the surrogacy route. Because, for various reasons. I think at that point when we we're ready to have kids, the adoption route was getting more difficult and then we elected—
> Charles: The international adoption.
> Gary: The international adoption. We originally wanted to adopt a child from China or Vietnam. But I think at that point both countries pretty much stopped.
> Charles: Well, I think, yeah, and the other thing was your mother really wanted—
> Gary: To have like, a grandson. And at that point my sister was the only who has a kid.
> Charles: Well, she wanted a son from her son, basically.
> Gary: Well, yeah [laugh].
> Charles: And you wanted that too.
> Gary: Yeah, I did.
> Charles: That was important to both of you .

      Although their choice to have a child through surrogacy was limited by their barriers to adopt internationally at the time, it was also influenced by Gary's mom's (as well as Gary's) wish to have a biological child. The couple's desire to fulfill Gary's mother's wishes were also influenced by the relatively recent, and still tenuous, acceptance Gary and Charles receive from her. In part this had to do with the sudden and dramatic way in which Gary had come out to his family, breaking an engagement to a woman he had been living with for several years a few months before their wedding. Gary's mother did not respond favorably to his coming out and he notes that it took about three years before his mother was no longer upset at him for being gay or breaking off the engagement. However, at that point, Gary says, "She went from being upset with us because we were a gay couple to being upset with us because she wasn't convinced we were serious about having children." Although this was mentioned in a humorous manner, it underscores the importance of fitting Gary's mother's normative expectations of family, such as having children, in order to maintain her acceptance. Given these circumstances, choosing to have children in a manner that aligns with his mother's desires for biological kin makes sense in cementing those ties of kinship and reconciling their relationship with her. This involved having a child through surrogacy using Gary's sperm, and the couple also decided that their son would have Gary's family's surname.

      Brett Paria describes a similar situation in which he and his partner, Greg Deng, choose to have children using a surrogate over adoption because he felt his parents would more likely accept a child biologically connected to them.

> Brett: For me, adopting and having someone else's child just wasn't an option for me. One, my family was most likely not going to be as accepting or supportive,

especially if I had someone else's child other than my own. It was going to be enough of a challenge to explain to them how I was going to be having my own child and so that was one thing.

Similar to Gary, Brett's family of origin was a strong influence in his decision to avoid adoption. Brett anticipated that his family would have a hard time understanding how he, as a gay man, was going to be a father. In order to avoid compounding this issue, and to increase the likelihood that his family would recognize his children as kin, he opted to have children through surrogacy. Brett felt his family was more likely to understand and accept him as a father, and his children as their kin, if there was biogenetic tie between them all.

In some cases respondents were less concerned about whether or not their families of origin accepted their own families and children at the present and more worried about the future consequences of their family's potential non-acceptance. In particular, would their family provide support or care to their children if something happened to them? Shelley Fleming explains how concerns about whether or not her socially conservative family would accept her child in such a situation affected her and her then-partner's decisions on who would carry as well as the race of the sperm donor.

Shelley: We talked about having Eurasian and I decided that it wasn't a good idea. Because if I had it I knew how conservative my family was and I knew they probably wouldn't take care of a child that they had any problems with—and I couldn't know if it was going to have downs or anything—but I wanted to make sure it was as, I guess—well, my own homophobia—I guess I wanted to make sure it was as much like they would be willing to raise if something happened to me. Because if I died I knew my father would leave his money, his private money, to the child. And if it was hers they wouldn't. And if it was not acceptable to them they wouldn't. So we picked out a white guy.

Similar to accounts from the previous section regarding custody, Shelley's concerns about her parents' acceptance involve the possibility that something could happen to her and ensuring her child is cared for and supported financially. This included ensuring that her father accepted and would leave his money to the child if Shelley died before he did. In order to ensure he recognized the child they had to ensure that the child was "acceptable" to him, namely the baby had to be biogenetically connected to Shelley, not her partner, and the child had to be white.

The concerns raised by Shelley underscore both the complexity and banality of many of the concerns raised by respondents. On one hand, at the heart of many of their concerns are the safety and well-being of their children in case something happens to one or both parents. These concerns are not unique to LGBT families and are observed, for example, in a broad spectrum of families through designations of godparents or guardians. On the other hand, these banal concerns are heightened for LGBT parents, which Shelley describes as filtered through "her own homophobia." Similar feelings left many other respondents also feeling especially vulnerable and uncertain of the treatment their families would receive should misfortune fall upon them. They are also made more complex by the use of ART and adoption to have children, through which rights are ambiguous and recognition by others uncertain.

If anything though, Shelley's self-described "homophobia" does not seem to reflect internalized homophobia in a sociological sense, as she does not hold herself to a lower status based on sexual identity or family structure (Herek, 2007). Instead, the concerns and anxieties she relates better fit definitions of a felt stigma (Scambler and Hopkins, 1987), in which she acts in accordance with the expectation that others may discriminate against her or her family. Her ability to see and respond to the perceived and expected homophobia of those around her, and society more broadly, more accurately reflects a "queer double consciousness," allowing her to anticipate the attitudes and expectations of a heteronormative and homophobic society without internalizing these beliefs as true (Orne, 2013).

In all three of these cases, respondents made choices to ensure that children and families were recognizable and accepted by families of origin; looking for ways to create or play up biogenetic ties between children, parents and extended kin. This is not to say that these ties were not also important to some respondents, such as Gary, but that biogenetic ties, especially when relationships with extended families were tenuous, were also seen as a pragmatic way to bolster the recognition of their children as theirs and as a part of their extended families. While not the sole reason for such actions, the inclusion, and display, of biogenetic ties strengthened how their extended kin understood their own families.

The value placed on biogenetic ties is connected to a broader set of norms under SNAF of what western families "are" or "ought to be." When respondents emphasize the importance of these ties to their extended families what they are pointing out is the emphasis on more closely aligning their children and families to these ideological norms. Both to make them more recognizable to their extended families but also as a means to downplay their difference as an LGBT family. Although ensuring children shared biogenetic ties with families of origin was a common means of "doing family," other examples included using family surnames, such as Gary and Charles giving their son Gary's family's surname, or, as Shelley notes, ensuring that children are the same race as the rest of their family. All of these practices are deployed with the intent of making children and families more recognizable under SNAF, whether respondents personally believe them important or not.

It is important to note, however, in all of these cases, that the choices made by respondents were based on how they anticipated their families would respond. Families of origin were not directly dictating how respondents should have children. In most cases respondents did not tell families until they were already far in the process to avoid any potential discouragement.

Recognition from Non-Kin

Respondents were also concerned how people outside of their families, who I refer to as outsiders for simplicity, would treat them and their children. Two issues related to outsiders emerged. First, respondents wanted to ensure that they are socially recognized as parents, especially if they have no legal or biological ties to their children. Second, they were concerned about harassment and discrimination their family, but especially their children, may encounter in the future. Respondents also sought to limit the extent their children might feel different from other families in the future. These concerns are connected to stigmas associated with LGBT families and acquiring children through ART and/or adoption. However, as shown in previous examples, in many cases these concerns are interconnected.

For example, Shelia Turner, mentioned earlier in the chapter, discusses how concerns about mutual recognition of their parental rights influenced her and partner, Lori's, decision of who

would carry their second child, Clement. Lori had carried their first child, Carlos, mostly due to Lori's interest in carrying and birthing a child, as well as Shelia's strong disinterest in doing so. However, Lori's first pregnancy was physically difficult and prompted some discussion of Shelia carrying the second child. Although Shelia continued to have little personal interest in becoming pregnant, her decision not to carry their second child was cemented by the meanings she felt other people would place on her and Lori's relationships with their children if they each birthed one child. Based on comments from friends after Carlos' birth, Shelia notes that she was concerned that if she gave birth to the second child that other people, drawing on a sense that biological motherhood is the most legitimate mode of motherhood, would consider that child "hers" and Carlos as "Lori's," diminishing the sense that they are both equally mothers to both of their children.

> Shelia: And people were so weird too. Even though we have like really supportive and open-minded friends some of the things they say sometimes are so strange. They say, "Well now that Lori has had Carlos maybe you can have the second one? And you will love him so much." So what are you implying? Because he didn't come from me I don't love him as much as I could love a baby I birthed? Just strange things that I was like, okay that is exactly why I don't want to. My thing is, even though we know couples where one birthed one and the other birthed the other, I didn't want the situation where people would say that one is yours and that one is yours. They are both ours.

Discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, anxieties related to the recognition of "nonbiological" or "social" parents were frequently reported by families, especially regarding early parenthood. These concerns are both personal (feeling like a parent) and public (others recognizing them as an equal and legitimate parent). Although some interviewed families shaped conception and birthing practices in ways that allowed for mutual participation (e.g. taking turns having children, IVF gestational surrogacy using one partner's egg and another's womb, mixing sperm from each partner together for the surrogate to use), Shelia notes her concern was based on how people would draw on normative beliefs about the salience of blood ties and biological motherhood to differentiate her and Lori's relationships to their children. In ways that may seem counterintuitive under SNAF, Shelia attempts to protect the mutual recognition of her and her partner by choosing *not* to be a biological parent and directly confronting those normative beliefs that prioritize biological parenthood.

It is important to note, however, that although Shelia's concerns about mutual recognition are common among respondents, her approach, which involves directly refuting SNAF ideologies, is not. It was more common for families to draw on pieces of SNAF ideologies in family building in an effort to normalize their families or downplay differences. The deployment of shared norms and ideological expectations as means to downplay differences can be seen as a form of covering, in which an individual seeks to downplay the obtrusiveness of a stigma's visible attributes (Goffman, 1963). It is limited though in the sense that many families are not seeking to downplay their visibility as LGBT families. Instead they engage in practices that make them more recognizably understood as a legitimate, LGBT family.

The sociological literature on accounts is also useful for understanding how respondents deploy shared norms and ideological expectations to legitimate nonnormative qualities of their

families. C. Wright Mills (1940) first argued that "vocabularies of motive," or accounts, are a way in which people justify past and future behavior in social interactions. These accounts are situated in the social norms and power relations of a social context and are used to make justified claims for behavior. Drawing on Mills' assertion, Scott and Lyman (1968) extend the meaning of accounts as a means of explaining or justifying the presence of a stigma attribute or a breech in social behavior to save face in a social interaction. However, Garfinkel (1967) argues that all activities, not just social breeches, are invisibly accounted for in daily life. Although he acknowledges, like Scott and Lyman, that accounts are most easily observed when social rules are breached, Garfinkel notes that the invisibility of many accounts resides in the implicit expectation that particular behaviors and practices accompany particular social relations. For instance, a heterosexual couple feeding a baby may be implicitly identified by an observer as a family consisting of a mother, a father, and a child. However, a same-sex couple with a baby does not fit that heteronormative schematic and may require further thought and inquiry from the observer to ascertain the nature of the of the couple's relationship (Are they friends? Kin? Lovers?) and the child (Who is/are the "real" parent(s)?) Comparing examples such as these reveal social norms, such as family configurations, are most apparent when they are breached and participants are compelled to account for their deviance from them. More recent developments in the accounts literature (summarized in Orbuch, 1997) have also followed Garfinkel's observation by examining how accounts help individuals control and understand their environment, handle stressful events, create life narratives, frame future events, and establish order in daily interactions.

Operating in a middling ground between the social breeches of Scott and Lyman and the invisibly monitored day-to-day life discussed by Garfinkel, LGBT parents seek to both bolster their social recognition as parents and a family through daily activities and practices that draw on SNAF constructions of what families "are" or "ought to be." A commonly reported approach for increasing social recognition through normalizing measures was through the use of surnames, both by parents and children. Displaying connections to children via surnames is a practice well-discussed in the research on lesbian parent families (Almack, 2005; Bergen, Suter, & Daas, 2006; Sullivan, 2004) and has been used, especially in contexts where equal, legal recognition is not possible, to make familial ties between social parents and their children more socially apparent (Benkov, 1994). Some respondents also chose to change their last name to their partner's surname, creating a common family surname. Other families had both partners change their last names, either by creating a hyphenated last name or an entirely new surname. In total, about 30% of interviewed families had parents who shared a surname. When discussing reasons for changing surnames, all of these families cited pre-existing children or children they planned to have as the motivating factor for the change.

Angela Marshall describes her reasoning for taking on her partner, Sam's, last name:

> Interviewer: Was there ever a point where you all ever discussed changing your last names?
>
> Angela: Yeah, we did...I have her last name. I said, "It would just be easier." Because I knew she wasn't going to take my last name. She is the more masculine in the relationship. In that since I see her as my husband. But we just decided that—because we knew at that point when we had that discussion we were talking about getting pregnant. So were like, I don't want to have a mixed family, say with

different last names, because it would cause confusion. Because I always knew, he is my biological son, but in order to validate her being the father figure, I would give—we would give Henry her last name. It meant a lot to her…Then we talked about school age and what it would be like. He [would say], "Well my last name is one and my mom is another and my other mom is another." You know. And I don't want to do the whole hyphenated name. Too long. Too much for him to remember. He is going to have a hard enough time describing—because we are still in [the Valley]—describing the relationship and his family structure, so let's make this easy.

For Sam and Angela, their decision to share a last name was shaped by their plan to have children and their expectation that it would make it easier for others to recognize them as a family and reduce the amount of active work they would have to do to explain and account for their family to others. The shared surname is thought to make it easier in a number of ways. Using Sam's surname bolsters Sam's recognition as a parent, both as a social parent and as a lesbian father figure. Using Sam's surname not only reflects the still common, heteronormative practice of wives taking on their husband's last name, it also reflects notions of normative fatherhood in which children also have their father's surname (Powell et al, 2010).

Angela and Sam also believe having a shared family surname will make it easier for their son in the future to identify his family to others. This sentiment is also reflected in Angela's belief that her son will already have a "hard time" because of their family structure and does not wish to compound those issues by making his family stand out any more than they already will. She also notes feeling that a shared surname is easier than using a hyphenated last name. Several families, citing reasons similar to Angela's, avoided hyphenated names because they thought that they would be cumbersome, difficult for young children to spell and write, and, in some cases, a marker that they have a queer or alternative family, singling them out for harassment or discrimination. Similar research on lesbian parent families has reported similar findings, noting that surname choices for children were often determined with "children's best interests" in mind, especially in regard to how others may treat them in the future (Almack, 2005).

Despite several families choosing to use a shared family surname for these reasons, most did not. As Table 9 shows, the majority of parents in couples choose to keep their own last names. There were some differences based on gender, male couples almost exclusively kept their own surnames. Even among the 2 male couples who had their surnames names legally hyphenated, they noted in professional, and in many informal social settings, they continue to use their original surnames. This pattern, in which women were more likely to change their surnames in order to have a shared family name also reflects broader surname patterns in the United States among different-sex couples, where an estimated 90 to 95% of married women in the United States take their husband's surname (Powell et al, 2010). Female couples, whether they choose to share surnames or not, were also more likely to discuss the option whereas the majority of male couples noted that the option was never discussed among them.

Table 9: Surnames Choices for Parents and Children

Family Surname Configurations		Male Couples	Female[26] Couples	All Families[27]
Parents and Children Share surnames				
	Created a New Surname	0	2 (6%)	2 (4%)
	Hyphenated Original Surnames	2 (14.3%)	3 (9%)	5 (10.2%)
	Family Uses One Parent's Original Surname	0	8 (24.2%)	8 (16.3%)
Parents Keep Original Surnames				
	Children Surnames Hyphenated	5 (35.7%)	7 (21.2%)	13 (26.5%)
	Children's Full Name Includes Both surnames	3 (21.4%)	5 (15.1%)	9 (18.4%)
	Children have 1 Parent's Surname	3 (21.4%)	8 (24.2%)	11 (22.4%)
	Child has Neither Parents' Surname	1 (7.1%)	0	1 (2%)
	Totals	14	33	49

Among couples keeping their original surnames, the selection of children's surnames continued to be important as a means of displaying kin ties between parents and children. Table 2 breaks down the children surname selections made by this group which included the following strategies: (1) hyphenating both parent's surnames; (2) including both parents' surnames in their children's full names, often using one as a formal surname and the other as a middle name; (3) only using 1 parent's surname; and (4) giving a child neither parents' surname[28]. Despite the array of choices families make, the majority opt to, in some way, ensure that parents' surnames are included somewhere in their children's full names.

---

26 Omitted are the two women who elected to become single parents and never partnered.
27 Includes 2 additional families. One family with a gay man and a lesbian who had a child together who kept their own surnames and hyphenated their child's surname. The second family consists of a lesbian couple who had a child with a family friend but all three share parenting responsibilities. In this family all parents kept their own surnames and the father's surname is used for the child but the biological mother's surname is included in the child's full name for purposes of social recognition.
28 In the family where this occurred one parent is the long-time legal guardian of the child who has kept her biological parents' surname.

The decision to give children both parents' surnames was influenced by the same set concerns as families sharing a single surname, that others would not recognize them them as parents and collectively as a family. These concerns also influenced the ordering of surnames. For instance, Michael Hall and Tim Reece decided to give their adoptive son, Dalton, Tim's surname as a middle name and Michael's as a last name because they were concerned that strangers would have a harder time identifying Michael as Dalton's father because they are not the same race. However, their decision was also shaped by their feeling that it gave their son the most flexibility to decide how to use his full name in the future.

> Michael: So with him we gave him both our names. So instead of having a middle name he just has two last names. So his middle name is Reece and his last name is Hall. That was more my request because I did have a sense growing up, at least from the outside with strangers and so forth and schools and things, Dalton being African-American, there is a visual relation, whether it is by blood or not, where he will be more easily connected to Tim by people who don't know us as a family. Just through the visual. So, I think, if people see him as Tim's son through physical appearance, you know, having my last name would sort of round out the picture and would be an identifier, a different type of identifier, but it would refer him to closer identification with me. But of course, giving him both of our names, I don't think we are going to force anything on him one way or another. If he wants to combine the two and use them as his last name, identify himself as Reece-Hall, he can do that. Or if he wants to consider Reece his middle name or when he fills out forms as Dalton R. Hall, whatever. That is sort of a, I don't know, kind of a flexibility that we have built in for him to be able to do whatever what he wants because we don't care.

Similar to families with children born using ART, Michael and Tim make their surname choices based on the different likelihoods of each being recognized by strangers as Dalton's father. Underlying SNAF conceptions of biologically related families, shared appearance, including race, between parents and children is often used by others as a way of reading potential kin ties. As a result, family misrecogniton by strangers based on racial presumptions of kinship frequently occurs among multiracial families (Da Costa, 2008) and families with transracially adopted children (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Howell, 2006). Again, although this is not exclusively an LGBT parent issue[29], it is a reminder that issues of recognition affect a broad array of families who do not fully align to SNAF ideals in terms of race, sexuality, biological ties, etc. In terms of the adoption market though, same-sex couples are also more likely to adopt transracially than heterosexual married couples (Raleigh, 2012).

While on one level Michael and Tim's surname choices for Dalton are influenced by concerns about misrecognition as a family by others based on race, their choices also reflect a desire to allow Dalton flexibility in how understands and uses his name when he is older. By giving Dalton both of the their surnames unhyphenated, Michael and Tim give Dalton flexibility in determining how he socially displays his name and the meanings attached to it in the future. This interest in providing children flexibility and control resonates with some of the concerns

---

29 Census data does reveal though, compared to different-sex couples, same-sex couples are more likely to be interracial (Oswald et al, 2005).

discussed by other families regarding hyphenated last names and giving their children greater control in how they can present and display potential markers of kinship as they grow older (a topic revisited in chapter 5).

However, not all families felt that sharing family surnames or last names with children was in the best interests of their children. While shared surnames can reduce the need for explanation and provide an easy way for others to identify them as a family, some respondents were concerned that being so easily read as a queer family could put their children in danger and expose them to harassment. In contrast to families who opted to share a surname, such as Sam and Angela, and those who opted to hyphenate their children's surnames, Rebecca Huntley explains why she did not want her children to have both of their parents' last names, hyphenated or not:

> Interviewer: Was there ever any talk of the kids having both your last names, like changing them or hyphenating, or anything like that?
> Rebecca: We had discussed it but I think I felt it would be too difficult for them.
> Interviewer: In what ways?
> Rebecca: That they would have to tell them. They would have pointed out, something about them would be pointed out. Their parents sexuality. How that would affect them? Yeah, I thought about it because some of the other friends of mine did it and I thought they were selfish. I didn't think they were pioneers. I never thought of it that way. I feared for [my children's] lives. I truly feared for their lives…So I just remember thinking, oh that would be really cool, but then oh, that's not cool. That's about me. For me, that was what it was about. And I didn't need that.

Although Rebecca's surname choices and reasoning were the most extreme reported by respondents, other families who avoided hyphenated surnames did so for similar reasons. In fact, these two radically different approaches, some form or shared or hyphenated surname versus using a single parent's surname, both draw on a singular logic but take them in opposite directions. While most couples opted to use shared family surnames or give their children both of their last names in order to reduce public confusion and misrecognition, which they felt could create a sense of difference and foster stigma for children, Rebecca voiced concern that this visibility could put her children in danger. Similar to families using both parents' surnames unhyphenated, Rebecca's choice for her children only have her former partner's surname is focused on the ensuring their future well-being, although at the cost of easier social recognition of her as their mother or personal satisfaction in sharing a surname.

As Rebecca's, as well Sam and Angela's, accounts illustrate, concern about children being stigmatized or harassed in the future because they have LGBT parents was an ongoing consideration that influenced several respondents' early child practices in order to preemptively mitigate those issues. What is also notable is the way that many families, despite the broad sense that experiences for LGBT people and their families are improving, accept the notion that their children will experience some stigma at some point because of their queer family structure. As a result, many families not only tried to mitigate the severity of stigma their children may encounter in the future as a result of their queer families, they also reported trying to reduce other forms of stigma or feelings of difference their children may encounter in the future. Frequently, this was framed as a sensitivity to the understanding that their child will have "a hard enough

time" having LGBT parents, something parents cannot control, so they would try to reduce other forms of stigma that could come about as a result of other choices they made in how they have children or build their families.

Concern over other other forms of stigma and harassment involved a range of practices and decisions. For instance, Keri Ash discusses how this rationale shaped her and her partner, Jamie Solis', donor selection in terms of race:

> Keri: For us, when we started reviewing donor profiles, we decided early we wanted a white child. Keira already has two moms, we don't need her to feel different by selecting an African-American or a Chinese donor. That seemed practical, to have a child that looked like us.

Concerned about the issues surrounding recognition and stigma experienced by mixed race and transracial families (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Da Costa, 2008), in addition to issues their future child encountering as a result of their queer family structure, Keri and Jamie sought out a white donor so their family would racially homogenous.

Sonja Fugate also frames her choice in taking her, now former, partner's surname in anticipation of them having children through a similar logic of minimizing additional differences for their children beyond having two moms:

> Sonja: The kids have [ex-partner's] name. Which actually I changed my last name to my ex's last name because part of the whole family process was I wanted the kids to think we were a family. I wanted us to all have the same name. I remember, growing up, that my mom kept her married name to my dad for a long time. I just think it is important for kids to like, it is like one of those extra things already coming from a different type of family, you don't want to add to it. So it's kind of like we are all the same family.

Similarly, Dale Prokesch and Scott Adams also chose which of their last names to give their daughter, Katelyn, imagining which name would minimize any additional "playground liabilities" she may have in the future based on queer family structure and Dale's own childhood experiences.

> Dale: We each kept our last names, and we gave Katelyn Scott's last name.
> Scott: My last name is very Mayflower: Adams. His is Prokesch, super Slavic, so we never, I guess it came up, but we quickly dismissed the notion of hyphenating both our names. And then the choice of one or the other, we went with ease in giving her my—
> Dale: Ease, and I also have to say, growing up in the WASP-y suburb that I did, I was teased for my last name, and I thought, you know, she's gonna have enough playground liabilities as it is, let's give her the WASP-y last name and see if we can't at least give her that.

In all three of these cases respondents reflected on the ramifications of their family-building decisions for their children in the future. Working under the expectation that their children will

feel, or be made to feel, different from others because of their queer family structure, many respondents tried to mitigate what Dale describes as additional "playground liabilities," or other ways their child may experience difference and stigma in their interactions with others. The three selected examples identify some of the range of choices influenced by these considerations. It also shows how a broad range of concerns, from racial difference in families to concerns about children being picked on at school for having an uncommon last name, are interwoven and compounded by respondents concerns of their children experiencing stigma and a sense of difference coming from a queer family. The choices that respondents made in these cases, choosing a donor that would make their family monoracial (and white) or sharing a common family surname reflect efforts to minimize difference from broader expectations of what families are normatively thought to look like. Dale and Scott's decision to give Katelyn Scott's surname also shows how concerns about children's future encounters with LGBT related stigma sensitizes some families to be more conservative in their choices beyond SNAF expectations, such as avoiding a surname that is hard to pronounce to avoid their child being picked on for having an odd sounding surname.

These choices are illustrative of Goffman's (1963) idea of "normification", or efforts made by stigmatized individuals to present themselves as "normal" despite the visibility of their stigma. It is a form of hypercorrection that LGBT families and, other marginalized families, use a form of stigma management. However, it is important to note that their practices do not exclusively rely on "covering," or attempts to downplay the salience or visibility of a stigmatized identity or attribute. While some of the practices discussed in this chapter, such as avoiding hyphenated surnames to avoid hypervisibility of children coming from an "alternative" or "queer" family, relate to strategies of covering, the three cases noted above do not. Instead, they emphasize normality in spite of being a queer family by aligning to other SNAF expectations. In other words, these practices illustrate how families practice normification by drawing on other markers or expectations of SNAF including monoracial families, whiteness, shared family names, and shared biological ties between parents and children.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how LGBT families navigate anticipated stigma through the process of having children. While stigma is not, of course, the only concern reported by respondents, or cited by prior research, affecting how respondents have children; parents also reported that carrying on biological or genetic lines, questions of legal access to different methods of having children, and health concerns were also important. What makes these concerns stand out is that they are not focused on the process itself, or even on the present, but on the implications of their choices for their family's future.

Concerns regarding stigma parents reported that their families may experience in the future can be broken down into two broad categories. The first category reflects concerns over the capability of respondents to maintain uncontested custody and legal recognition as parents of their children. Their concerns were built on a number of factors including: (1) Rapidly changing laws and legal contexts (both progressive and regressive) for LGBT families and families with children had through ART or adoption; (2) Differences in legal contexts between local, state and national levels; and (3) the broad influence of heteronormativity and the cultural importance of blood ties embedded in law and society. One trend that can be noted among more recently created families in my sample is the growth of legal recognition available to them in the states

that the majority chose to have children. However, when families had access to streamlined recognition through state recognized relationships, such as in California, most respondents went above and beyond to ensure they have the most comprehensive set of protections available to them in case laws change or some form of custody battle (either between parents, extended family, donors, surrogates, or biological progenitors) were to take place.

The second category involves concerns over the social recognition of parents and families, particularly by extended kin and relevant family outsiders. For many respondents, early family building decisions were shaped so that extended kin were more likely to accept their families and children as legitimate kin. Early practices were also influenced by how parents perceived their choices would influence recognition by outsiders and the degree of stigma children would encounter, and possibly internalize, as they grow older. Notably, while practices to bolster social recognition have long been used as an imperfect proxy for absent legal recognitions by LGBT families (Benkov, 1994; Sullivan, 2004), these practices continue to be relevant for families who do have access to legal recognition and protections.

Furthermore, although I am broadly distinguishing between concerns of legal and social recognition, they are not mutually exclusive concerns for all parents and these concerns frequently overlap. For instance, some of the explanations provided by families regarding social recognition from extended kin and outsiders involve easing acceptance and interactions so legal recognitions either do not have to be invoked or are not questioned in a way that highlights a family's difference, potentially requiring further legal scrutiny of their families. Although some practices seem to be more focused on one set of concerns, such as second parent adoption on legal recognition and surname usage for social recognition, there remains considerable overlap in the motivations behind their choices.

It is also important to note that despite families drawing upon a similar base logic surrounding minimizing ways their child may end up feeling different or being harassed in the future, how they respond to these concerns can be very different. I am not arguing that these examples reflect the only approaches taken by interviewed families or by LGBT families in general. Instead, they illustrate the ways in which respondents' future oriented concerns about their parenting rights and the well-being of their children are on their' minds and influence their family practices, as far back as the process of having children.

Although these two issues are not unique to LGBT families, in fact many of the issues discussed have as much to do with having children through "alternative means," such as ART or adoption, their sensitivity to these issues are also linked to concerns of stigma they may also receive as an LGBT family. Other marginalized family forms, including single-mother households (Hays, 1996), stepfamilies (Cherlin, 1978), adoptive families (Howell, 2006), multiracial families (DaCosta, 2007), and families with fathers as primary caregivers (Doucet, 2006; Risman 1998) also experience a lack of institutional and cultural support.

Using Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) understanding of agentic social action nested in multiple temporal contexts, I argue that to fully understand LGBT families' stigma experiences and management we have to consider both prejudice and discrimination experienced in the present *and* how their stigma management is also oriented toward experiences of stigma that may happen in the future. In particular, my findings illustrate a situation in which the future looms large in the family building and present day actions of LGBT families. Families grapple with both a general uncertainty of the security of their legal rights as well as a general expectation that

their children will be vulnerable to social stigma as they grow older, and especially in adolescence and young adulthood.

These concerns are also not unique to pre-parenting and are prevalent, to some degree, throughout child-rearing (demonstrated in later chapters). However, respondents noted early steps taken to bolster recognition and mitigate or diminish possible stigma or harassment in the future. Furthermore, their practices to mitigate these concerns are not add-ons to the process of having children, their concerns deeply influenced fundamental decisions respondents made in the process.

Finally, although I have been arguing that these practices are primarily future oriented, we should also consider the work that this forward thinking and strategizing does for parents in the midst of having children and as they establish early parent identities. One way to think about these practices is as a means of alleviating anxieties and concerns that respondents have at the present (or period in which they were having children). If they do accept that their children will experience some stigma based on their parents' sexual identities and relationship(s), then parents are careful and deliberate in the ways they either try to preempt or do preemptive damage control on that anticipated stigma. Acting on future concerns and enacting parenthood in such a thoughtful and deliberate way bolsters their claims to parenthood in the present as well as allays legitimate concerns these families have based on their marginalized positions as LGBT and acquiring children through "alternative means." It also illustrates how one consequence of the anticipated stigma parents experience is how it shapes the emotion work of acquiring children and creating a family. While some of the concerns families have for the future may have a low probability of actually occurring, their present day emotional consequences are quite real.

This sense of building a legitimate and socially recognized parenting identity and family, however, does not stop once a child appears. As we will see in the next chapter, early parenthood practices continue to be shaped by concerns of legitimacy, both in terms of feeling like a legitimate parent and being recognized by people outside of the family.

Chapter 4: 'We Are Both Her Mothers and I Want the World to Know That': Misrecognition, Hyperscrutiny, and Modes of Family Display[30]

As discussed in chapter 3, an ongoing concern for prospective LGBT parents is that their parenting status is socially recognized. This includes legal recognition as parents, with all the responsibilities and protections it entails, as well as informal social recognition from extended family, friends, and strangers. Informal social recognition operates as a way of addressing the uncertain risks their families may encounter in the future from ambiguous legal and social climates for LGBT people, families, and the use of ART and adoption. It is also an important part of establishing a parenting identity. However, issues surrounding informal recognition do not end following the birth of their children.

Regardless of an individual's sexual orientation or the gender composition of a couple, the process of becoming and inhabiting a parent identity, or any other social identity for that matter, is not instantaneous. It is a social process accomplished through meaningful practices that form its substance and legibility (Finch, 2007; Fox, 2009; McCathy, Edwards, and Gillies, 2003; Morgan, 2011). However, LGBT parents, and other family compositions on the margins of SNAF, find that inhabiting personally meaningful parent identities, that are also intelligible to people outside of their families, is especially challenging. This chapter explores how LGBT parents with young children navigate informal challenges to their day-to-day social recognition. Accounts are drawn from respondents who currently have young children and from respondents with older children reporting their experiences retrospectively.

Looking at informal social recognition during early parenthood is an important window into new LGBT parents' experiences of stigma that otherwise would be difficult to see. As mentioned in chapter 1, the majority of parents I spoke to insisted that they encounter little to no overt hostility in their day-to-day interactions with others and are generally accepted as a family. In general, this fits with the current rhetoric of the United States as a "post-gay" society in which (some) LGBT people experience greater legal and social acceptance and overt expressions of homophobia are increasingly sanctioned. However, parents did report experiences regarding social recognition that I argue reflect the subtle and diffuse ways in which LGBT families continue to experience stigma in post-gay society. I identify two common manifestations of stigma experienced by LGBT parents with young children: the invisibility/illegibility of LGBT family relations in public, which I refer to as *misrecognition*; and, when family relations are recognized, the hypervisibility and denial of privacy they experience in public spaces, or what I refer to as *hyperscrutiny*.

I draw on the microaggressions literature to better understand the ambiguous, diffuse, and hard to quantify forms of marginalization that make up these experiences and identify them as an expression of stigma. In other words, LGBT families never stopped experiencing stigma, but like other forms of prejudice and discrimination experienced by marginalized populations, it has changed over time and become more difficult to pinpoint and name. Identifying the changing, yet

---

[30] Portions of the analysis presented in this chapter were originally published in: Colonna, R. J., (2013). "We are both her mothers and I want the world to know that": Selection of parent terms in lesbian co-parent families with children using donor insemination," in Blair, S. L., & Claster, P. N. (eds), *Visions of the 21st Century Family: Transforming Structures and Identities (Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research, Volume 7)*. Copyright ® 2013 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. This material is reproduced under conditions agreed upon by Emerald.

persistent, character of stigma for LGBT families is especially important as, on a national and societal level, legal rights and social acceptance are growing but do not fully eradicate the deep underlying beliefs and heteronormative institutional structures that marginalize and shape the lives of LGBT families (and all families for that matter.) The California-based families I interviewed may arguably be on the vanguard of these legal and cultural shifts, making them an excellent population to examine what the experiences of families living in other areas will experience (if they are not already) as these changes continue to emerge throughout the United States.

I also contribute to the scholarship on stigma and discrimination by broadening our understanding of the implications that microaggressions have for people's day-to-day lives and, like any other manifestation of stigma, how it is managed. Although other practices can be considered, this chapter focuses primarily on the selection and usage of parent terms as a lens through which to understand how new LGBT parents experience and respond to microaggressions related to social recognition. Parent terms are focused on for a couple of reasons. First, discussion of recognition emerged unprompted by parents when asked about the selection of parent terms, and vice versa. Second, although parent terms might appear innocuous, their selection and usage are heavily gendered and normalized under a heteronormative framework of family. As a result, like with many family practices for LGBT families, their choices are deliberate and parents thoughtfully consider their implications. Third, although some research has explored the meaning making that goes into parent terms for lesbian parent families (Bergen, Suter, & Daas; 2006; Gabb, 2005; Padavic and Butterfield, 2011) and step-families (Kellas, LeClair-Underberg, & Normand, 2008), it remains a relatively unexplored topic, especially in relation to stigma management. Forth, these kind of day-to-day activities and displays dig deep into the heart of the phenomenological behavior that David Morgan (2011) argues is at the heart of meaning making for all family life. Following Morgan's assertions, I argue that parent terms are a family practice linked to issues of personal and social recognition as a parent; operating as mode of display for parent identities, both for parents and those observing them.

Finally, the chapter ends its discussion of microaggressions and parent terms by highlighting how these practices and concerns are temporally located and contextualized. The frequency and salience of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny, as well as the importance of parent terms as a family practice, are heightened during early parenthood and when children are young. Using retrospective accounts, and some thoughtful projections from early parents, I illustrate the diminishing importance of parent terms, and subsequently, concerns about social recognition, as parenting identities become more established and children grow older and more autonomous. We need to not only consider the implications of subtle forms of stigma, like microaggressions, on the lives of marginalized families, but also how position in life course for parents and children also affects the manifestation and salience of stigma.

Stigma and Microaggressions

As overt forms of discrimination and prejudice become less socially acceptable and decline, subtle forms persist. Race scholars, for instance, have noted a shift from overt expressions of racism to modes that are indirect, subtle, and operate at a level below the perpetrator's conscious awareness (Sue, 2010). These experiences are described as expressions of modern racism (McConahay, 1986), symbolic racism (Sears, 1988), and aversive racism

(Dovidio and Gaertner, 1996). Similar assertions are also made regarding experiences of sexism for women (Swim and Cohen, 1995) and heterosexism for LGB people (Herek, 2007; Orne, 2013; Seidman, 2002). Microaggressions research attempts to identify and name these instances of discrimination as they occur in everyday social interactions and discern the effects they have on individuals subjected to them.

Microaggressions are defined as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership" (Sue, 2010, p.xvi). The concept was originally developed by Chester Pierce to describe the subtle, everyday putdowns directed at African-Americans (Pierce, Carew, et al, 1978). However, subsequent research has expanded the concept to consider the experiences of other racial and ethnic groups including Asian-Americans (Sue et al, 2007), Latina/os (Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010; Solorzano and Bernal, 2001), indigenous peoples (Hill, Kim, and Williams, 2010), and multiracial people (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal, Wong, et al, 2010); as well as microaggressions occurring on the basis of gender (Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Nadal, 2010), class (Sue, 2010), disability (Keller & Galgay, 2010), religion (Nadal, Issa, et al., 2010), and sexual identity (Nadal, 2013; Nadal, Rivera, and Corpus, 2010).

If stigma is a negative status characteristic realized through social interaction, then microaggressions are a form of practice through which stigma is conveyed. These practices can be conveyed verbally, behaviorally, and environmentally. However, what distinguishes microaggressions from more overt expressions of stigma is that they are often subtle, filled with double messages, and are difficult for individuals witnessing or experiencing them to confirm that a particular incident is motivated by bias (Sue, 2010). Part of the difficulty arises because unconscious biases can motivate microaggressions outside of a perpetrator's conscious awareness. Thoughts, words, actions, even physical environments, can be unconsciously shaped by beliefs and values that inform actions which perpetuate bias and discrimination.

Derald Sue (2010), drawing on prior research he conducted with colleagues (Sue et al, 2007; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008), identifies 3 three different types of microaggressions that reflect different degrees of intent and content of microaggressions: *microassaults*, *microinsults*, and *microinvalidations*. Microassaults refer to instances when individuals consciously convey denigrating messages to individuals on the basis of their group memberships. As the most direct and unambiguously hostile form of microaggression, and most likely to receive public sanction, Sue notes that individuals tend to only practice them in situations where they feel protected from sanction (e.g. anonymous internet comments or among individuals that they believe share their beliefs). Microinsults are "interpersonal or environmental communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person's racial, gender, or sexual orientation, heritage, or identity" (Sue, 2010, p.31). More subtle and difficult to directly identify as behavior motivated by stereotypes or prejudice than microassaults, microinsults are also more likely to occur outside the conscious awareness of perpetrators. Microinvalidations are mostly unconscious "communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups" (Sue, 2010, p.37). For instance, the denial of power and privilege (or lack thereof) granted to people on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation; or individual denial racist, sexist, or heterosexist behavior. Of these three forms of microaggressions, the majority of instances discussed in this chapter are microinsults.

The subtle and ambiguous character of such moments also leaves individuals experiencing them wondering if a particular occasion is motivated by implicit or explicit bias, or if they are misreading the situation. For example, Derald Sue, Christina Capodilupo, and Aisha Holder's (2008) research on microaggressions experienced by Black Americans notes the following example to illustrate the ambiguity in discerning whether an incident is a microaggression or not:

> One participant wrestled with an incident in which a White person told her an answer was 'very smart': 'Like it feels like a compliment but not really. It leaves you feeling like, did you just compliment me or what?' (p.332)

Reflecting the ambiguity of many microaggressions, and that perpetrators will frequently enact them unconsciously, it is not just about the actions of individuals but also how they are understood, experienced, and interpreted by their recipients. In the previous example, the respondent struggles with the ambiguity of the comment which, on one hand, may have been well-intentioned, or, on the other hand, may be a subtle insult reflecting stereotypes that Blacks are intellectually inferior. These moments, in which one has to assess whether an action is motivated by stereotypes, can also create a sense of social identity threat with social consequences of its own (Steele, 1997; Steele and Aronson, 1995).

In assessing whether an encounter was actually a microaggression, factors considered often include: relationship to perpetrator, racial/cultural identity development of recipients, thematic content of the microaggression, and past experiences of recipients (Sue, 2010). For instance, in the above example, if a questionable incident occurs frequently for a recipient it can lead them to believe there may be some kind of systematic bias occurring. Recipients will also often do "sanity checks", checking in with other people sharing the identity in question about whether a particular incident was a microaggression or not (Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder, 2008).

Individuals experiencing a microaggression encounter a catch-22 in deciding whether to call out such moments. On one hand, if commented on, the incident might be written off by the perpetrator, either unaware of their unconscious bias, or drawing on the ambiguity of the situation to save face. This can increase feelings that a social encounter or environment is hostile, that one's social experience has been discounted, feelings of powerlessness, and damage social relationships with perpetrators (which, depending on one's relationship with them, and any potential power dynamics, can have lasting harm.) However, not addressing a microaggression can also lead to feelings of powerlessness and a sense of lost integrity (Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). For these reasons, as well as the limited window in which individuals typically have to respond, when microaggressions occur the most common response by recipients is to do nothing (Sue, 2010).

Even when one does not outwardly respond to microaggressions the encounter is still processed internally. A common response was "validating oneself," referring to individuals acknowledging that a microaggression occurred against them without internalizing negative societal perceptions or stereotypes related to their group identity. Examples include acknowledging the pervasiveness of racism, sexism, or homophobia, their frequent occurrence, and locating blame on the aggressor rather than themselves (Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder, 2008). Other work has also noted similar practices of "stigma resistance" among LGBT populations (Almack, 2007; Orne, 2013). Some recipients take this one step further by acknowledging the pervasiveness of cultural and institutional systems of discrimination and how, to some extent,

perpetrators of microaggressions are also victims of these same systems, a practice described as "rescuing the offender" (Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder, 2008). This approach, which acknowledges that even the perpetrators of microaggressions are, in their own ways, victims of the same systems of oppression, is one of way of managing the frustration or pain associated with a microaggression away from the individual perpetrating it to this broader system which must then be targeted for any charge to actually occur.

Although microaggressions might appear trivial and harmless, they can have serious physical and psychological consequences for people. The mental and emotional work that goes into assessing microaggressions can be very draining. In fact, some research suggests that microaggressions can be more stressful for individuals than overt forms of bias and discrimination (Salvatore and Shelton, 2007; Sue, 2003). For instance, Salvatore and Shelton (2007) argue that overt, intentional moments of racism may cause less psychological distress than microaggressions because there is less mental work is involved in figuring out whether the event is motivated by racial bias and most people of color have received more social training in how to feel about and respond to overt racism than with microaggressions. Given the high day-to-day frequency of microaggressions for many individuals, the cumulative stress they produce can be very high, akin to a figurative "slow death by a thousand cuts" (Sue, 2010, p.66). Long-term negative effects associated with microaggressions include lower self esteem, emotional turmoil, physical health problems, and reduced work productivity (Sue, 2010).

Despite common trends reported among microaggressions experienced by different marginalized groups, there are some noted differences across groups and ongoing research seeks to further develop how their experiences vary. Following this trend, there is a push to better understand how LGBT people experience and are affected by microaggressions. One difference noted is that LGBT people may be more likely to experience "microassaults", or microaggressions that are more consciously enacted by the perpetrator, than other groups (Sue, 2010). There has also been a push to create a taxonomy of the types of microaggressions experienced by LGBT people comparable to those identified for different racial/ethnic groups and women. This research has identified 9 common themes to LGBT microaggressions, listed in table 10.

Table 10: List of Different Types of Microaggressions Experienced by LGBT people[31]

Type of Microaggression	Example
Use of Heterosexist and Transphobic Terminology	Using terms like "faggot," "dyke," or "tranny."
Endorsement of heteronormative and gender normative culture and behavior	Telling someone they don't "act gay in public."
Assumption of a Universal LGBT Experience	Assuming that all lesbian women act or look "butch."
Exoticization	Heterosexual people stereotyping all LGBT people as the "comedic relief."
Discomfort/Disapproval of LGBT Experiences	Staring at an LGBT person with surprise or disgust.
Denial of the realities of heterosexism and transphobia	Telling an LGBT person that they are paranoid about being discriminated against.
Assumption of Sexual Pathology and Abnormality	Assuming all gay men have HIV/AIDS or all transgender women are sex workers.
Denial of Individual Heterosexism	Someone saying, "I am not homophobic, I have a gay friend."
Denial of Bodily Privacy[32]	Asking a transgender person if they are "pre-op" or "post-op."

One thing missing from this scholarship is a better sense of how microaggressions are managed preemptively and how they shape day-to-day behavior beyond increased stress and negative health outcomes. In part this might be because the literature on microaggressions has not closely integrated scholarship on stigma management which has demonstrated how daily encounters with stigma can deeply affect the social lives and construction of identity for individuals (Goffman, 1963; Earnshaw and Quinn, 2012; Link et al, 1989; Scambler and Hopkins, 1986). By focusing on how microaggressions shape day-to-day family practices, I illustrate how individuals manage these interactions as a form of recurring and difficult to name expression of stigma.

My research adds to this burgeoning literature by considering the stigma experiences of early LGBT parents, which reflects intersections of microaggressions based on LGBT identities

31 Compiled in Nadal (2013) and drawn from findings Nadal, Issa, et al (2011); Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus (2010); Nadal, Skolnick & Wong (2012); and Nadal et al (2010).
32 Primarily experienced by trans* individuals.

as well as ones based on practicing marginalized family relations. Aside from developing a more nuanced understanding of the kinds of microaggressions experienced by LGBT people and how they respond to them, this chapter has three contributions to the microaggressions literature. First, it highlights how family itself is a normative category related to status and stigma and individuals are affected by it via microaggressions in day-to-day life. Second, I show how the experience of family-related microaggressions do not stand in isolation from microaggressions based on race, class, gender, and sexuality. Family-based interactions are a medium through which race, gender, class and sexuality microaggressions are imagined and enacted, as ideas about what families "are" or "ought to be" are heavily implicated with understandings of these social categories. Third, by highlighting microaggressions based on both family structure and its interconnections with race, gender, class, and sexuality, I hope to expand our understanding of the scope in which microaggressions affect individuals in day-to-day life via families, as well as how these experiences are shaped by stigma related to race, gender, class, and sexuality.

Microaggressions Reported by LGBT Parents

Misrecognition
        One of the most commonly reported issues among respondents was misrecognition. Misrecognition refers to instances when others, explicitly or implicitly, are unable to recognize existing family relations between people. Misrecognition includes both moments of invisibility, in which onlookers do not attribute any kind of familial relationship between individuals, and illegibility, in which onlookers can discern some form of relationship exists but are unable correctly identify it and mislabel it, often as a more removed relation (e.g. a couple as "sisters" or a parent as a "grandparent" or "helpful friend"). My usage of misrecognition is distinct from Bourdieu's (1977) similarly named concept. While Bourdieu's use of misrecognition refers refers to the "false consciousness" through which the powerless implicitly accept the cultural and symbolic capital of the powerful, my usage turns that definition on its head. Instead, my usage of the term focuses on the powerful's inability to see beyond their own understanding of the of the world (i.e. SNAF), thereby misrecognizing family relations existing outside of this worldview.
        Of the 51 families interviewed, 45 families discussed occasions in which their family relations went unnoticed or were misconstrued by strangers. For most families, these were not solitary events, but an ongoing occurrence when interacting with new people or entering new social spaces. These moments were often discussed with a mixture of humor and annoyance. Humor to the extent in which their family relations are misconstrued by clueless strangers and annoyance from the lack of recognition they are given as a family or as parents.
        Tammy Silva and Mary Jones' account is illustrative of the broad range of assumptions made by strangers misrecognizing LGBT family relations. When asked if there were ever times in which people are mistaken or confused about their family relations, the couple responded:

      Mary: Oh, all the time.
      Tammy: All the time
      Mary: I don't think most people realize that we would be together and so they'll decide
          that Tammy's my mom.
      Tammy: Yeah, so I've been mistaken as the mom before and—
      Mary: 'Are y'all sisters?'

Tammy: Yeah, and at first when it was the mom I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I look that old? I'm barely 40. What does this mean?'

Mary: Not even 40 yet.

Tammy: Yeah, I wasn't even 40. I think I was like 38 at the time and I was like, 'What does this mean? Are you joking?' So I think that people try to fit you in a box because the last box that they would ever conceive is that these are two partners. That would be the last box. So I think they have to go through all other boxes first, which, 'Oh, if you're not sisters this must be a mother/daughter relationship, good friends— '

Mary: Neighbors.

Tammy: 'Oh, did your husbands die in Iraq?' I mean people really must come up with some crazy stuff. [Laughs]. So that's happened; we're mistaken for that relationship.

Mary: All the time. Grocery store and what not.

Tammy: And you see some people just kind of look when you're walking in with both the children and they have our hands. We're walking in and they're just kind of like 'what?' and you can see them go through the boxes again nonverbally, but in their mind.

Mary: I like it too, the pause that happens. People will say 'Oh, is this your daughter?' 'No, that's my partner.' And people just pause. They're not really sure, 'What is, what's partner?'

Tammy: 'Oh do you own a business together?'

As Tammy and Mary illustrate, when respondents go unrecognized as a partner or parent to their children they are often not completely erased. Most of the time, strangers are able to identify some kind of relationship, but typically they have to go through a lengthy list of other possibilities before they consider a same-sex couple, if they do at all. Instead, they were frequently assume other less direct, or diminished, kin relations including grandparents, aunts, uncles, or friends. In other words, under misrecognition, family relations may become *invisible* and go completely unseen, or, as Tammy and Mary illustrate, they may become *illegible*, in which others can discern some kind of relationship but, due to heteronormative presumptions regarding family and kinship, are unable to correctly identify those relationships.

Even when the couple attempts to explain to individuals their relationship when it is mistaken, some individuals seem unable to understand their explanation, such strangers interpreting the term "partner" as indicative of a business relationship instead of a gender neutral term for spouse or significant other. These moments can also be nonverbal, very subtle and brief, such as when Tammy and Mary note the confused, struggling looks on people's faces when their family is out together in public. The invisibility of their relationship in these moments emphasizes not only how strangers do not actively perceive same-gender couples as part of their social world, but also how in contexts revolving around children and family, these same-sex relationships become even less visible. Sociologist Maureen Sullivan (2004) describes this phenomenon as the "cultural blindspot" that lesbian parents (and I would extend to GBT parents) live in. Another interviewed mother, Lori Turner, summarizes this perspective based on her family's experience, "You could be anything but lesbian, anything but two moms with their kids."

The lack of awareness or intentionality on the part of the strangers, as well the brevity and the day-to-day frequency in which misrecognition occurs identify these interactions as microaggressions. In particular, they reflect the previously noted microaggressions theme, *endorsement of heteronormative and gender normative culture and behavior*. The assumptions that strangers are making regarding Tammy and Mary's relationship reflect an erasure of LGBT relationships in everyday life. These interactions are also a promotion of heterosexuality as a normative ideal, as strangers remodel their same-gender relationship under a lens of heteronormativity (i.e. parent-child, sisters, or heterosexual friends). Because these instances do not appear to be deliberate or motivated by animus on the perpetrator's behalf, they reflect a microinsult, or an action predicated on stereotypes regarding the marginalized group in question that are insulting and demeaning. In this case it is predicated on the assumptions that LGBT people are (1) not parents and (2) do not look like "everyday people."

Reflecting Garfinkel's (1967) observation that social norms are not just regulatory forces, but tools used by individuals to implicitly make sense of the social world they inhabit, strangers draw on heteronormative ideologies of what families "are" to make sense of the respondents' relationships with each other and their children. Interview respondents emphasize that many individuals who encounter their families have little to no implicit sense that LGBT families exist in their social world and instead account for the relations they see under a heteronormative lens that frequently erases their same-sex relationships and occludes the parent status of one of the partners. While in most cases this misrecognition is not malicious or motivated by homophobia, it reflects the insidious nature of heterosexism suffused into how individuals see the world, which has negative consequences for LGBT families; including experiencing a sense of difference, a lack of belonging, and additional work explaining their misrecognized relationships.

Not only did strangers frequently misrecognize respondents' family relations, they would frequently assume a heterosexual family structure. In particular, strangers would presume in interactions with respondents, especially if one parent was alone with their children, that they had a different gendered spouse and/or that children had a mother and a father. Chris Austenberg and his partner, Larry Hass, discuss their experiences with this kind of misrecognition in their daily lives.

> Chris: As two fathers the example I love to give is that we are at [the grocery store] checking out with our daughter and her baby [doll] and the checkout person… would say to our daughter, who is one or two years old, 'Oh, isn't your mommy lucky to have your daddy do the grocery shopping.'
> Larry: Yeah, and now you're coming after a grocery store clerk.
> Chris: Okay, let's not get into the whole misogyny thing you're indoctrinating my daughter into here. You have to take them over and go, 'Actually, Amy has two dads and they both like to do the grocery shopping.'
> Larry: Which isn't true [laughs].
> Chris: But you have to model to your child how to defend herself and correct the person on their cultural assumptions so hopefully they will be a little more careful the next time they say something so—I don't know, I'm being a little too judgmental.
> Larry: It's the heterosexual imperative.

For Chris and Larry, a major issue regarding this kind of misrecognition has to do with the messages these interactions send to their daughter regarding the visibility of their family and the sexism that frequently accompanies these heteronormative assumptions. In this context it is not just about parents responding to personal experiences of microaggressions, but also responding to ones directed at their children, who parents believe are more susceptible to internalizing the sense of difference and heterosexist messages conveyed by strangers' assumptions.

Larry's comment, "Yeah, and now you're coming after the store clerk," is also illustrative of the difficulty experienced by individuals who attempt to respond to microaggressions. When addressing a person's implicit biases, there is the possibility of coming off as the one being the antagonist in a situation and having one's grievance dismissed or ignored, a microinvalidation in its own right. Microaggressions also usually happen quickly and unexpectedly, so recipients have to quickly process and decide how, if at all, they want to address it. Mentioned earlier, this level of identifying and processing microaggressions can be very mentally and emotionally draining, and the cumulative effects can quickly add up if a frequent occurrence. As I show later in the chapter, the need for quick responses is one of the reasons why individuals come up with standard strategies in advance.

Experiences of misrecognition can also be very diffuse, extending beyond interpersonal interactions with strangers and embedded in organizations as well. Chris and Larry follow up their previous example with one regarding heteronormative paperwork they encounter in a range of child-centered and family contexts:

> Chris: Yeah, it's hard to breakdown actually. When you get a form in your kids gymnastics class that says mother/father. Oh, I have to have this fight again. 'Could you put parent 1/parent 2 on your form?'
> Larry: I know. We went there and it had mother/father on the form and I'm like. I'm not coming here. It's 2009. Just put parent, guardian, parent 1/parent 2, whatever.
> Chris: What if the kid is being raised by a grandparent? You just alienated the child. It's not even just because of my agenda--
> Larry: No it's not. It's for everyone.
> Chris: But yeah, these are the little ways that you're constantly having to take on little minor battles.

Just as microaggressions can occur verbally or through one's behavior, they can also manifest in the structure and logic of organizations. The forms that Chris and Larry describe, which only include spots for a parent to identify as "Mother" or "Father," conveys the lower status and exclusion of other family configurations from the organization's awareness. Just like verbal expressions of misrecognition, these environmental expressions subtly convey to families a sense of difference and not belonging. It also creates additional interactional work for parents who have to clarify and account for one's family who is not formally recognized by the organizational or bureaucratic apparatus.

Families also often experience microinvalidations when they call out the exclusionary nature of an organization's form or structure, who are quick to dismiss any the underlying issue involved in this exclusion or the harm that this misrecognition can inflict on families. Experiences like Larry and Chris' might seem like small things to the representatives or gatekeepers of the organization, who are probably only encountering this incongruity for the first

time and have never had to question the lack of inclusion of these forms. But when you are a queer family encountering these kinds of environmental microaggressions every time one enters a new context, the cumulative weight and systematic inequality of not being included is much more salient and painful. In addition, the lack of awareness of these issues by institutional authorities and gatekeepers, who are unlikely to appreciate the gravity of these issues, makes calling out these microaggressions even more awkward and difficult.

Despite the awkwardness, Chris and Larry feel compelled to address these "little minor battles" head on to avoid sending a negative message about their family to their children. They also note that their actions help their children by modeling how to respond to these kinds of situations themselves. Other research on LGBT parents has noted that, in general, parents do feel more compelled to respond to issues of misrecognition and come out in public spaces after having children because they do not want to send negative messages to their children about their families (Almack, 2007; Arnesto and Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008). In some ways this is similar to findings in the racial socialization of children scholarship, in which parents of color simultaneously attempt to shield children from racism while also attempting to model for them ways of responding to it so they are prepared when faced with similar interactions in the future (Hughes et al, 2006; Snyder, 2012).

However, Chris and Larry are also quick to point out that their responses are "not even just because of my agenda" but are "for everyone". They are careful to note not only the specific reasons for practicing it for their family but also for other forms of marginalized families who are are also alienated by these practices. This highlights an underlying theme expressed by some of the interviewed parents when calling out microaggressions, especially ones connected to their children. Specifically, they want to avoid the perception that they are using their children as a vehicle to drive a political agenda, a common accusation lobbed at LGBT parents calling for policy change in family spaces. As a result, some parents are circumspect about calling out microaggressions and note that they feel they need to "choose their battles" carefully. Rather than focusing their arguments on the harm caused to their families, they also try to frame their grievances in ways that connect their concerns to issues affecting a broader range of families.

Beth Feldt also expresses concerns about the messages her son may internalize from moments of misrecognition. However, her concerns also extend to what is conveyed to her three-year-old son by the responses given by strangers when called out on their assumptions:

> Beth: I took him to the doctor the other day and she said, 'Well, you could ask your Daddy, blah, blah, blah, something.' And I said, 'He has two moms.' 'Oh, I'm sorry.' And I was kinda more bugged by that response. I just felt like she could like, 'Oh, Okay.' But you know, it was more like, 'Oh, I'm sorry, it was all mixed up.' I just felt like that was a weird message for him too. What aspect of that are you saying you're sorry for? So that happens and that kind of thing can bug me. But it doesn't happen very often.

Similar to Larry and Chris' encounter in the grocery store, Beth is concerned about the "weird message" he son may receive from encounters such as this, in which it is presumed he has a father. However, Beth is also bothered by the ambiguous apology her and her son received from the doctor, which she fears could be interpreted by her son that there is something wrong with their family. Although "I'm sorry" is a typical English response for having made a mistake, the

vague explanation for why there was a mistake sends an ambiguous message to Beth and her son. By noting that the reason for the mistake is "it was all mixed up" leaves the fault of the confusion unclear, the doctor for confusing families and patients, or the confusing and nonnormative structure of the family, as the root cause for the doctor's confusion.

Beth's example also highlights the difficulty perpetrators of microaggressions can have in adequately responding to them when they are called out. Because they frequently occur unconsciously and both their enactment and one's response can happen so quickly it can catch someone just as off-guard when they are called out on a microaggression. Called out in this way, perpetrators can become flustered and not know (a) exactly what they did wrong (if anything) and (b) how to adequately respond to the faux pas.

Moments of misrecognition did not only revolve around being a same-sex couple or an LGBT parent. Like other forms of microaggressions, the exact source can sometimes be difficult to ascertain, especially for individuals with multiple marginalized identities (Sue, 2010; Nadal, 2013). For instance, in Tammy and Mary's earlier account, their ages affected how strangers read their family relationships. Being mistaken as a parent of a younger partner or grandparent of a child was a common experience among respondents. However, this issue arises not only on the basis of being an LGBT parent, it is also tied to the experiences of being an older parent of a young child; a common experience for LGBT parents who often delay having children early in life due to the financial costs and effort involved in having children using ART or adoption. So although misrecognition related to age is not exclusively an LGBT issue, especially as many people, LGBT or not, increasingly choose to have children later in life, it is still tied to the experience of many LGBT parents.

Reflecting findings from chapter 3, issues of social recognition and misrecognition are also affected by strangers' perceptions of who is, or who is not, a biological parent. Frequently, this emerged through strangers assuming kinship and parent-child relationships through shared appearance and inferring from those similarities a biogenetic tie. Assumptions about family through the lens of biogenetics also underscores how race is a lens through which individuals attempt to read potential kin relations. For instance, Lori Turner and Shelia Lewis, whose experiences were discussed in chapter 3, note how strangers, attempting to map kinship through racial appearance, frequently misrecognize their family relations. Lori and Shelia have two children, Carlos and Clement, ages 4 and 2, respectively, at time of interview. Both children were conceived and carried by Lori, who ethnically identifies as Jewish-Latina, with sperm from an anonymous black donor. However, of the two children, Carlos has darker skin and Clement has lighter skin, leading strangers to assume that they are observing two families, with Shelia, who identifies as African-American, as the mother of Carlos, and Lori as the mother of Clement. The couple discusses a few of these occasions:

> Lori: Remember that one time we were at the jewelers and I said "Give me the baby." And they were like "You are such a good friend." [Laughs]. And then at Southwest that woman was like, "Who is the…" So sometimes they will talk to both us, "Put your mask on before the child's." Because they don't know who is related to whom. All the time. We must have tons of stories like that. I can only remember the few I was telling you about.
>
> Shelia: I don't get it so much now but when Carlos was a baby I remember carrying him in his carrying case…and then they would look at Carlos and you could see that

he was totally confused and I thought, man he would really be confused if he saw me with Clement. Because Carlos at least, he is fairly, you know, dark hair, dark eyes.

Lori: They [Shelia and Carlos] are pretty much the same color.

Shelia and Lori's experiences with misrecognition highlights the intersectionality of the microaggressions many of the families reported. In this case, it is not just being a same-sex couple that is prompting the misrecognition, it is also being an interracial couple. They are mapped as two distinct families based on the expectations that families have only one mother, and that families are monoracial, an issue of misrecognition experienced by interracial and multiracial families (DaCosta, 2008). Compare this Tammy and Mary's example, where, even when they are not perceived as a couple, they are still often construed as kin (albeit mother-daughter, sisters, etc) to Lori and Shelia who are primarily seen as friends.

As much as strangers use physical appearance of family members as an indicator of who is a (biological) parent, even when only one parent is present comments about shared appearance and presumed biogenetic ties are drawn on by strangers to describe family relations (whether those assumptions are true or not). Vicky Leah and her partner, Julie Edelman, note how Vicky was frequently presumed to be their daughter, Shawna's, biological mother, when the two of them were alone:

Vicky: One time though, I can't remember when, but recently, someone was saying how much Shawna looks like me. Shawna doesn't look like me, if you really look at her she looks like Julie. She doesn't have any of my genetic material. Maybe she dresses like me but she doesn't look like me. Or somebody would say..."Does she look like your husband or something?" And I really keep having to explain. So these things keep coming up, for me. Not that she looks like me, but it's so ridiculous, she doesn't look like me. But it comes up all the time.

Julie: They want to make it fit.

Vicky: Well, there is no reason why it wouldn't fit. They don't think about anything other than their world. Most people anyway.

For strangers, making the family relations they perceive "fit" involves approximating it as closely to a heteronormative framing of family as possible. This means drawing connections between similarities in appearance between parent and child to account for a perceived biological family relation. Similarly, when a parent is alone with their child, the presumption is made that their partner (if they have one) is a different gender; seen in Vicky's case with references from strangers to her "husband." As Julie notes, the strangers "want to make it fit" or explain the relationships between respondents and their children as families, but they are working with a limited perception of families as heterosexual with biologically produced children that cannot fully account for the relationships they are observing.

The limited perception Julie and Vicky describe again highlights the ubiquity of SNAF and the pervasive ways it affects how individuals see and understand their social world. It is a reminder that the perpetrators of these microaggressions, usually enacted unconsciously and without malice, are victims of this pervasive ideology as well. Furthermore, rationalizing the misrecognition of strangers in this way, as Julie does, is one way in which LGBT families, as

well as other marginalized individuals, rationalize the microaggressions they experience without internalizing their negative messages and damaging their ability to interact with people on a daily basis.

Issues of misrecognition were not limited to couples. Single parents also noted assumptions made by strangers regarding their marital status and the parentage of their children. Respondents who co-parented but were not in a romantic relationship with each other also noted issues with misrecognition and having to explain their family relations. For instance, Lucy Burnes, raised her son, Jared, between two households with Frank Matthews, Jared's gay, biological father. Lucy notes that "it's never easy explaining who Frank is" and that the confusion strangers experience regarding their family is the "story of their lives":

> Lucy: Because to the outside world when Frank and I are walking around in the world with Jared we are the perfect little nuclear couple...So I felt like a number of times I made the extra effort to explain the situation. I think if I had been raising Jared with a woman partner it would have been really self-evident on what we were doing and how we were doing it or whatever. And that wasn't the case with Frank and there were assumptions. I mean understandably. But it was an opportunity to educate people.

For Lucy, it was especially important, and sometimes difficult, to clarify to strangers that her and Frank are, and were not, married, in order to avoid presumptions that there is, or was, some kind of animosity between the two of them. Furthermore, she also describes wanting to emphasize that Frank is not merely a known donor, but an active co-parent to their son.

Lucy also notes that co-parenting with a man makes it even more likely for people to misread their family relations. Their queerness is doubly erased both through the assumption of being a heterosexual (though perhaps divorced) couple by assuming that they are heterosexual and are, or were, at one point a couple raising a child. Ironically, Lucy feels they would probably have an easier time explaining their family as a same-sex couple because, comparatively, that is an arrangement that more easily fits into the SNAF idea of two romantically attached parents. It is a reminder that the experiences of LGBT families can vary dramatically and with experience greater stigma the further one diverges from SNAF.

Negotiating misrecognition also had to be balanced with concerns over how much information one would have to disclose to clarify one's family relations. This issue was especially salient for the two transgender parents interviewed. In both cases respondents were male-to-female and had children with their cisgender female partners using sperm collected before hormonally or surgically transitioning[33]. However, in addition to typical modes of misrecognition discussed so far for same-sex couples, transgender respondents noted that even when people understood them as same-sex couple with children, they would make assumptions that one of them was not a biological parent. These assumptions put transgender parents into positions where to fully account for their family relations they would need to disclose that they are transgender, something both respondents felt uncomfortable revealing to new people as it could put them in socially awkward, and potentially hostile, situations. Angeline Chea comments on her struggle with this issue.

---

33 Due to fertility issues of one of the cisgender female parents, in one case they also had a family member donate an egg fertilized and implanted using IVF.

Angeline: There is something particularly different with our same-sex relationship. Which is that we are both biologically parents and the funny thing is we are actively out as a lesbian couple and possibly out as transgender. I kinda have to be professionally…but if I meet someone new, I don't say anything. And more and more, nobody realizes and until I get to know them and there is a reason for them to know about my history, I don't say anything. So the interesting thing is if I say I am his biological parent then I am saying that I am transgender, or at least that we have a very complicated biological arrangement here. And my mother, for example, is a proponent of just telling people that he is my adopted child. You know, a more traditional lesbian relationship. So I have no intention of doing that. As he is older and better able to understand I intend to be open with him at the level that his level of development allows for. But it is still an issue. When people ask, 'Which of you ask had Max?' they are essentially asking which of you is not related to him and that's—being lesbians is one thing—but being transgender is being the fringe of the fringe, it's even more problematic. Like in the school system setting, it really isn't something that I want him to deal with, that I want to bring up beyond having complete legal guardianship. So it is a challenge that we haven't quite figured exactly what we are going to do about.

Clarifying Angeline's biological relationship to her son Max is complicated because doing so leaves her, and potentially her son in the future, open to transphobia. However, questions that would require disclosure of her transgender identity come up frequently and if left unanswered diminish her ability to account for her relationship with her son.

This section identifies the most common issue reported by respondents during early parenthood: microaggressions based on other people's misrecognition of their family relations. This includes not recognizing same-sex relationships, presuming that a respondent has a different sex partner, not identifying one or both members of a same-sex couple as parents, and presuming children have a mother and a father. Interwoven in these misreadings of kinship by strangers are presumptions about what families "are" or "ought to be" through lenses of heteronormativity, biological essentialist notions of parenting, and assumptions of monoracial families. Their unconscious deployment of these heteronormative assumptions is a reminder of the depth of these ideological framings of family in that they practically erase the ability to see or understand other configurations of family unless they are actively explained to individuals, and even then, as Mary and Tammy note, that is not always successful.

Reactions to these microaggressions varied among participants, with respondents describing frustration, annoyance, concern for children, and, to some extent, a sense of amusement over the inability of some individuals to perceive non-heteronormative family relations. For all families, however, misrecognition forces them to do additional work clarifying kin relations. Like all microaggressions, they also demand extra mental and emotional effort going through one's day. While moments of misrecognition are not overtly hostile, reflecting a microinsult rather than a microassault, families still have to process them and decide whether to respond to them or not. Was that meant to be insulting or hostile? Do I respond to that comment or not? And while individuals typically deploy these microaggressions unwittingly and without

malice, their reactions once they are called out can be very defensive and, at times, hostile; forcing respondents to decide whether it is worth responding in a given incident or not.

Although misrecognition was common among interviewed families, some variance in frequency was noted with families living in small towns and rural areas reporting more frequent misrecognition. Participants in these locations connected their experiences to the limited presence of other LGBT families and other family forms that diverge from SNAF imaginary (i.e. older parents, interracial couples, transracial parenting, etc.) The connection between misrecognition and rural locations was a common discussion among respondents, both those living in such locations and those who do not, and figured into both how families spatially map stigma and the strategies used to keep it at a distance (a topic discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.)

Hyperscrutiny

Ironically, when respondents' report that their family relations are recognized by strangers (i.e. not experiencing misrecognition) rather than experience a sense of normalcy they often find themselves subject to extra scrutiny instead. Similarly, transgender individuals and people with disabilities also report experiencing heightened scrutiny related to a lack of bodily privacy with strangers and acquaintances feeling entitled to ask intrusive questions about their bodies (Keller & Galgay, 2010; Nadal, Vargas, et al, 2012). Describing similar experiences, though not exclusively focused on bodies, LGBT families are frequently asked to explain their family relations. Families reported being asked detailed questions regarding the process of acquiring children and day-to-day family practices in public spaces. While these types of questions might not seem out of the ordinary in conversations with close friends and family, these questions were frequently asked by strangers or newly met acquaintances; calling for respondents to account for their family relations through a series of questions and justifications that would seem absurd and intrusive to ask different-sex couples under similar circumstances. Embedded in these questions are also, usually implicit, value judgments that undermine the legitimacy of family relationships that do not fit SNAF expectations.

These experiences operate as form of microinsult for LGBT families, denying them the same level of privacy normatively presumed for families. The influence of these moments for families is also exacerbated, as are all microaggressions, by the high frequency in which they occur, and the implicit assumptions embedded in the encounters. The sense of heightened visibility in public spaces can create a sense of being abnormal and not belonging. The implicit value judgements in these encounters also subtly challenge the legitimacy of their families, something that can be especially stressful for new parents.

LGBT families, when read as such, are especially vulnerable to this experience of heightened visibility and public scrutiny due to the implied deviance from SNAF expectations embedded the "usual" ways in which they acquire children (i.e. ART or adoption). While different-sex couples may also use these methods to acquire children, their use of ART or adoption is not explicitly presumed in the same way that it is for LGBT parents. As Goffman (1963) notes, the influence of stigma on a person's behavior and everyday interactions is dependent on the visibility of the stigma. For instance, among different-sex couples with adopted children or ones conceived using ART there remains a greater possibility, compared to same-sex couples, of passing as a "normal" family with biologically conceived children in everyday social situations. In fact, barring observable markers, or stigma symbols, that would lead an observer to

question biological relatedness (such as a child appearing to be a different race from a parent, however problematic such assumptions may be), most people follow SNAF assumptions and presume biologically conceived children from a heterosexual couple. In this case, a heterosexual relationship operates as a status symbol that guides individuals to fill in unknown information about a person's biography in a "favorable" light. However, it is commonly presumed that same-sex couples cannot biologically conceive children without outside assistance. While a heterosexual couple in itself operates as a status symbol that presumes a SNAF family arrangement, being a visible same-sex couple operates as a stigma symbol presumed to exclude such families from normative biogenetic relations. As a result, same-sex couples with children, when not rendered invisible, must negotiate a social environment in which their differences from ideological family norms are highly visible. As is the case for all families who fall outside of the SNAF formation, this leaves LGBT families subject to higher levels of public scrutiny.

The double-bind of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny highlights the paradox of public identity management for LGBT families. Either they are not seen as a part of the constellation of families and rendered invisible or, they are visible but represent a social breach that, even when the intent is supportive and trying to be inclusive, puts a spotlight on their families based on their difference. How do they make their families legible and avoid the sense of difference and additional display work called upon by misrecognition without becoming so visible that the queerness of their families looms too large and requires accounting in its own right? I will return to this issue in the final sections of this chapter by exploring the ways families carefully attempt to manage these dual issues.

LGBT families, far removed from the SNAF imaginary of heterosexual families, are subject to heightened public monitoring. This informal public monitoring bears some similarity to the formal monitoring that parents experience acquiring children through reproductive interventions and adoption discussed in chapter 3. Other family forms that deviate from SNAF expectations also experience higher degrees of both formal and informal monitoring. For instance, poor single mothers attempting to access state welfare have their day-to-day lives heavily monitored, including job seeking, work, and romantic relationships, to determine whether they remain eligible for assistance (Hays, 2003). In all of these cases families that fall outside of SNAF norms are not given access to the same social expectations of privacy from the public and the State that is presumed for "normal" families.

Although not (exclusively) under formal scrutiny in these cases, families that fall outside of normative expectations also informally experience greater public scrutiny when strangers ask them to explain, or account, for themselves. I refer to this increased visibility and forced accountability as *hyperscrutiny*. Similar experiences of increased visibility are reported in studies of multiracial families with children (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Da Costa, 2008) and interracial couples (Steinbugler, 2012). In these studies, increased visibility often manifests in the forms of uncomfortable stares and unprompted comments about their families from strangers, both negative and affirming. However, in contrast to Steinbugler's (2012) use of the term *hypervisibility* to discuss a similar experience of heightened visibility among different-sex and same-sex Black/White interracial couples, I use the term *hyperscrutiny* to highlight not only the increased visibility of LGBT families with children, but also the ways in which they are prompted by strangers to answer questions or entertain comments about their families.

Although families and perpetrators frequently framed these interactions as non-malicious and motivated by "curiosity," they reflect another form of microaggression experienced by

LGBT families. Similar to experiences of misrecognition, hyperscrutiny is frequently enacted by perpetrators unconsciously, with their thoughts and actions guided by SNAF ideologies and heteronormativity. The questions asked by strangers, often about family creation or biological connections between parents and children, are intrusive and, under most circumstances, considered improper to ask strangers. Like other microaggressions, the frustration and stress comes from both the high frequency in which such interactions occur and the subtle implications of lower status embedded in them. In particular, the underlying assumption that their perceived difference makes their bodies and families, things normally understood as private, are open for public discussion and interrogation. Linda Cohen and Sherry Shaffir describe their frustration with the heightened level of scrutiny they experience as a family.

> Linda: You gotta keep going. You explain it to people who don't understand. You answer all their fucking questions. We've done that since the beginning, answering their questions like: 'Who had her? What does it mean to adopt? How can you adopt and have her?'
> Sherry: 'How did you decide on a donor?'
> Linda: Yeah. 'How did you decide on a donor? How did that sperm thing happen?'

Linda and Sherry illustrate the most common theme of hyperscrutiny reported by respondents, questions about how parents acquired children. These questions often have complex and highly personal answers that many respondents have no interest in (frequently) disclosing to strangers on the spot. While most parents do not express the Sherry and Linda's high level of frustration, the frequency and unsolicited manner in which these questions are asked by strangers was an ongoing source of irritation for most respondents. At the other extreme, a few families framed these moments as positive opportunities to educate "well intentioned, curious people" which can help to reduce heteronormative presumptions in the future; a stigma management strategy referred to as "preventative telling" (Conrad and Schneider, 1980)

Just as in chapter 3, the theoretical work on accounts helps explain the phenomenon through which stigmatized individuals, or anyone who breaches social norms, are called upon to explain their deviance. However, diverging from the original formulation of accounts developed by Scott and Lyman (1968), in which social actors provide an excuse or justification for their social breach, LGBT families are called upon by others to do the work of explaining intimate details about their family lives to satisfy the curiosity of others and, on a deeper level, explain how they can be both queer and a family. As a result, these questions operate as a form of microinvalidation that reminds LGBT families of their perceived difference by others.

The underlying frustration and sense of invalidation coming from moments of hyperscrutiny is also heightened by the implicit judgments and assumptions embedded in the timing and content of the questions. For instance, April Meyer describes how such questions can take on an argumentative, or antagonistic, aspect:

> April: When we are with him and people would say, 'Who is the mom? When he was born?' Not just when he was born but we have been out and I remember now because the people said, 'Who is the mom?' And we said, 'We both are.' Like we get into a debate.

April notes her frustration in questions like, "Who is the mom?", stem both from the presumption that there is only one mom among the same-sex couple and the sense that they now have to justify, or "debate," that answer with others. Assuming there is only one mom "when [their son] was born" also draws on a biological essentialist notion of parenthood that equates motherhood to the biological process of carrying and birthing the child. Although insults may not be intended by the questioners, the way they are asking the questions, which presuppose one mother, discounts the possibility that both April and her partner are both mothers to their child. Furthermore, when they correct the assumption and say, "We both are.", it leaves April feeling like they are getting into a "debate" where they will need to prove their assertion.

The intent, and potential heterosexism, behind such questions can also be unclear. For instance, in April's example, it is unlikely that the people were deliberately trying to diminish the status of the nonbiological parent in the couple (assuming there is only one[34]). However, it is important to interrogate why this piece of information is so important to know, what it says about strangers' assumptions about families and kinship, and what is unconsciously communicated to LGBT families. This information is of interest exactly because biological ties are thought to be an important component of family relations and kinship, a topic of deep fascination in western culture (Mason, 2008; Schneider, 1968). Furthermore, by asking these questions, and even subtly challenging responses that do not fit into this frame, they convey to families, and especially nonbiological parents, lower status.

Terry Mandel also describes the kinds of questions he and his partner, Alan Bailey, were frequently asked when their daughter was a newborn, and the ways in which implicit judgments and assumptions about parenthood and family are embedded in those questions and the way they are asked.

> Terry: People always want to know who's the 'real dad.' That's why we don't tell people who the biological father—biological donor—is. But that has not happened as much [recently]. When she was first born, and we were out and about with her, as a newborn, almost everywhere we went people said, 'Where did you get her?'. And, after a while we were just like, [scoffs] 'what do you mean?' I would always say, 'What do you mean where did we get her?'. 'How long do you have her?' 'Since before she was born. What do you mean?' 'I mean the—y'know'. I would throw it back and then Alan started to get offended, more than once.

Similar to April's experiences, the pronounced curiosity people had over whether Terry or Alan is their daughter's biological father is problematic for the couple because the question's high frequency and how it is loaded with assumptions that conflate "biological father" with "real father". The high frequency of these questions not only reflect implicit heteronormative biases in how family is generally understood but also serves as a reminder of the degree to which individuals feel empowered to ask LGBT families to account for their existence (i.e. "Where did you get her?"). Pushing back on both on these assumptions, Terry and Alan adopted a policy in which they refuse to disclose to others which of them is the biological father, challenging both the importance of this knowledge and the entitlement of others to ask.

---

34 As we noted in chapter 3, some two-mom families used IVF with one partner's egg gestated by the other partner, conferring a biological claim to motherhood for both parents.

The hyperscrutiny experienced by Terry and other parents with young children is reminiscent of the experiences of some pregnant women in public who experience their bodies as "public property" to the extent that friends and even strangers feel empowered to touch their bodies, comment on their shape, and ask questions about the pregnancy without solicitation (Bailey, 2001). However, as Terry notes, questions about how they acquired children and who is the biological parent were most common when his daughter was very young. In fact, I found that both issues of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny diminish over time for families as children age, a point discussed in more detail at the end of the chapter.

Highlighted in Terry and April's experiences, a key part of the problem with hyperscrutiny is not just frequency in which they occur and the entitlement others display in asking personal questions about their families, it is also the problematic ways in which questions are framed and the terminology used by others. For example, respondents noted that people frequently conflate donors and surrogates as parents due to their biogenetic ties to their children. In doing so, they are not only overemphasizing the importance of biological ties to claims of parenthood, which simultaneously undermines the legitimacy of social parents, it frequently undercuts the linguistic boundaries carefully crafted by respondents to demarcate who is family. Amanda Nolan notes implicit value judgments in the terminology people use to ask about their child's donor.

> Amanda: There has been a couple of times people will say, and I feel it, 'So who is the father?" They will ask about the father. And they know it is a donor.
> Brooke: Yeah.
> Amanda: Because it's not like a father.
> Brooke: And we will say, 'We don't know the donor.' Or something to sort of frame it for them. And someone recently started talking about his father.

It is important to note that much of the frustration felt by Amanda and her partner, Brooke Garner, comes from people who they feel "know it is a donor" yet continue to use the term "father" in conversation. Similar to April, much of their frustration arises from the sense that people are challenging the legitimacy of their family structure and falling back on a heteronormative presumption that children always having a mother and a father.

Charles Dunne and his partner, Gary Ly, have a similar experience when people ask about the process of having their son, Tristan.

> Charles: Yeah, then there is the question of: 'Oh, then where is his mom? What happened to his mom?' Stuff like that. We have to say, 'Well, he doesn't have a mom, he has two dads.'
> Gary: Even gay couples come up and ask, 'Who is his mom?' They say that. We say, 'We don't refer to that person as his mom.'
> Charles: We don't use that word.
> Gary: We don't use that word.
> Charles: Because it sets up this idea that there is this missing mother out there. Which there isn't. So we have to be careful about the terminology. But we get asked that question a lot. We always say, 'No, he had a surrogate. He's got two dads and a surrogate.'

Embedded in the use of parent terms for donors and surrogates are deeply held ideological beliefs that a primary indicator of parenthood is a biological tie to children. For instance,

referring to the surrogate as "Mom" emphasizes the ideological salience associated with motherhood and the process of birthing a child. Noting this common conflation, Charles and Gary note the importance they place on using terminology to identify Tristan's "surrogate" in order to emphasize that she not his "mother," as well as her familial distance from them.

Similar to Amanda and Brooke's strategy of linguistically reframing questions about their children's "father" to responses about their "donor," Charles and Gary's corrections emphasize that they must be careful with their use of family terminology because of the effect they fear it could have on their children. Referring to a surrogate as "mom" can create a sense that their is a missing parent for children or make them feel like they are missing out an important piece of what it means to have a family. To challenge this perception, most families avoided the use of parent terms for donors and surrogates, and also emphasized in their discussions with children the diverse range of families that exist and the greater importance of having people who love them. Referring to donors and surrogates using parent terms purely on the basis of their biological ties to children can also leave parents, especially social parents, feeling that their own parent identities are diminished. The strategies used by couples to respond and diminish the salience of such inquiries and value judgments using parent terms are explored in more detail in the next section.

A similar vein of questions also occurred for families who chose, or were planning, to have additional children. In these cases people were inclined to ask respondents if they planned to use the same donor for the second child as they did for the first. However, similar to questions about biological parenthood, these questions frequently took on a ideological charge that made respondents uncomfortable answering them. For example, Deanna Smith discusses why she is bothered when people ask if she is using the same donor during her second pregnancy.

> Deanna: It has actually been a tough thing for me being pregnant a second time just how many straight people ask if it is the same donor and if they are going to be 'real siblings'. It is really hard for me. And my response lately with the person who said this to me on Friday. 'Even if they were completely different genetically they would be real siblings because they are our kids and we are raising them. This is our real family. But yes, we do like that they are from the same donor because it worked out well the first time and because eventually there is contact with the donor and if it is the same person they can share that in common.' But it bothers me.

Although Deanna notes that she was using the same donor during her second pregnancy for logistical reasons, she was bothered by the value judgment embedded in people asking if her children would be "real siblings." Similar to earlier accounts of people asking who is the "real mother" or "real father", these questions carry implicit assumptions that biologically related kin relations are "real," that non-biological or social kin ties are lower, or secondary, in status, and that even among families using ART they should aspire to simulate a kind of biogenetic heteronormativity in their selection of donors and surrogates (Mamo, 2007; Schneider, 1968; Sullivan, 2004; Teman, 2010; Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, it bothered her that, because she is using the same donor, people who asked might assume that she was doing so in order for her children to be "real siblings", a notion that is problematic to Deanna. As a result, Deanna feels

obliged to provide a more detailed account of her family's choices surrounding donor selection than she would otherwise like to provide.

Similarly, Ruth Adenauer notes the strong interest people have regarding the sperm donor she is using as she tries to get pregnant for a second time.

> Ruth: What's been funny is how many people ask us—we are trying to get pregnant again now—and the thing that is important to extended family and the thing that people ask me about it is if we have the same donor. If we reserved vials, which we did reserve vials. But I think it is so interesting. They are like, 'Oh that is so good of you.' That is one compliment. Apparently they don't want me to be whoring around with two donors [laughs]. They want to make sure. It's very strange, how important that connection is to people.

Like Deanna, Ruth notes the high degree of interest and frequency in which people asked about her donor choices when they found out she was trying to get pregnant. She also similarly notes that people complimented her on her choice to use the same donor for her intended second child. Ruth also notes the implied value judgement in their relief that she is not "whoring around with two donors" conflating the usage of unknown donors with sexual promiscuity and the idea of children conceived out of a relationship by different "fathers."

Similar to misrecognition, respondents experiences of hyperscrutiny do not emerge exclusively from being LGBT, they are interwoven with other ways in which their families do not fit SNAF imaginaries. For instance, male respondents note receiving a lot of unsolicited parenting advice and comments while in public, especially from women. These experiences reflect the extent to which notions of parenting are heavily gendered. Compared with men, women receive greater legitimacy as parents but are subject to higher expectations as mothers and greater consequences for failing to live up to those expectations (Hays, 1996). In fact, mother-child relationships are so often described as the central parenting relationship that the care work involved with raising children is often referred to as "mothering" (Ruddick, 1995). However, men who are primary caregivers note difficulty in being recognized as a primary parent or entering parent spaces that have also become implicitly gendered (Doucet, 2006; Risman, 1998).

Terry, continuing his discussion from earlier in the chapter about questions he and his partner are asked in public with observations regarding how they are treated as men caring for a newborn in public:

> Terry: We got a lot of unsolicited advice from women. Which still continues to a degree, which, y'know is, I'm sure dads alone with a kid get it a lot, too. It's just, that the 2 of us, I mean, we'd be in an airplane and...she was 6 months old or something. We know how to handle diapers and seat belts and everything else. And still we would get flight attendants condescending to us. I really didn't like that. Or patronizing like you're, 'How nice to see men parenting kind of stuff.' That's something else I didn't really like.

Although not unique to queer men raising children, "fatherhood" is another parent status subject to extra scrutiny in public that others, in this case primarily women, feel empowered to comment

on and intervene (Doucet, 2006). Whatever their intentions, these kinds of solicitations operate as a microaggression reminding men that they are culturally understood as secondary parents to mothers and presumed ignorant or unable to care for children without help. Or, as Terry notes, individuals expressing amazement at their capacity to parent without assistance.

Sophia Brooks also describes the hyperscrutiny that she and her children experience at school from other students and how it is contextualized not only by her lesbian identity but her being an older, white parent with two adopted children of color.

> Sophia: And at the elementary school level where I just totally felt like even though I had been on campus for five years I could walk around and nobody would know that my kids went to school there. It was a very odd experience. Which I think is probably partially related to my being a lesbian, partially related to my being an older parent. In the Bay Area I am not unusual; but here [in the Central Valley] I am. And so there has been more for my kids to deal with because other kids have looked at me and said, well, first they say, 'How come your mom doesn't look like you. Your skin colors are different.' We got that question a lot in elementary school. Then the second question is, 'How come your mom looks so old.' So different here in the Central Valley. And being GLBT is part of the difference is how I understand it.

Sophia and her family's experiences of scrutiny and lack of social recognition are shaped by the multiple ways in which her family sits on the margins of SNAF. She also illustrates how misrecognition and hyperscrutiny, which seem like they would be mutually exclusive, can also be experienced at the same time. Although Sophia can sometimes disentangle the sources that prompt the scrutiny and sense of difference that her family experiences (such as questions asking why her and her children have different skin colors), other times she left unsure to what extent age, race, and her sexuality collectively play into their marginalization. Other research on microaggressions among individuals with multiple stigmatized identities also note the increased difficulty experienced by individuals in sorting out the collective effect of all aspects of their identity (Nadal, 2013).

Reflecting on her experiences, Sophia believes the degree of difference she feels and the scrutiny her family experiences would have been less if they had stayed in the Bay Area rather than moving to the Central Valley, a more rural and socially conservative part of the state. In particular, she notes that it is not just being different from the ideological expectations of what families "are" or "ought to be," but living in an area with very few other families that visibly resemble hers. The importance placed on living in areas with similar families (including queer families, adoptive families, children acquired through ART, and transracial families) was a common theme noted among families and is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5. However, even among families living in the Bay Area, which was seen as a location with a diverse array of families, respondents who were older parents and had transracially adopted also noted similar experiences to Sophia. In fact, the majority of respondents, regardless of location, noted they encountered more explicit issues of social recognition on the basis of race than they did based on the their sexual identity or being in same-sex couple.

Families that do not fit typical structures, such as having children outside of a romantic relationship, or caring for children for whom you have a different kin relationship, also encounter

heightened scrutiny. For example, Iris Avina and Stephanie Dillow, both 27 at the time of interview, who care care for Iris' two teenage siblings, discuss the heightened scrutiny they have encountered from co-workers and school settings.

> Iris: Sometimes like, parent-teacher conferences, there's always just a little bit of hesitation, like. You know, I'm her sister, she's my partner. You know.
> Stephanie: It's just a really different situation, you know? Not the 2 female, you know, but with the added thing of her siblings. It's just unusual.
> Iris: Yeah.
> Interviewer: So does it just make it an issue for explaining your family? Does it come in other moments?
> Iris: For me at work a lot, people ask me 'Oh, do you have kids?' And then that opens the floodgates. I say, 'Yes'. And then it's like, okay, I get into 'They're teenagers'. 'What? You look so young.' And then it's like, 'okay this, and that, this and that.' And that whole thing. And then it's just a really long process, but I haven't experienced any, what's the word?
> Stephanie: Negativity.
> Iris: Negativity, yeah. I haven't. But it's just different. You know, most people are like 'Yeah.' Or 'Yeah, I have one.' But for me it's like, they ask more questions which makes them more confused and then sometimes when I pick them up from school earlier sometimes people ask 'Who are you?' You know? It's like. You've got to explain it to the woman behind the desk at the school, and it's like you always have to explain yourself. It feels like—Not that it's—I don't mind, but it's just, annoying, kind of.

Although Iris and Stephanie describe their experiences as unsurprising, it does not change the fact that they are always having to explain themselves, both informally and formally, ranging from informal conversations with co-workers to interactions with authority figures and gatekeepers at the kids' school. Furthermore, the explanations are not brief exchanges, Iris notes that explanations that satisfy these inquiries are "a really long process". While this may not reflect any overt hostility or "negativity" for their family, it does force them to frequently account for themselves, taking additional time and effort, and serves as a reminder of their family's perceived difference by others.

   As these examples illustrate, on occasions when families in the study are recognized by others they are frequently subject to heightened visibility and scrutiny. In these moments, LGBT families are asked to describe the processes used to have children as well as detailed questions about their legal and biogenetic relations to their children. Embedded in many of these moments of scrutiny are value judgments that diminish the status of their families or seek to reinterpret family relations under a lens of heteronormativity. These moments of scrutiny are also in contrast to the privileged status of many heterosexual families who are implicitly accepted by others as family through the questions strangers *do not (or do not think to) ask*. Many families expressed frustration over these breaches to their family's privacy; which is exacerbated by the frequency in which they occur and the implicit value judgements embedded in questions. Families not only had to endure these breaches, but also had to figure out how to respond them; either through some sort of response to questions or, like Terry, through a confrontational approach of not

responding to those question. Parents also needed to decide, if and how to confront implicit value judgements at play, as they were often not only belittling of respondents parent status but were seen as potentially harmful to children who may internalize these negative messages about their families.

Through all of these accounts the use of parent titles are observed as central to the ways in which family relations are accounted for or discounted. Building on the importance of parent terms for early family accounts, the rest of chapter explores how families select and utilize parent terms in relation to issues of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny.

Families Respond: Accounting for Family

Although the microaggressions scholarship provides a useful framework for understanding stigma beyond overt expressions of discrimination, it still remains limited in understanding its consequences and how individuals respond to them. So far this scholarship has primarily focused on how individuals understand and respond to microaggressions in the moments when they occur and the long-term influence on people's psychological and physical health. What is missing is how individuals subtly reshape their own behavior and practices over time to preemptively sidestep or respond to anticipated microaggressions. Although microaggressions often happen quickly and without warning, their high frequency can lead individuals to develop strategies and practices to reduce their frequency, or quickly respond when they do occur.

The families I interviewed did not passively endure moments of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. In the remainder of this chapter I highlight how parents subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) strategically respond to moments of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. Building on the microaggressions scholarship, I focus on how families preemptively respond to anticipated microaggressions through their selection and daily usage of parent terms (such as "momma", "mommy", "daddy", and "papa"). Their selection and usage of parent terms operates as a form of family display intended to reduce misrecognition and, when they are understood by others as a family, reduce their heightened visibility in public. However, this strategy can present its own challenges as families negotiate both the personal, affective meanings they associate with different terms and with a term's public legibility.

Doing Family, Family Displays, and the Sociology of Accounts

In order to understand how microaggressions morph the day-to-day lives of LGBT families I draw on David Morgan's (1996, 2011) family practices framework to capture how family relations are shaped through daily activities and social interaction. Family practices are defined as activities "which deal in some way with ideas about parenthood, kinship and marriage and the expectations and obligations which are associated with these practices" (Morgan, 1996, p.11). Also known as the "doing family" approach, this framework moves away from earlier theories that define families as relatively stable structures with their own social functions and coherent membership (Parsons and Bales, 1955). Instead, it focuses on the ongoing activities that sustain a quality to relationships that allows for them to be understood as family. In other words, rather than thinking about "family" as a noun, one can think of it as an adjective to describe a relationship (Morgan, 1996).

The activities involved in doing family are understood as socially meaningful for practicing family because they are embedded in "wider systems of social meaning" (Morgan,

1996.) For instance, SNAF, as an a dominant cultural ideology that shapes what people think families "are" or "ought to be," operates as an organizing force for family practices that shapes what (and for whom) specific activities are infused with family meanings. The advantage to this approach over a "family as structure" approach is that it better captures the fluidity of family relationships for individual members and its complex relationship to dominant cultural understandings of families.

Practicing families, however, is more complex than merely "doing family" as Morgan describes it. Janet Finch (2007) argues that family relationships must be "displayed" in addition to being "done." Actions can carry multiple social meanings, and, particularly at this historical moment, what constitutes legitimate family relationships cannot always be taken for granted, especially for families on the margins of SNAF. LGBT families, for instance, may experience higher stakes in their family displays since their family configurations are not readily recognized under heteronormative family ideologies and may vary considerably depending on the social environment they inhabit. In other words, Finch defines "family displays" as a form of meta practice to convey to others that one is "doing family things" (Finch, 2007, p.67). However, Finch does not give enough credit for how important displays are for all family practices. Rather than a distinct or meta form of family practice, I argue that it is more productive to think about family displays as a characteristic of all family practices with a spectrum of intensity based on the ease in which a practice is readily identified as a "family practice" and the stakes involved in its success or its failure to be recognized.

Family displays, while applicable to any family relations, is a useful concept for understanding the extra work involved in the construction of family relations for people on the margins of SNAF. It highlights the participation of people outside of families in the daily construction of family relations. It also illustrates how not all practices, and individuals practicing them, will be recognizable by relevant others and across different contexts. For example, under this framework, instances of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny can be seen as moments when one's family practices are not recognized or read as such by strangers who then do not recognize the family meanings normally associated with these practices.

Family displays also extend our understanding of the various ways in which marginalized families subtly "account" for their deviance from SNAF expectation in social interactions with others. They illustrate how individuals subtly convey family relations to others despite their deviation from social expectations of what families "are" or "ought to be." It is layer of accounting that, in ideal circumstances, is accomplished seamlessly through family displays and reduces the misrecognition and hyperscrutiny experienced. This approach can also be expanded to think about the interconnection between displays and accounts for other forms of relationships and identities as well. For example, Sue Fischer and Stephen Groce (1990) also find accounting strategies used by medical patients struggling in conversations with doctors to have their concerns and observations heard and taken seriously. Patients use accounting strategies to display competence in medical discourses, which they hope will lead doctors to listen to them. However, these strategies frequently involve compliance with and subordination in a power structure that ultimately reifies the authority of the doctor. Similarly, the research on LGBT families explores the ways in which family displays not only legitimate relationships but also, in the course of seeking legitimacy, tend to comply with and reify the SNAF norms that are the source of the marginalization in the first place.

In cases of misrecognition, family displays make family ties more visible and recognizable to strangers. In the case of hyperscrutiny, these practices reduce the salience in which LGBT families seem different from heterosexual ones. However, in both of these cases I found that a key arena in which displays were manufactured was how family relations are referred to and discussed in conversations with others. For this reason I focus on the selection and day-to-day use of kinship terms as a form of family practice and display used to offset issues of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. However, term selection and use is also mediated by the highly personal and emotional meanings individual attach to them, which are laden with their own social meanings related to familial relations and parenting identity.

Limited research has been conducted on the importance of kinship terms for family life. The research that has been conducted has focused on stepfamilies and lesbian couples with children; which have yielded similar findings. Scholarship on stepfamilies indicates that stepparents and children struggle to find terms to describe their kin relations because everyday language presumes first marriages and that children only have two parents who are biologically related to them (Cherlin, 1978; Kellas, LeClair-Underberg, & Normand, 2008). However, this research also indicates that kinship terms are symbolically important for stepfamilies. Children in stepfamilies creatively use kinship terms to make sense of complex family relationships and handle difficult transitions that come with remarriage (Kellas, LeClair-Underberg, & Normand, 2008). Children also used kinship terms to communicate solidarity, separateness, and to manage the balance of stepfamily life (e.g, avoiding terms that would hurt a stepparent's feelings or using terms that would reduce strangers' confusion over family relations).

Studies of lesbian couples with children have also found that they struggle finding meaningful kinship terms and, similar to stepfamilies, that these terms are symbolically important (Bergen et al, 2006; Gabb, 2005; Padavic & Butterfield, 2011; Sullivan, 2004). When children are conceived using DI, parent terms are used to increase social recognition of non-biological mothers, typically with parents using two parallel terms for mother (e.g., "mommy" and "momma") to emphasize the equal standing of both parents (Bergen et al, 2006; Sullivan, 2004). Research in Florida also finds that many lesbian non-biological parents, feeling the absence of social and legal recognition, struggle to self-identify themselves as "mothers," with a significant portion taking on a "father" identity or a completely new, locally contextualized, parenting identity, such as "mathers" (Padavic & Butterfield, 2011).

These findings, taken together, suggest the importance of parent terms for recognizing the parenting identities and kinship relationships that exist outside of SNAF ideologies. Building on Mead's (1934) idea that language is central to identity formation, names and titles operate as a container for the perceived expectations accorded to the identity they symbolically define (Strauss, 1959). In other words, parent terms operate as both a way of understanding one's own parenting identity in relation to internalized SNAF ideologies and through public recognition in day-to-day social interaction. However, term selection can also be difficult because parents do not feel they fit, or are told by others they do not fit, the normative criteria for the identity symbolized in a particular term. As a result, marginalized families draw upon a range of new terms, and extended meanings for existing ones, to personally and publicly define parent identities.

Furthermore, these studies indicate that not all families use parallel mother terms, or even mother terms at all. This pushes the question of whether the terms used by lesbian couples are always considered to be equal. Even for couples using parallel mother terms, are the terms

comparatively neutral in meaning or are there reasons why a parent would want to be called, for instance, "mommy" over "momma"? Furthermore, when non-normative terms, such as "daddy" or "mather," are selected, what are the implications for public recognition of parenting identities and family relationships? In other words, how do marginalized families who struggle with social recognition reconcile using personally meaningful terms that may not be socially approved or recognizable to others? Finally, as there are currently no studies exploring how male same-sex couples negotiate parent terms in the context of intentional parenthood, it remains unknown the extent to which their parent term practices mirror, or differ, from lesbian parents. The rest of this chapter addresses these questions.

"We Are Both Her Mothers and I Want the World to Know That"

Twenty families selected terms specifically to ensure that both parents were publicly recognized and avoid issues of misrecognition. However, this strategy was most salient among couples who had children using donor insemination or surrogacy. Reflecting cases discussed earlier in the chapter, couples were concerned that non-biological parents would be accorded lower status or rendered invisible by others. Parent term selection, as a result, operated for some families as means of displaying that they are both equally parents of their children. For instance, Ruth Adenaur and her partner, Bobbi Lennon, decided on parent terms shortly after Ruth gave birth to their daughter, Kay-Kay, because they wanted to prevent other people from using problematic labels that would diminish Bobbi's position as Kay-Kay's mother. Ruth describes the process:

> Interviewer: How does Kay-Kay refer to you?
> Ruth: I'm 'momma' and Bobbi is 'mommy.'
> Interviewer: Was that a conscious decision?
> Ruth: It became one. We actually initially hadn't any intention of doing one thing or another. We felt like that she would figure it out. What we knew from other women—other lesbians—who had kids was that was that maybe they start out with some kind of distinguishing name and then over time they just both become 'mom.' So we thought, 'Well, she will work it out.' It turned out that it was really important to everybody else. [Laughs]. Like with Kay-Kay, it didn't matter to her but everybody else wanted to know what she was going to call us. And then somebody, it might have even been my mom, and she started calling us 'momma 1' and 'momma 2' and there wasn't a chance in hell Bobbi was going to be 'momma 2.' So then we picked 'momma' and 'mommy' and it stuck.

Although Ruth and Bobbi initially had no interest in coming up with specific parent terms, parent terms are not just used by children but also by parents and others as a way of identifying family relationships. As a result, inquiries into the terms the couple would use came from "everybody else" and when the couple did not select terms they were determined by others. Reflecting the instances of hyperscrutiny discussed in the previous section, when families are visible, people outside the family reveal a strong interest in seemingly mundane family practices. In this case, people expressed a strong interest in how Ruth and Bobbi differentiate their parenting identities through the parent terms they use. While many respondents noted plans for terms prior to the birth of children that balanced reflected deeply personal reasons alongside factors related to

public recognition, Ruth and Bobbi did not. For them, it was presumed to be something their daughter "would figure out" and, based on what they were told by other queer families with older children, it was likely Kay-Kay would just end up referring to both of them as "mom" in the long run anyways.

Like many instances of hyperscrutiny, an interest in the parent terms used by the couple likely reflects a curiosity without malicious intent. Especially since parent term usage is highly gendered and usually a taken-for-granted process among different-sex couples. However, the questions about term differentiation and the parent terms others attribute to families if none are given can be laden with implicit, and problematic, ideological meanings. Like many microaggressions, much of the distress from these moments can arise from having to decipher what term designations from others mean and what kinds of feelings they inspire for the parents. For instance, it is not clear whether Ruth's mother's use of the terms "momma 1" for Ruth and "momma 2" for Bobbi were meant to highlight a secondary status for Bobbi as a non-biological mother, a point of insecurity for Bobbi that emerged elsewhere in the interview.

Regardless of intent, Ruth was clearly aware of her partner's sensitivity to moments where her position as a mother would feel diminished. By selecting two commonly used, but distinct, parent terms, "mommy" and "momma," Ruth and Bobbi sought to establish that they were both equally Kay-Kay's mothers. As this case illustrates, selecting parent terms can become a strategy that helps to ensure that non-biological mothers will feel like parents themselves, and that they will be recognized as such by individuals outside of their immediate family. Furthermore, internally feeling like a mother and external recognition of that identity by strangers are not mutually exclusive. Consistent with symbolic interactionist theories of identity development (Cooley, 1983; Mead, 1934), Bobbi's sensitivity to these moments shows that comfortably inhabiting a mother identity is connected to external recognition.

Lisa Goldschmidt, the biological mother of 17 month old Mina, also emphasized how, for her, the selection of parent terms was "partially political" and connected to external recognition. This was an issue that specifically came up in moments of hyperscrutiny when people would ask the seemingly innocent, yet socially charged question of, "Who's the dad?"

> Lisa: For me, it is partially political. It's up to Gail what she gets called but, you know, some people are really clear on they don't think of themselves quite as a mother and so on. So they are happy with a different term and I am just really, again, maybe I am bending over backwards, but I am uncomfortable over the distinction of who we are. We are both her mothers and I want the world to know that. So any kind of masculine name kind of bothers me. So anything that makes Gail sound more like a dad than a mom...I like affirming to people that there is no dad in this relationship. Not that I get a lot of that but you know. Sometimes people seem to have that in their head, 'Who's the dad?' There is no dad, only two moms.

Like Ruth, who wanted to avoid her co-parent being framed as a secondary mother ("momma 2"), Lisa noted that it was important that both she and her partner, Gail Goldschmidt, be recognized as mothers and that their parent terms not diminish either of their positions, particularly Gail's. As a result, she wanted to make sure her partner wasn't referred to with masculine parent terms that apply heteronormative standards to their relationship and emphasize an embodied distance from children that is often associated with fatherhood. In other words, Lisa

wants to avoid the presumption that she more of a primary parent than Gail. For Gail and Lisa, using the terms "momma" and "mommy" reflected their wishes to be seen equally as mothers and to acknowledge the gender identities of both parents. However, not all lesbian parents view father or masculine parent terms as problematic; some of my informants preferred them, as discussed later in this section.

Not all parent terms were equal though in the eyes of respondents. For instance, in seeking a personally meaningful term, some non-biological mothers avoided terms that made them uncomfortable, including terms they associated with biological mothers. Robin De Luca, a non-biological mother, explains to her partner, Veronica Landon, why she would have felt "less appropriate" being referred to as "mommy":

> Veronica: You didn't want 'mommy' for you for some reason. You were like, "mommy' sounds weird.' And I said, 'Oh, I'm 'mommy."
> Robin: I don't think it was—it just seemed more appropriate. You're the more motherly one. You're the one who wanted to have a baby so badly. You gave birth to him. You seemed like you should have the 'mommy' [pause] moniker. I wasn't that attached to it. It wasn't that I thought it was weird or anything I just thought you should have it. And 'momma' is Italian so 'momma' made sense to me...So at some point he may call me 'mommy' but that's later.

Robin's account highlights how even specific gendered parent terms that might, on the surface, appear symbolically neutral, can be loaded with complex meanings. Although uncomfortable using the term "mommy," Robin also notes that her feelings toward the term are tied to the present, noting that maybe her son would refer to her as "mommy" when he is older (he was 2 at the time of the interview.) The feeling that her relationship might become more maternal and reflect a more "motherly" relationship, like Veronica's, highlights beliefs among several parents that when children are young they are more attached to their biological mom but as they get older they may develop other, equally maternal, relationships with other parents. Instead, Robin opted to use the term "momma" because she associated it with her Italian heritage. It also reflected a cultural background she shared with her son through their Italian surname, De Luca, a compromise among the couple to connect their son to Robin's family and heritage since he would be "genetically a Landon."

Similarly, Dale Prokesch and Scott Adams' selection of parent terms was also influenced by concerns of public recognition balanced with different meaning they associated with parent terms. Because of the social and emotional meanings attributed to biological parenthood, Dale and Scott used provided a mixed sample of their sperm to surrogate in order to avoid having to negotiate who would be the biological parent. This approach also allows the couple the opportunity to sidestep questions from others about who is the biological parent; as, without additional paternity tests, it remains uncertain. Although this strategy does allows the couple to sidestep deciding who would be the biological parent and removes certainty of who is the biological parent, it does not fully negate the anxieties that parents may feel over being a nonbiological parent. Dale explains how his concerns regarding his potential nonbiological relationship to his daughter, and his own discomfort at being seen as "different", affected his desire to be referred to as "daddy" instead of "papa."

Dale: I wanted to be 'dad' because I felt like that was a more normal relationship, it would minimize the extent to which she would –minimize the extent—the likelihood of her disliking me, to be perfectly honest with you…And also, honestly, you know, it was I think in part also motivated by internalized homophobia. Like, being 'papa' marks you as different in some way, I feel like. Whereas being 'dad', less so. I would probably be capable of making a different choice now, but at the time, I couldn't.

Dale's desire to have a "normal" relationship with his daughter was emphasized in his push to be called "daddy." Being called "daddy" became a way to enact a normal relationship with Katelyn. Furthermore, he feared being called "papa" would mark him as a gay parent when alone or as the odd parent out compared to his partner if he were "daddy." For many couples, internalized homophobia connected to the tensions of being perceived as a "normal" family affected naming practices utilized, deemphasizing differences or queerness in the names.

Reflecting Dale's concerns about how he would be perceived by others using the term "papa" instead of "daddy," some families were especially concerned about the levels of scrutiny they might receive from strangers in public spaces if they chose names that were "too far out there." Nine families mentioned this as a consideration that weighed into their initial choice of terms and another 3 mentioned it as an ongoing concern related to the terms they had chosen. Two of these couples noted that they vetted terms using the "super-market test" – would strangers turn their heads in confusion in response to a particular term said aloud. Glenn Frye, mother of 11-year-old twin boys, described how this criteria influenced her and her partner, Drew Frye, choice of parent terms:

Interviewer: I was wondering if you could talk about how your children refer to you all and walk me through the process of deciding that?

Glenn: Sure, yeah. So we wanted names that were not going to catch your ear at the grocery store when they said, 'Can I have this cereal, 'momma Drewie'?' Or 'momma D'? Or any of that stuff. I think it all sounds goofy. And then catches people's ears as a result. So we came up with one of us would be 'momma' and the other would be 'mommy,' assuming they would shorten it eventually to 'Ma' and 'Mom' and that would work over time.

Glenn and Drew strategically avoid "goofy" parent terms that would catch people's ears as a way to reduce the stares and sense of hypervisibility they experience in public spaces. It reflects a stigma management strategy Goffman (1963) referred to as "covering," or practices used to keep a stigmatized attribute from being too noticeable or salient in a social encounter. Using the commonplace terms like "momma" and "mommy", rather than the less common terms or modes of address, reduces the extent to which their deviance from SNAF is salient in public spaces.

Robin de Luca and Veronica Landon also noted that their use of "mommy" and "momma" was influenced by their interest in "flying under the radar," or reducing how much they stand out as an LGBT family in public spaces.

Robin: It was when I read the new book that cemented it because [my son] really seemed to like it because it had 'mommy' and 'momma' in it. And the other book we have

had 'mommy' and 'momma' too. I wanted to also reflect, I mean there is not a lot of them, children's books for same-sex parents, so I thought it would be nice to reflect some of the terminology in the books so as not to add any further confusion. We got enough complicated stuff going with him.

Veronica: Yeah. 'mommy' and 'momma' is pretty universal.

Robin: Yeah, wasn't someone in the mom's group, or the other birthing class going to be 'Daddy'?

Veronica: Mm-hmm.

Robin: No extra layers.

Veronica: Yeah, you think about the kid going to school and saying, 'My 'Didi,' blah, blah, blah.' Using the currency that everybody else does is a better way to go if you're people like us and you like to fly under the radar.

Veronica and Robin justified their use of "mommy" and "momma" through their perception that the terms were "pretty universal." Not only were these terms commonly used by other mothers they encountered day-to-day, gay or straight, but the pair of terms had specific resonance for them as they reflected the terminology in children's books featuring lesbian parents. Furthermore, Veronica and Robin expressed concerns that uncommon or unique terms would create added confusion, especially since they felt that there was enough "complicated stuff" already going on for their family, particularly for their son. By avoiding these "extra layers" of complexity they hoped to avoid the extra burden of explaining their family relations to outsiders and minimize experiences of difference for themselves and their son.

However, it is important to emphasize that the strategies used by Glenn, Veronica, and Robin's families for reducing visibility is not about trying to hide the fact that they are an LGBT family. It is about downplaying the degree to which, despite being an LGBT family, their day-to-day family practices display difference from SNAF norms. In doing so they strategically interweave SNAF normative practices, such as using terms like "momma" or "mommy" instead of "momma D" or "didi" to display a sense of normalcy to strangers and acquaintances as they go about their daily lives. These modes of display allow families to more seamlessly go about their daily activities and offset the degree to which they may encounter hyperscrutiny.

The day-to-day use of parent terms was also deliberately practiced in ways that also attempted to reduce misrecognition. For instance, Claire and Noreen Wishon note that when they are not together they refer to themselves as one of their daughter's "moms" instead of as her "mom" to avoid presumptions of being a part of a different-sex couple.

Noreen: I am often trying to say I am one of Laura's moms. Like when I first meet people.

Claire: It lets them know something.

Noreen: It lets them know they have another mom. But it immediately outs us. I don't do a whole big thing. I mean, it's a split second. I am acknowledging that I am not filtering that. And I try to do it a lot.

Claire: I know. Like when one of your brothers were to introduce themselves they would say, "I am Noreen's brother, Frank."

Noreen: Right.

> Claire: But people wouldn't assume that you did or did not have another brother based on him saying that. But most people only have one mom. So that is somewhat why. But if we lived in a world where people didn't make that assumption I think we could say, "I am her mom."

Noting the heterosexual presumptions others are likely to make if they refer to themselves as "Laura's mom" when they are alone, Claire and Noreen are deliberate in the language they use in daily conversation to display their relationship with their daughter. Doing so is not only related to coming out to new people in an understated way, but also in recognizing the parent status of both of them and that "mom" is not a unique identity in their family. This allows them to both preemptively try offset moments of misrecognition while also doing so in a subtle and seamless way that will help to reduce moments of hyperscrutiny that might arise if their LGBT parent status is declared more demonstratively.

While male couples and adoptive families selection of parent terms were not strongly influenced by biogenetic discourses in the same ways that they were for female couples using ART, there was still detailed discussion among parents regarding day-to-day use of parent terms to strategically display kinship in public settings. Danny Che describes how his family negotiates public perceptions of his family using parent terms and family interactions to strategically display family amidst misrecognition.

> Danny: Especially if they see its two dads. When we all go out, because he has a little more of an Asian look, I think people think that he is mine. But when he says, 'Daddy.' And Dan looks to him and says, 'Yes?' I see people going, "Oh, he's 'daddy.' So what am I? Am I just a man nanny or the houseboy? Then they see me butting in like a mom going to fix this and fix that and they go, 'Oh, these two are the parents.'

Because Danny and his adopted son, Miles, are both of Asian descent there is a presumption from strangers that Danny is the biological father. However, when Miles calls Dan Madsen, his significantly older, white father, "daddy" it destabilizes the biogenetic framing used by onlookers. However, now Danny finds himself in a position where his presence must be accounted for. To accomplish this he subversively plays off of gendered scripts of parenting, "butting in like a mom," to emphasize his parent relation to Miles. This example emphasizes how kinship is displayed by these families to offset misrecognition through a combination of practices that simultaneously refute and draw on SNAF beliefs of family. It also highlights how displays occur not only among "relevant others," such as extended kin or institutional authorities, but for complete strangers.

Miles active participation is also instrumental to the perceived legitimacy of Dan, Danny, and Miles' family display. Miles calling Dan "Daddy" in public identifies to strangers that Dan is a parent when he might otherwise not be recognized. Because children are perceived as a central feature of families, their kinship displays are especially salient and taken seriously by others as real and genuine. Similarly, Michael Hall and Tim Reece describe the family display work accomplished in public by their 2-year-old son, Dalton:

> Michael: Well now there is much less room for assumption now that Dalton talks.

Tim: Yeah, that's true.
Michael: Screaming "Daddy, daddy!"
Tim: Yeah, that's true.
Michael: He is the one who helps make clear who is who and what is what.

In this case it is not just the selection and general use of parent terms that matters, but who in the family uses them. As these examples emphasize, children, not just parents, are active agents in the process of accounting for family through kinship displays as means to mitigate and respond to misrecognition from strangers. It also gives a glimpse into how stigma management becomes a group practice in some families. While Dalton and Miles may not be aware of their involvement in the management of stigma their families may encounter, they remain active participants.

Accounting for "Extra Layers" of Meaning

Although many respondents deliberately chose terms that would be easily recognizable to strangers, reducing misrecognition, and, as Robin and Veronica put it, add "no extra layers" of meaning to explain, not all couples found it easy or desirable to limit the range of possible terms they use to fit the normative imaginations of the public. In fact, for some respondents, the desire to pick a term that was personally meaningful led them to select uncommon or unique terms that were not immediately discernible to people outside of the family, creating a conflict between the personal meanings and public legibility of terms. Two cases, in particular, reflected this situation. In both of them, the parents reported the kinds of scrutiny they faced (or anticipated facing) in public, as well as their strategies for negotiating these encounters.

The first case involves Beth Feldt, Abigail Reuter, and their 3-year-old son, Zack. Beth and Abigail described Beth's struggle to find a term after their son's birth that comfortably fit her relationship with him as a non-biological, and not conventionally feminine, parent. Feeling that terms like "mommy" and "daddy" did not fit her relationship with her son, Beth struggled to find a personally meaningful term that was not "too far out there." Beth and Abigail recount the process:

Interviewer: How did the parental references and how you all refer to yourselves as parents—how did you come to a decision about that or how did it come about?
Abigail: Well, between us I feel like—I remember we just had a conversation. I mean, it was tricky. It wasn't just like one conversation. It was really, really tricky.
Beth: Yeah.
Abigail: It was more tricky for Beth. I felt like more open. 'mommy,' 'momma,' you know, any of those, except for mom, I don't really like...But you can talk about yours.
Beth: For me it was very hard because I had witnessed Abigail giving birth to him and it just felt weird. Like wait, I'm 'mom,' or 'mommy,' or whatever. It didn't feel quite right. I got back to this weird, almost traditional thing, 'No, she's the 'mommy.'' I mean, that combined with the fact that I am not the most feminine gal on the block so, it felt—I did feel more of a father role. But I didn't want to be called 'daddy,' that was too far out there. So I just didn't—I wasn't a 'mommy,' but I wasn't a 'daddy.' And so I felt like this weird hybrid and I couldn't find anything that seemed to fit that would allow me to be recognized as the parent in public.

> Because a lot of people come up with 'baba' or something and I knew that would be an issue down the road if we are in a supermarket or something. But I don't know.
>
> Abigail: 'Baba'? Whose 'baba'? Whose 'baba' to you?
>
> Beth: Right.
>
> Abigail: What's 'baba'?
>
> Beth: Right. Then having the kid try to explain to his friends what is a 'baba' and so I went everyday and would come up with a new nickname. 'I'll be this!' Or, 'I'll be that!' And I tried to talk it out in those first couple of months. But [Abigail] calls me 'Louie'…
>
> Abigail: It is like a really affectionate name for her, 'Louie.' So Beth at some point was like, "momma-Lu." I'll be 'momma-Lu." Then there is this reinforcement because I call her 'Louie' and he calls her 'momma-Lu.'

Beth's account of how she came to be called "momma-Lu" highlights several issues in negotiating parent terms amidst a biogenetic discourse that is both internalized and externally imposed in interactions with others. Beth described her internalization of these beliefs when Abigail gave birth to Zack and she went into this "weird, almost traditional" mindset in which there is really only one "mommy" and that is the birth mother. The feeling that this is a "weird" standpoint may reflect a conflict with the view articulated by other lesbian parent families in the sample, and other studies of lesbian parent families (Dunne, 2000; Sullivan, 2004), that they both are equally mothers.

Beth also described feeling more like a "father," but feeling that it would be "too far out there" to be referred to as "daddy." Instead, she described feeling like a "weird hybrid," somewhere between a "mommy" and a "daddy," reflecting a sentiment akin to the previously described "mathers;" illustrating how terms can gloss the complexity of ways people experience parenting and gender (Padavic & Butterfield, 2011). However, Beth wished to avoid any terms that would involve frequent explanation, such as "baba". Despite these reservations, her family ended up referring to her as "momma-Lu," a term that reflected deeply personal, affectionate meanings for their family and was used in one variant by her partner and another by her son.

Using the term "momma-Lu," however, subjected Beth and Zack to hyperscrutiny, with strangers frequently asking Beth and Zack to explain the term and account for their relationship. Beth felt weird revealing these uniquely intimate meanings to strangers and described an occasion where she just referred to herself as "momma" to avoid an in-depth discussion. This occasion became a turning point for how the family referred to Beth. Abigail and Beth reflect on how Beth and Zack transitioned from the term "momma-Lu" to "momma":

> Abigail: But [Zack] has, they both, have kind have shortened it to 'momma,' which was not originally what you were comfortable with but now it is like its own and you inhabit it and it's different.
>
> Beth: But what is really interesting is that with the 'momma-Lu' versus 'momma' thing— we were at his preschool. I picked him up one time, and someone asked me, 'Who is what? Who gets called what?' And I said, 'Well, I'm 'momma' and she is, my partner, is 'mommy."
>
> Abigail: Which it wasn't. She wasn't called 'momma.'

> Beth: No, I was 'momma-Lu.' Yeah, because the whole Louie thing is just kind of weird and it just felt weird describing it and I didn't like having to do that every single time because everyone was like, 'momma-Lu?' So we were driving in the car and I said, 'Zackie, does it make you uncomfortable that I sometimes tell people you call me 'momma' instead of 'momma-Lu'?' And he went, 'Ehhh?' And I said, 'Is that too big a question?' and he said, 'Yeah.' So I said, 'Okay. Okay.' Then, later in the day, two times later in the day, the first time he came up to me and he had my face and face-to-face he says, 'Momma, I love you.' That was the first time he ever called me 'momma.'

Tired of explaining the term every time she encountered someone new, on this occasion Beth referred to herself by a more normatively recognized term, "momma." Doing so reflects the previously discussed covering strategies described by Drew, Robin, and Veronica as a means to reduce hyperscrutiny.

However, as Beth illustrated in retelling her conversation with Zack after the occasion, she was also cognizant of the personal and emotional meanings her son might associate with "momma-Lu," and asked for his input. Although he was unable to verbalize a response to her at the moment, he emphasized his acceptance for Beth as "momma" through his expressed love for her later in the day, marking a shift in the term they both used.

Zack's use of the term "momma" after this occasion emphasizes two features of parent term use and selection. First, parent term usage reflects unique parent-child relationships with meanings that are not only created and held by parents but also by their children, whose influence and ability to articulate those meanings become more pronounced with age. Just as biological mothers affirm the parent terms used by non-biological mothers, children, especially as they become older and more vocal, also become a source of legitimation. Second, parent term selection is influenced by internalized SNAF beliefs of the parents and the perceived and expressed attitudes of the public at large. Terms that encompass highly personal and intimate relationships between parents and children are not only used within the family, but also in actively displaying kinship to others. While this occurs on some level for all families, for LGBT families, who are more likely to go misrecognized by others without explicit family displays, the use of these terms and their legibility to others becomes especially salient. Furthermore, although Beth does ultimately end up being referred to as "momma" and, as Abigail notes, is "comfortable" and "inhabits it," it is questionable whether that would have occurred without the external pressure from others frequently asking about "momma-Lu" and subtly calling out its deviance.

Although Beth opted to switch to a more normative parent term over time to reduce the hyperscrutiny she and her son experienced, not all families made similar choices. Like Beth and Abigail, Angela and Sam Marshall sought a term for Sam that reflected her feeling more like a "dad" than a "mom," and initially referred to Sam as "daddy." However, once their 2-year-old son, Henry, began to speak and call Sam "da-da," the couple realized that referring to Sam as "daddy" might cause confusion with people outside of the family and might not be well-received in their conservative community. Angela and Sam recount how they reconciled this dilemma:

> Interviewer: We talked about parental terms [earlier in the interview]. Could you give me a quick recap of your decision and how you all came to it?

Angela: Sure. Well, I always knew I was going to be 'mom,' 'mommy,' whatever. Because that is just how I identify myself. But we really struggled with Sam because she doesn't consider herself as 'mom.' Even before we had kids, we had dogs, and she would always say, 'I'm 'daddy." You know, 'Go to 'daddy." So she always went by the term 'daddy.' When I got pregnant we talked at length about it. 'Well, we can call you 'daddy' or call you 'mom-dad'?' I even got a book on lesbian parenting. What do other lesbians do? We went back and forth. And I'm like, 'You could just go by 'daddy.' That's fine. And you can just describe it later.' But then we got to a point where he was calling her 'daddy,' 'da-da,' when he first started talking. Then we're like, but what about when he goes to school? What do you do then? Other kids are going to ask, 'What does your mom and dad do?' And he is going to be able to associate dad with the male gender and it is just not going to work. So we started researching it and we found in the Italian language 'babbo' means dad. And the donor was 100% Italian. So he's 50% Italian and we want to raise him with a little bit of that understanding of Italian culture. So we decided, okay, she is going to be 'babbo' and if people ask, 'Well, how did you come with that name?' Those who—you know how you can always get a feeling when you talk to somebody about their level of education or their sensitivity to the matter—so if we get the sense that they're close minded we'll just say, 'Oh, that's just what he has always called her.' But if somebody is more understanding and open-minded we'll say, 'Well, that means 'daddy' in Italian.' It just depends on the situation or circumstance.

Interviewer: So it gives you a little more flexibility?

Both: Yeah.

Angela: But more than likely when he gets to school age he will be like, "That's my mom." More than likely. And that's okay [laughs.]

In contrast to Beth, who switched to a more normative term, Angela and Sam decided to refer to Sam as "babbo," an Italian term for "dad" with valued fatherly meanings that were usually indecipherable to strangers. Although referring to Sam as "babbo" may require the family to explain the term to new people, the ambiguity of the term in their community gave them a lot of flexibility in how they explained it to others. That flexibility was especially valued given the conservative family culture of the Central Valley town in which they live and, reflecting that culture, their heightened concern about verbal harassment and hostility compared to most of the interviewed families. When the family was in a situation in which they felt uncomfortable providing a full account, the term could be dismissed as a random name made up by their son. Once again, children help to define the legitimacy of parent-child relationships, and, in this case, claiming the term came from their 2 year old son's whims is a socially acceptable account for its deviance. However, when the family felt they were interacting with someone more "open-minded," they could disclose other, less obvious, meanings of the term.

The term "babbo" also carried additional personal meanings for the family. Using the term reflected the couple's desire to integrate an understanding of Henry's Italian heritage, inherited from his donor, into his everyday life. Furthermore, the term linguistically tied Sam's parenting identity to this heritage, making it something shared within the family instead of exclusively with someone outside it.

Both of these cases bring together three important features of parent terms as forms of family displays. First, personal meanings associated with parent terms were important for building early parent-child relationships and bolstering parent identities, especially for non-biological parents. In both of these cases one parent felt uncomfortable with "mom" terms because she did not feel they accurately named their parenting identities. Beth related her discomfort to feeling distant from the birthing process compared to her partner and feeling this positioned her more as a father.

Both Beth and Sam also felt that father terms would resonate with their more masculine gender presentations. This, however, brings up the second theme: the importance of a term's public legibility, especially as time passes and families move into new social contexts and meet new people. In the long run, both Sam and Beth selected terms that were not "daddy" because they did not want to burden their child with having to explain their lesbian "daddies." However, both did select uncommon or unique parent terms that, although not explicitly flagging gender deviance in the same way that "daddy" would, did result in heightened scrutiny from people outside of the family inquiring about the terms.

Finally, term selection is an adaptive process in which families creatively renegotiate terms over time as parent-child relationships develop and to handle moments of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. Beth, with the help and acceptance of her son, eventually reconfigured "momma-Lu" into "momma," a more socially recognizable term, in response to her unease in explaining the uniquely personal term. Sam, however, opted for "babbo,' a more obscure (where they live) Italian term for "daddy." Although this did not reduce public inquiry, it did give Sam's family flexibility in the meanings they convey to others regarding the term. Both of these cases illustrate how term selection and use is an ongoing family practice that interweaves the continual redefinition of family relationships with how those relationships are displayed to others.

Conclusion

As this chapter illustrates, although LGBT parents with young children report low levels of hostility and overt discrimination, subtle forms of stigma persist. These actions, reflected in the microaggressions literature, are often subtle, quick, and frequently occur outside of perpetrators' conscious awareness. Respondents reported two common forms of microaggressions: (1) misrecognition, the frequent misreading or invisibility of their family relations; and (2) hyperscrutiny, the heightened public visibility and lack of privacy LGBT families experience when publicly visible. Although parents discussed these experiences in relation to their LGBT identities, their experiences of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny are also interwoven with other ways their families diverge from the SNAF imaginary including the absence of biological ties between parents and children, being an older parent, and parents and children appearing to be different races (whether true or not). The findings of this chapter highlight the persistence and changing configurations of stigma as those attributed with the spoiled identity receive growing, though not complete, social acceptance and protections under the law. It also highlights how these expressions of stigma continue to have subtle implications for the day-to-day practice of family life and construction of parent identities.

However, parents were often proactive in looking for ways to mitigate issues of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny. In particular, families looked for ways to actively display their ties to reduce misrecognition, but to do so in ways that would minimize their difference from other parents and families in public spaces, allowing them to, as Robin and Veronica put it, "fly

under the radar." A common set of practices discussed by respondents to do this involved parent term selection and day-to-day usage. Naming practices are central to social interactions that legitimate or discount LGBT family relations. Couples strategically display kinship using parent terms to emphasize family relations which might otherwise go unnoticed or be subject to heightened scrutiny. In some cases, families felt such concern regarding the reactions from people outside of their family to their choice of parent terms that they selected terms that they would not have otherwise chosen in order to be more normatively recognizable in public.

These practices, I argue, reflect a form of family display, which might be understood using the literature on stigma and accounts, as an example of a subtle form of accounting for deviations from SNAF expectations of families. In this way I draw on both classical understandings of the accounts literature, which focus on moments when individuals verbally attempt to explain social breeches (Scott and Lyman, 1968), and more recent configurations in the accounts literature, which focus on the ways in which individuals construct relationships and identities through narrative (Orbuch et al, 1997). It also highlights how this synthesis of the classical and recent expansions of the accounts literature applies to the scholarship on family practices and displays. In particular, we can understand family displays as a form of subtle accounting for moments when kin relations might otherwise go unrecognized or breach conventional modes of expression.

In addition to affecting the external recognition of family relations, naming practices also help to shape one's family identity, with normative family images influencing the emotional charge of parent terms. This was especially salient when couples used terms to help non-biological parents feel comfortable and secure in their parenting identities when children are young by selecting terms for them associated with families of origin and cultural traditions. It also illustrates the importance of day-to-day family practices in the construction of family relations and parenting identity. Furthermore, highlighting how many of the practices discussed reflect explicit forms of family displays emphasizes the interplay between the construction of family, normally conceived of as a private and highly individualized social group, between the individuals making up the family in question and the public.

The ways in which LGBT parents negotiate parenthood amidst gender normative beliefs regarding "The Family" also show how seemingly innocuous family activities, such as names used in a family, can have deep social meanings and influence. For instance, choosing how a child will refer to their parents, a task that for heterosexual couples may seem fairly straightforward, for lesbian couples may be infused with important meanings for identity and the recognition of family relationships. The examples in this chapter illustrate how families are produced through both private and public interactions, since something as personal and intimate as what your child calls you can be influenced by interactions with strangers and what is (and is not) recognizable as "family" in public spaces.

Although respondents with children of all ages reported instances of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny, their prevalence and impact for families changed over time. Discussed earlier,the majority of questions asked by strangers revolved around how respondents acquired children. Once children are past infancy, respondents, like Terry, noted that fewer people asked those kinds of questions. Furthermore, although parent terms play an important role in some families as a means through which an early parenting identity can be enacted and displayed, their utility diminishes over time. For example, Dale Novak, from earlier in the chapter, noted that, if given

the choice between "daddy" and "papa" now, he would not need to pick "daddy" over concerns of feeling abnormal.

Respondents also reported (or anticipate) that parent terms will morph over time from specific one's chosen by parents that reflect unique parenting identities to children's use of nonspecific parent terms over time. Tammy Silva, from the beginning of the chapter, summarizes her feelings on how her children's usage of parent terms have morphed over time.

> Tammy: You just don't want to become wed to all the prep work. And it's interesting too because if you have a name that might sound a bit childish you will see it start to drift off. So 'tam-tam' is obviously a name that children gave you but now that Ryan's 9 he uses 'tam-tam' in the home more but outside its 'mom' so the child perspective is drifting off.

This is not to say hyperscrutiny and misrecognition disappeared, especially for families removed from SNAF imaginaries in multiple ways (e.g. older parent, transracial family, etc.). Instead, as the next chapter explores in greater detail, the burden of negotiating the presentation of family in public spaces gradually shifts from parents to children and, with that shift, there are changes in how family is displayed and enacted.

Chapter 5: Avoiding Playground Liabilities: Stigma Mediated through Time and Place

This chapter looks at how anticipated stigma affects decisions on where families live, the schools children attend, and how parents negotiate being out in public spaces. I also illustrate how this anticipated stigma, although focused on experiences children are likely to encounter beginning in adolescence, shapes much earlier family practices. Although other research has considered adolescent children of LGBT parents' stigma experiences, particularly in school settings (Lindsay et al, 2006; Lubbe, 2008; Welsh, 2011), this chapter focuses on how parents experience, and manage, the possibility of their children experiencing stigma related to their family structures. I highlight how stigma management for LGBT families is an interdependent, group process in which parents imagine that children's future success or failure in navigating stigma is heavily contingent on their past and ongoing contributions.

The first half of this chapter explores how families addressed this anticipated stigma for their children through careful selection and control of the environments their families inhabit. In particular, this section examines how respondents attempt to shape the future experiences of stigma (and how their children will respond to them) through conscientious selection of the cities and neighborhoods they live in and the schools their children attend. Three common themes observed in selection include: (1) finding locations with other LGBT families; (2) embedding themselves in communities with a diverse array of families; and (3) inhabiting safe spaces where parents feel others will be supportive of their families. Parents' decisions on where to live and where their children attend school (or where they don't) illustrates how they not only conceptualize stigma as a concern located in the future but in specific locations.

The second half of the chapter looks at how respondents manage anticipated stigma through the day-to-day management of their family's outness. It explores the ways in which LGBT identified parents with young children approach coming out as part of a strategy to both shield children from stigmatizing experiences in the present and prepare them for anticipated encounters with stigma as they grow older. I refer to these practices as a strategy of *preemptive outness*. However, as children grew older and entered adolescence, the experience of stigma moves from parents' anticipating stigma for their children to children anticipating and experiencing stigma of their own. Through this transition, parents stop practicing "preemptive outness" and moved at least partially into closets in some contexts so children may practice what I call *selective outnes*s, a coming strategy in which children choose whether or not to disclose their family configurations based on their own comfort and assessment of context. In doing so, I compare experiences between cohorts of families with young children and ones with adolescents and young adults, finding parallels between the present-day experiences and future-oriented concerns of families with young children and the experiences and retrospective accounts of change among families with older children. These strategies illustrate the importance of contextualizing experiences of stigma and stigma management for LGBT families in respect to time and life course. They also contribute to a growing body of literature that looks at coming out as an ongoing strategic practice contingent on social context and the situational motives of individuals.

I also highlight how race and class are embedded in these practices, both in the strategies available to families and in the stigma concerns respondents are managing. Alongside the anticipated stigma that respondents reported for their children on the basis of their sexual identities, many families also report similar and interconnected strategies for addressing racial

stigma (especially among interracial couples and couples who have adopted transracially.) Class position also heavily influenced many of the stigma management strategies used by families with class privilege shaping where one can and cannot live, attend school, and the kinds of demands one can place on institutional figures of authority.

Controlling the Environment

One way that respondents managed the concerns they had about the heterosexism and homophobia their children would encounter in the future was careful consideration of where they lived and where their children go (or will go) to school. In doing so, they hoped to reduce early stigmatizing encounters that would have their children internalize negative messages about themselves and their families, giving them time to build up a positive sense of self and image of their family. I found three common themes in parents' discussions of features they desired in both schools and locations to combat anticipated stigma (listed in order of importance): (1) a visible population of other LGBT families, (2) a "diverse" community, and (3) a positive environment exemplified through visible signs of LGBT friendliness and support from members of those respective communities. This section will discuss how each of these three features factored into respondents' decisions and how they negotiated the absence of one or more of these features. In particular, I found that although parents abstractly wanted all three of these features, many took, for instance, the presence of other LGBT families as a sign of a supportive environment. However, when other LGBT families were not visible, they looked for locations with a diverse array of families and a culture that supported family diversity. When a diverse population of families was also not present, parents looked for spaces with some indicator that they their families will be welcomed and supported. Through these accounts I also highlight how class privilege is embedded in these practices and understandings of "desirable" family diversity in schools and communities.

"Not Being the Only One..."

Most parents reported that they want to live in locations, and have their children attend schools, with high concentrations of visible, LGBT families. This was one of the most desired traits reported by families. They felt that living in spaces with several other LGBT families would reduce the likelihood of their children feeling different. It would also decrease the likelihood of being the first queer family that people in their schools and neighborhoods encounter, reducing the shock value of their presence. Families also hoped they might benefit from the identity management work of other families coming before them.

Glenn Frye notes that since her twin sons were born, she and her partner, Drew Frye, have deliberately chosen to only live in locations where they feel that their children will not experience a sense of difference or alienation because of their family structure. In particular, she explains why the presence of other LGBT families heavily influenced her family's recent relocation to the Bay Area for Drew's job.

> Glenn: We have also self-selected where to live as a result of having kids, though so we can only to speak to places where it is not going to be shocking or unexpected. So maybe some people aren't expecting it but they go there pretty quickly. And I agree, it has gotten easier over time. But my litmus test since they were born is that I don't ever want them to be an anomaly. I don't ever want them to be the only

> people they know that have two moms or two dads...So, as a result, when [Drew] gets a job in the Bay Area; okay, that is a valid place. We could go live there. That would be fine. But when she was looking for jobs and there was the possibility of a move, it was explicitly understood that Kansas was never going to be a choice.

Glenn's "litmus test" for determining whether a location is good for her family is whether or not there would be other people their children would see and interact with that also had two moms or two dads. Without this exposure, Glenn fears is her children would feel like they were an anomaly, creating a sense a difference and marginalization. Inhabiting spaces with high concentrations of other LGBT families also means that people in the community at large are more likely to have had previous interactions with queer families; decreasing the likelihood that someone's encounter with an interviewed family will not be their first interaction with an LGBT family and, as Glenn put it, meeting their family will not be "shocking or unexpected." Respondents also hoped this would reduce moments in which they would be forced to account for their family relations (as discussed in chapter 4), creating a sense of difference for themselves and their children.

Bonnie Flory demonstrates a similar logic when she explains why her family lives in the Bay Area compared to other locations.

> Bonnie: There is a reason that we live in [the Bay Area] and not in a Central Valley community or South Carolina or a number of other places. We want to make sure that [our son] Michael is not the only one in his classroom and his school that has queer parents. Lesbian, gay, whatever. That was certainly true in preschool and it is true in the elementary school where he is going now. I feel like it is a very open and supportive community. That is why we live here, for that I think over so many other reasons.

Bonnie's explanation illustrates the connection between choosing where to live and the consequences that has for their children in school, a space that many families envisioned as a site of potential stigma for their children and one where they would have decreased influence over time. However, one way Bonnie could exert some control over her son's school environment, and his potential, future encounters with homophobia and heterosexism, was choosing to live in a location with other LGBT families.

In addition to ensuring that her son, Michael, will not feel a sense of difference from being the only one in his classes that has queer parents, the presence of other LGBT families means that other families can (and may have already) taken up some the formal and informal work involved in making schools more supportive and inclusive of queer families. Some parents reported that they passively reap the benefits of earlier trailblazing families whose presence accustomed both schools and community members to their presence, allowing them to feel a sense of normalcy in not having to go out of their way to do anything extra. For example, Keith Hershberger and Tony Russell, living in Sacramento, describe how they benefit from the presence of another prominent two-dad family at their son's school.

> Tony: Yeah, there are these guys, Steve and Caleb, and their kids, they have one kid left [at the school] and one kid that is out. Very active in the PTA and all of this for

years before we got there. One of the big fund-raising things they threw a few
years ago was epic. You know, so they--

Keith: Yeah, they've been around. So people are used to that. They are used to having a
same-sex couple in the mix somehow.

Tony: That is very involved in the school.

Interviewer: Okay.

Tony: So yeah, I think they were a big road paver in this neighborhood and that school
for us.

Bonnie and Glenn's choices of where to live are also illustrative of the ways in which
parents spatially locate stigma. It is not just that they explained the positive qualities of the
locations they choose to live in, they also identified other locations (e.g. the Central Valley, South
Carolina, and Kansas) that they actively avoided. Pragmatically, these comparisons do highlight
other locations with presumably less visible LGBT populations and, in some cases, restrictive
laws for LGBT families. However, I argue that identifying these locations in comparison to
where they live serves an additional purpose in the management of stigma. As Glenn noted
earlier in the chapter, she is concerned about the stigma her children are likely to encounter in the
future. She can, to a degree, alleviate some of those anxieties both by locating her family in
supportive and affirming spaces *and* by spatially locating stigma somewhere else. Her control of
the future and how stigma may affect her children in the future may be ambiguous and uncertain,
but her choice in location, based on her understanding of where and how stigma may occur, is
something she can respond to, alleviating some of her concerns in the present. I will return to this
theme of spatially locating stigma later in the chapter.

Class privilege is also influential in respondents' ability to live in locations with high
LGBT visibility. Many of the "best" locations in terms of LGBT visibility for LGBT were
affluent neighborhoods and cities with a high cost of living. Furthermore, as Glenn and Drew
illustrate, the ability to choose where to live and relocate to desirable locations with employment
options also reflects a middle and upper class position. Although class is usually not explicitly
discussed by respondents, their middle to upper class privilege is instrumental in the decisions
they make about where to live.

"Part of a Diverse Community"

In addition to the presence and visibility of other LGBT families, parents also discussed
looking for locations and schools with a diverse array of families and a culture that celebrates
diversity. Parents expressed a desire to be embedded in communities that embodied a broad array
of family configurations that included ethnic and racial diversity, different religious affiliations,
families with older parents, and nontraditional family configurations (e.g. single parents,
adoptive families, and children living with custodial guardians who are not their parents, such as
grandparents, aunts, or uncles.) Many respondents sought out this increased range of family
diversity because it reflects other ways, in addition to being a queer family, in which their own
families diverge from SNAF ideals. But it was also discussed as a means through which to
incorporate queer families into a larger constellation of family expressions that highlights and
celebrates family variation.

Discussions of diversity were especially prevalent in school selection. Michael Hall
provides an illustrative example of how families think about and identify diversity in prospective

schools. It also highlights how seeking diversity relates to concerns that he has about his two-year-old son, Dalton, experiencing stigma related to his family structure in the future.

> Michael: I think about whether there is going to be this phase or stage or one moment of time when Dalton is going to be like, "Wait a minute. My family is different." And I went to, just the other night, an open house for a school we are considering for him and part of the evening was a little alumni panel and these were kids who were in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. And some had graduated from the school and were 9th and 10th graders. And they were cute, precocious little kids. But one of them just totally naturally- they were talking about diversity in the school-- and this one girl was one of the more vocal ones, just sort of said, "Well, diversity at this school is not what most people might think about because the philosophy is everybody, no matter who you are, or where you're from, or what your family is like is different. In that sense we are all diverse versus mainstream society where in mainstream society diversity means sprinkling in different ethnicity or gay person or whatever." She said, "I have two lesbian moms." And she goes, "It is just totally natural and part of my life or whatever." And it is kind of reassuring for me to hear like okay, maybe there isn't going to one moment where there will be this horrendous struggle of differentness.

Michael's comment was unsolicited, a response to my closing interview question, "Is there anything else you would like to add or feel I should know?" The fact that this comment came without prompting, along with Dalton's young age, highlights the intensity of Michael's concerns that his son may internalize stigma about his family later as he grows older and how these concerns are already affecting Michael's decisions about schools his son will attend in a couple of years. One one level, Michael is reassured to hear a teeanger with two moms publicly express her comfort with her family structure and feel that it is "totally natural." These comments helped to allay Michael's present day anxieties about a sense of difference that their son may internalize and struggle with in the future. The teen speaker's expressed comfort and ease with her family structure is also attributed to the school's approach to diversity. In particular, this framing of diversity claims to acknowledge and respect one's difference amidst everyone's unique positionalities so, in that respect, everyone is (not) different.

In Michael's case, this diversity framework achieved the same end as other families seeking locations and schools with other LGBT families. In both cases they are trying to keep their children from feeling a stigmatizing sense of difference. While sometimes these two features, LGBT visibility and promotion of family diversity, go hand-in-hand, in other cases the latter operates as a proxy, or sometimes a consolation, for the former. In other words, some families noted that schools illustrating a broader commitment to diversity, despite a lack of other LGBT families, helped alleviate parents' anxieties that their children would feel different or alienated. Karen Whitley's selection her son's preschool illustrates this logic.

> Karen: When we first started at the preschool we were the first and only gay family they ever had. I was clearly in the middle of the road for staying but I asked the director about it and she talked to us about the value of every family and exposure to different types of families. And she could talk about the families that were there

in terms of race and single parents. Even one family who was a child with a grandparent. Gay families was kind of the only aspect in her opinion that wasn't reflected. And so I liked that inclusive meant "inclusive" to her.

Although this framing of diversity might be more in line with the "mainstream diversity" that the school Michael discussed tries to distinguish themselves from, the utility for Karen's family is similar. Despite the absence of other LGBT families, something Karen notes concerned her, the preschool director's framing of their family as "another aspect" that is as of yet (but could be) included in the preschool, appealed to Karen.

These broader framings of diversity also appealed to families' desire to expose their children to a broad range of individuals and other families. Although this was observed as a means of producing more conscientious and cosmopolitan children, it also reflects parents' interests in ensuring that other aspects of their children's identities are not marginalized. For instance, Derek Correll explains how his family's decision to stay in the East Bay, despite the economic burden of raising five children on a comparatively modest income for their location and family size, was due to the limited number of locations he felt his family could move and still experience the same levels of acceptance that they do now.

> Derek: Yeah, I mean on occasion when the market was hot we actually talked about selling out and moving somewhere else but then it became a question of "Where?" Where could two middle age white guys, with mixed-race and African-American kids live as comfortably and as accepted as we do here in the [East Bay]. And it is pretty limited. So yeah, I really like where we live.

The wide range of family types present in participants' neighborhoods including adoptive families, families with older parents, and multiracial families; demographics that many interviewed families, such as Derek's, represent. Especially among transracial families (which in this sample is almost exclusively white parents with children of color) there was an equal, if not greater concern for ensuring that their children interacted with other families and individuals of the same race. Later in the interview, Derek and his partner, William Ballard, discussed how race figures into their ongoing consideration of middle schools their children will attend in a few years.

> Interviewer: How did you all end up selecting schools for their children?
> William: It is one of the schools that is in our district where we are in. And I think we just said, "What is the best school in the area?" And they said, "That one." We got in and we knew we were in this great school. This great school in our district…
> Derek: Now where they are going after this is a totally different question that we have a couple years to research. I'm not sure what we are doing for middle school. The middle school that [their school] feeds into is not all that great.
> Interviewer: Do you have any criteria that are important for you as you thinking about that?
> William: We want to make sure—it is has a mixed-racial—that's even more important to me than academic—the racial makeup of the school.

William and Derek's emphasis on the importance of racial diversity, alongside and over, the presence of other LGBT families and academic rank, serves as an important reminder of how the complex, intersecting identities of LGBT families can create similar, distinct, and co-constructed concerns regarding stigma their children may encounter.

Although seeking out diverse locations and schools with inclusive philosophies was a method through which parents addressed anticipated stigma, it is also important to note what was missing in respondents' framings of diversity. In particular, diversity in terms of class background and education levels of families was only mentioned as a desirable component by a single family. Although most families did not mention class at all, when it was mentioned it was when respondents noted that they avoided interactions with individuals from lower educational backgrounds because they equated lower education (and class position) with greater homophobia. Greg Deng pointedly explains how he correlates education and class with acceptance for him and his family:

> Greg: I think a lot it has to do Rafael with—and, I hope I don't sound—I think part of it is a socioeconomic thing when you're surrounded with a lot of educated people you don't typically have the problems that you would if you were say, trying to do this with more of a blue collar type of people. And I'm trying to say this in the most delicate way possible because I am certainly not prejudiced, I'm not- I don't judge people but I found and part of the reason I moved to the Bay Area from a very conservative area in Orange County in Southern California is that up here- the only thing I can come up with is that people are more educated up here and more tolerant. But I still find people up here that are not tolerant but they are typically less educated or not in professional fields. And I'm not saying they are all like that but I'm saying if you were to take a cross-section a higher percentage of educated people are typically more tolerant, that is just what I find. So in terms of us, we are typically so surrounded by highly educated people that it hasn't been an issue. But then I have friends that, you know, are- well, they're in, it takes them a little longer to get accepted is the best way I can put it.

Although Greg partially attributes his family's generally positive experiences with living in the Bay Area where he feels that people are generally more tolerant and accepting, he also believes that much of it has to do with the higher level of education people in the area. Instances such as this illustrate that some kinds of diversity are more desirable than others for interviewed families. In fact, I argue that part of what made some respondents, like Karen, receptive to a school's framing of diversity was that LGBT families were deliberately included in a framework of "desirable diversity".

The inclusion of LGBT people within a framework of "desirable diversity" also appears in the scholarship on queer politics of respectability and homonormativity. For example, in a study of LGBT activist organizations, Jane Ward (2008) argues that diversity culture, or the celebration of identity-based diversity, has become more commonplace only to the extent that its practice benefits corporate, white, middle-class interests. In particular, the opportunities for inclusion in these organizations are granted to marginalized individuals willing to commit to assimilating into the cultural and political mainstream. However, when the same differences do not align with white, corporate interests, they are framed as undesirable and unprofessional.

Reflecting these interests, Ward finds that, compared to diversity based on race or gender, displays of class diversity are undervalued. Similarly, Duggan's (2003) explanation of homonormativity identifies the granting of social and political acceptance to some LGBT people (specifically white, middle-class, individuals with conventional gender expressions) who accept and do not explicitly challenge dominant institutions of heteronormativity.

The expectations of corporate diversity and homonormativity extend into the expectations placed on LGBT families' inclusion into "desirable diversity'. As long as they are otherwise normative and do not seek to challenge the existing system, they can be welcomed in, to the benefit of the organization demonstrating its diversity and for the family in question; in the process gaining access to the organization's resources and a sense of respectability and normality. The strength of diversity discourse is also evident in Greg's reticence to note his class/education bias as it ideologically runs against the idea of welcome diversity even as it is practiced with that bias.

The inclusion of LGBT families into this framework of "desirable diversity" is also illustrated when families express that they have an edge getting their children into schools because they can can bolster a school's claims to diversity. Gary Ly describes his family's experiences applying to schools in San Francisco:

> Gary: Well, the schools. They have been very receptive. And I think that's because most of the schools in San Francisco are very open minded, they want to have diversity. So they want kids of different backgrounds and different kind of families. And I think being a kid with gay parents, it helped actually get him into schools. Especially with gay male parents, they probably have more kids with lesbian parents than gay parents. And I think pretty much all the schools we applied to we got in...So, preschool in San Francisco is actually pretty hard to get in because they just don't have that many. Especially good ones. And it can be competitive. And I think being from a gay male household it helped us getting into these schools. And the schools are great. And the parents in the school and the other kids, to them it isn't a big deal at all. So, we get along with all the kids and we get along with the parents.

This culture of diversity, diffuse where they live in San Francisco, benefits Gary's family by creating an environment in which schools are accepting and supportive of their family. Furthermore, when schools attempt to legitimate this culture of diversity that makes schools desirable locations, they *need* gay and lesbian families to fulfill those demographics and demonstrate the commitment to diversity they are trying to market. As we saw in Karen's case, although frameworks of diversity may sometimes replace or stand in as proxies for the presence of other LGBT families, having LGBT families at your school not only demonstrates your commitment to this diversity to LGBT families but to this liberal framing of (desirable) diversity at large. As a result, Gary and his partner, Charles Dunne, believe they benefit with an easier time being selected by competitive preschools (to give their money to in the form of tuition.)

Communities and schools with this cultures promoting diversity were highly desired by some interviewed families because it places their family within a larger constellation of family diversity that includes families of different races, cultures, and family configurations. Being positioned in this constellation of diversity allows families a feeling a normalcy without feeling

singled out by others (such as through specific policies for LGBT families) or even themselves (such as having to seek out specific treatment or other LGBT families to feel normal). These practices also seem to operate with a (mostly) implicit class bias that shapes understandings of what kinds of diversity are desirable and which are not. The complicity of LGBT families in the maintenance and construction of this "desirable" diversity framework highlights ways in which families, while trying to navigate anticipated stigma for their families, end up in collusion with broader systems of oppression that maintain the heteronormativity that stigmatizes them in the first place. It highlights the pragmatic tensions, and complex allegiances, that parents and families have to broader SNAF ideologies and systems of control.

Despite widespread interest among families in my sample to live in locations with LGBT family visibility and diverse family cultures, not all the families I interviewed lived in locations where family diversity cultures include well-to-do LGBT families. In particular, I found that Bay Area families were most successful in finding neighborhoods and schools with a diverse array of families or cultures that celebrate family diversity. However, parents in other areas still discussed their desire for these features. Families in the Greater Sacramento area described mixed success, often feeling more limited in their selections to specific, costly neighborhoods that not all families could afford. Families living the Central Valley, a predominantly socially conservative area with limited LGBT visibility, reported the most challenges. In this next section we explore how families in locations without LGBT visibility and cultures of diversity that included their families sought out supportive schools and communities in general.

A Safe and Supportive Environment

Related to the previous strategies, families looked for communities and schools they felt were safe and supportive. Although themes of safety and support were often intertwined with selecting locations with other LGBT families or diverse communities, the theme was especially pronounced among families living in areas that they felt lacked these qualities. Tammy Silva and Mary Jones, living in a small town in the Central Valley, illustrate the importance of feeling safe and supported through their account of how they seriously considered relocating to either Sacramento or somewhere in the Bay Area following the campaign and passage of Proposition 8.

> Interviewer: I was wondering if you can talk a little bit more about how you feel about the community that you're living in as a place for raising your family?
> Tammy: Well you know this is a great community because it's small and it's safe. It's hard because we would like to be in a more liberal or progressive area and we really took a hard hit after prop 8. Harder than we both thought, we were emotionally- we cried.
> Mary: It was rough.
> Tammy: It was rough.
> Mary: It was a rough time for that to happen in our relationship in general because it was right at the time where we would be talking about a commitment ceremony or wedding or what-not and so for that to be decided right at that point in our relationship that was rough. And then we're both politically aware enough that of course we get online we're researching how was the vote in this area versus the vote in Sacramento per se or whatever and to see that the vote in Stanislaus county where we live and work was like what 78%? Yes on 8, it feels very

> personal, it just feels like, oh my gosh we are so like the other in this community. And yet this is where I'm raising my children they're going to public school y'know. We attend church here. We work here, I work for the county government y'know. It just it felt like such an attack on us and our family.
>
> Tammy: And really just kind of walking around numb looking you couldn't help but look at people when you're getting your Starbucks coffee and 'Did you? Was it you that voted against me?' And we took it so per- it was really hard and it took a lot of recovery because we actually started looking about leaving. We thought, you know, we need to be in Sacramento. We need to be closer to the Bay Area.

Tammy and Mary feel that one of the best aspects of the place they live is that it is "small and safe," at least in a general way imagined for small, rural communities. However, Tammy and Mary's feelings of safety and support were shaken by the high percentage of people who voted for Proposition 8 in their county. Whereas many families in my study located homophobia and discrimination outside of their immediate social environment, usually based on the lack of homophobia they feel personally directed at them, the election results for Proposition 8 were statistical evidence to the contrary for Tammy and Mary, forcing them to confront the prejudice embedded in their own community. In fact, the pain felt was not just from high the number of votes in their county, it was also that they were high compared to nearby "liberal and progressive" areas, such as the Bay Area and Sacramento, reflecting again how perceptions of homophobia are comparatively mapped onto locations. The election results created feelings of suspicion for Tammy and Mary as they went about their days, speculating about whom among the people they encountered were actually supportive of their family. Overall, Tammy and Mary felt alienated within their community and like an "other", which, as I noted earlier in this chapter, is one of the primary things families I interviewed sought to avoid, especially for their children.

Mary notes feeling personally attacked and betrayed in part because she felt her family had done everything they should to be considered a "respectable" member of the community. This is consistent with other work on queer populations living in rural areas which find that acceptance of queer people is conditional on "playing by the rules"; namely, being gender conventional, keeping one's sexuality to themselves, and making no public demands (Stein, 2001). Building on that, Mary felt she had done everything expected of a "respectable", middle class, member of the community (i.e. raise children, have them attend public school, family goes to church). Yet she was still excluded from marrying Tammy, another marker of middle class respectability; which was made all the more painful as they were planning their commitment ceremony at that moment. Whereas other families in the Bay Area and Sacramento report feel like a desirable addition to a community's diversity or not unlike other "respectable" families (particularly in terms of class and education), Tammy and Mary felt like outsiders, despite their claims to middle class respectability.

These feelings reached a point where they felt they "needed" to move somewhere more supportive, like Sacramento or the Bay Area, areas also defined by other families in the study as supportive spaces for LGBT families. However, they ultimately decided not to move and explain how they reframed their understanding of community and sought out a network of support.

> Mary: We started house-hunting.

Tammy: We started house-hunting, contacting the realtors of those areas, because if I teach at the university here I can pretty much teach elsewhere and with county employment and state employment we really knew that if we needed to we could find a job. So we really strategized. And then we went out to lunch with a colleague from the university who told us, she just said it with such plain stay, she said "You need to form your community around you and start selecting the people who would be supportive of who you are." And, you know, of course we do. I mean that's logic for someone to say it to us so clear and plain as day. So we put all these plans off to the side. We really started, I guess, paying attention to who we connected with and realizing that on the street, y'know, we have George and Lauren. We have Danny and Michelle who just adore us and love us and are very supportive of us and were just as hurt about Prop 8 as we were. And so it took months of healing and then we finally put those plans to the side and really kind of dug in.

Mary: But our community is very intentional. I mean, we really have worked hard to reach out to other families like ours. And we do a lot of social functions, y'know, at our house, y'know. We have big parties here with other kids and we often include a lot of people. They become large gatherings I think because we try to bring in as many of those kind of whatever other people as we feel like we can and feels good to know like we have a large circle around us here. Even here in [town], y'know, voting this way on Prop 8, I think it does create a sense that we have allies and we have other families and we really sought out other lesbian moms who have kids and so we we try to be social with those people on a pretty regular basis.

Although Tammy and Mary came very close to moving, ultimately they chose to stay after coming to the realization that what they needed to do was *to build* a supportive community around them. Their experiences following proposition 8 prompted them to further their efforts to find others who are supportive and nurture those relationships in order to build a supportive community for themselves in their town and neighborhood. Although nearly all the families in my study mentioned the importance of building supportive networks and fostering ties with other LGBT families in the area, the sense of immediate urgency and effort put into building those relationships was much greater for families living in areas with fewer visible queer families and without the organization networks that they can readily plug into for those connections. However, it is also important to point out that the ability to relocate, such as in Tammy and Mary's case, is predicated on their class position and resources, allowing for them to be able to find jobs and maintain a household in more expensive areas, such as Sacramento or the Bay Area.

Emphasis on safe and supportive environments were more even more pronounced in discussions about schools. Families living in areas with high concentrations of LGBT families or pronounced cultures of family diversity were more likely to send their children to public schools. However, families living outside of these locations were more likely to send their children to private and charter schools in an effort to broaden their search for safety and support. For example, of the 6 families living in the Central Valley, only one family sent their child to public school (and in that case their father was the principal of the school.) These parents reported

feeling that they wielded more influence in charter and private schools, allowing them to more power to manage their children's potential experiences with stigma. Dan Madsen and Danny Che, living on the edge of the Silicon Valley, also noted their discomfort living on what they felt was the fringe of the Bay Area. Following this discussion, Dan and Danny describe their reasons for enrolling their son in a private school.

> Dan: I don't know that he's yet got any discrimination from any of his friends at school either. That I know about. Because the school is very supportive of him
> Interviewer: So you've had good experiences then through school?
> Danny: Yeah, we've all had nothing but good experiences. Which is kind of scary because I think we'll crumble if we get a really bad experience. It would be really traumatic for us if we started to get a really bad experience. So that's why we need to be prepared for that.
> Dan: He's in a private school where we have a little more control.
> Danny: And I think as long as we keep him in private schools I think we can control what the teachers do more. And if we were to go put him in a private school, of course, that wasn't good to us, we wouldn't stay. And in public school I think he's gonna get more flak.
> Dan: That's what we're thinking so he's in private school. I try to stay away from religious private schools. I try to stay away from the religious base.

Despite Dan and Danny's overall positive experiences in their community, they dread the possibility of a bad experience and the negative effect it would have on their family. This is compounded by their sense that they live on the fringe of the Bay Area where the perceived benefits of the area's visible LGBT population and culture of family diversity are more tenuous. As a result, two factors shape Dan and Danny's decision to enroll their son in private school. First, sending their son to private school permits them more control over the school environment. Even though they do not feel the community they are in as supportive as they would like, and, by extension, the local schools, they can utilize their increased influence over a private school to create a more supportive environment. Since they are paying directly for the school they feel more empowered to dictate the actions of teachers and staff and, if they are unhappy with how they are treated, can leave and look for another school. Second, they are looking for a school with a supportive atmosphere for their family through policies and staff. Dan and Danny best illustrate this through their deliberate avoidance of religious schools, where they felt religiously motivated policy could be homophobic and also inhibit their ability to influence the actions of the staff. In fact, the lack of secular private schools in Sacramento and the Central Valley were reported by several respondents to shape their decisions to have their children attend public or charter schools.

This strategy also highlights classed dimensions of these strategies to negotiate anticipated stigma. Families utilize their economic privilege to widen the scope of schools they can choose from, have more authority in the schools they attend, and exercise the right to leave if a school does not fit their particular desires. This entitlement was common among families looking to enroll their children in charter and private schools and, for some families outside of the Bay Area, heavily limited the number of options available to them.

Charter schools were also a popular option among families living in less supportive areas, as well as among families with fewer economic resources. Families reported feeling like they were able to gain some of the educational benefits they presumed would come from private schools as well as encounter a more educated (and presumably supportive) population of staff and parents. Tania Alvarez illustrates these considerations led her to send her son to a charter school after feeling a lack of support from faculty and staff at the nearby public school her ex's son attended.

> Tania: I was dreading sending him [my son] to public school. I know I was in a district where he was going to go, according to all the testings for the state, he was in the district to go to the best school in Stanislaus county. Best public school I should say. But I didn't like the interaction that I got with the principal there and a few of the other faculty members. I didn't like the interactions I had gotten from my ex's son being there.
>
> Interviewer: Could you talk a little more about that.
>
> Tania: It seemed like they had a problem with the gay. They kinda seemed like they had a chip on their shoulder about it. I was very open. They did not like to call me. Even though I was listed on his emergency sheet. They insisted on calling her family and her family lived in Stockton. They did not like to call me. It was even almost an issue for me to go in and help with the class. So they just were not really open to it. Which was odd because a lot of the more progressive families go there. It is a pretty affluent part of town. So, in fact, a lot of the people who were in his class had moved—their parents had moved from the Bay Area back down to Modesto. So the parents themselves were very accepting of it. There were few stares that we ever got there. At the charter school I don't feel we ever get stared at at all...I don't think we ever get stared at all. I think it is a lot more accepting. I haven't had a problem. The principal doesn't give me any weird vibe. He is very open. He knows the situation. The teachers never had a problem with it.

Although Tania's son was set to attend the "best public school" in their county, she "dreaded" sending him there because she felt, based on her previous interactions with the school's faculty when her ex's son attended the school, it was not supportive of queer families. Tania notes the staff and faculty discounting her as parent, demonstrated through microaggressions like ignoring her as an emergency contact (instead calling other family members several towns over) and being resistant to her volunteering in class. Although these are all minor incidences and none of them outright demonstrate hostility or homophobia, collectively they cultivate a general sense of ill will and exclusion for Tania that made her feel unwelcome at the school and concerned how her and son would be treated should he attend the school.

Tania also found the lack of support odd given the affluence of the neighborhood the generally school served and the fact that many of the parents recently relocated from the Bay Area, which, as previously discussed in the chapter, was presumed to have a very supportive family culture. Her sense that this lack of support is odd once again highlights the ways in which many of the interviewed parents associated support for LGBT people with specific locations (e.g. the Bay Area) and the class position of the community at large. It also highlights the multiple

levels of support parents seek out through schools, looking at faculty, staff, and the parents of other children attending the school.

In contrast, Tania reports feeling supported at her son's charter school, conveyed through the openness of the principal to her family, the lack of problems with teachers, and the acceptance of other parents. The charter school also provided Tania the same kind of shopping around strategy utilized by Dan and Danny via private schools. Tania, a single mother without a college degree, noted she would not have been able to afford private school tuition for her son. Further, she noted in her area that all of the private schools are catholic or christian schools where they would "teach her son it is not okay to be gay."

Her selection of the charter school was also shaped by its recommendation from a lesbian parent couple, Sam and Angela Marshall, also interviewed in this study, who had researched the school for their son to attend in a few years (he was almost 2 at the time of interview.) When I asked Sam and Angela why they chose this school they noted its high educational standards compared to the public schools in the area, a curriculum based on "cultural sensitivity", the lack of secular private schools in the area, and the feeling that the charter school would attract a more "educated" population of parents who be more accepting of their family. Similar to Tania, and other families reported in the previous section on school diversity, education (a marker of upper and middle class status) is correlated as a marker of acceptance. Furthermore, emphasis on cultural sensitivity and Tania's comments about the general acceptance experienced from the Principal and teachers at the charter school reflect the criteria used by families in the Bay Area and Sacramento in selecting their schools (mostly public schools). Charter schools allowed Tania, Angela, and Sam greater access to the same criteria in school selection in an area with fewer LGBT families and less of a cultural emphasis on diversity.

However, there are also constraints associated with shopping around for schools in rural areas. Loretta Henning, who lives in a small rural town several hours north of Sacramento described the challenges she encounters while searching for a supportive preschool for her daughters. Looking in her immediate town, as well as nearby ones, Loretta found few good options for her daughters to attend. Similar to Tania, Loretta found that many of the preschools were religiously oriented, which generated concerns about how their family would be treated at the school. However, she also described the few secular preschools in area as "horrible". Loretta recounts some of her experiences contacting preschools to discuss how they would support children with two moms.

> Loretta: If they said the word lesbian at all they would say it like they were whispering- like it was a secret. When I ask they kind of act like it wouldn't come up. I'm like, "Yes, it would come up. If you are a gay person it comes up. Unless you actively make it not come up." So frustrating. In fact, one preschool I interviewed on the phone we talked all about the school and at the very end I say, "Well, my girl has two moms." And I word it that way because somehow it seems more jolting to people if you say lesbian or anything that has the word sex in it. It freaks them out. So I say, "My girl has two moms. Is that going to be a problem at your school?" "No. we have two colored kids here and nobody ever bothers them." [Laughs] I was like oh my god. I haven't heard anyone say "colored" in a long time. So then she said after that, "Well, nobody is going to know." And I said, " You mean you're not going to tell?" "Well no, it wouldn't come up." I said, "Yeah

it would. It's preschool. You draw pictures of your family. Or for show and share if she brought a book about a family with two moms?" "Well", she said, "We don't proselytize about any particular religion. It would be inappropriate for them to bring anything like that." And I'm like, "Well, obviously, we have nothing else to talk about." There is a lot of that.

For Loretta, and other parents shopping around for schools, the issues they encounter are not necessarily hostility but the lack of a proactive policy for inclusion of LGBT families. A policy that presumes their children's family structure will "not come up" is not a value neutral stance, it is a stance that promotes heteronormative families and ignores the ways in which children, teachers, and curriculum engage in family-related practices and talk throughout the school day. Echoing accounts from parents in the previous section, Loretta also notes the antiquated and clumsy way in which the preschool discussed race as an indicator of their ability to competently address issues that may come for LGBT families, and marginalized families in general, who attend the school.

Finding no suitable nearby options, Loretta ended up taking her daughters to a preschool in a larger city 45 minutes away, a substantial commute only made possible by the fact that preschool is only 2 days a week. She also noted that this practice will not be sustainable once they start kindergarten. In addition to school selection, Loretta, and other families located in small, rural towns noted similar practices when seeking out other services that require close contact with their families, such as doctors and dentists.

Although most families living in areas with high queer visibility (such as the Bay Area) sent their children to local public schools, one exception was the only couple with a transgender parent and a school-aged child. Claire and Noreen Wishon describe how their decision to send their daughter to a private school was shaped by their feeling that the local public school would not provide her support as a child of a same-sex couple with a transgender parent.

> Noreen: When we did say, "Our daughter might want to talk about her family. She might want to talk about her moms and one of them being transgendered. Can you be supportive of that through your staff and teachers?" She just gave this kind of blanket response of "all of our children are special here." She just couldn't be more specific in supporting us as individuals than that. And that just didn't feel like enough support to us.
>
> Claire: And at that time I had developed some second set curriculum that you kind of just fold right in and I kind of talked about that and that didn't go anywhere. So--
>
> Noreen: So we also looked at private schools that we thought might be open and supportive. So we found one that had a history of having a lot of queer parents and a curriculum that reflected that. So that is where we went.

Similar to Loretta's meetings with administrators when she was looking for preschool for her daughters, Claire and Noreen rejected the rhetoric that "all of our children are special here" as a blanket statement of support. While Loretta was especially sensitive in seeking out concrete ways a school would support her family because of the general lack of support she experienced in the conservative, rural area her family lived, Claire's transgender identity and Noreen's relatively new queer identity prompted them to seek out extra levels of support than they might

have otherwise looked for living in the Bay Area. Reflecting this heightened sensitivity, Noreen noted, "I think for me, a little bit for you [Claire] too, because trans is another whole gamut. And for me, being new into my queer identity, we were really looking for a queer safe space." As a result, they ended up exploring private school options to expand the range of available schools in order to find one that met their specific needs.

However, the choice to send their daughter to a private school put a noticeable financial strain on their family, even with a scholarship their daughter received from the school. Claire and Noreen discuss the implications of feeling compelled to enroll their daughter in private school when I ask if there are any specific issues that come from being an LGBT parent.

> Claire: You could almost say, living in Oakland, the public schools are challenging. I wonder if we would have gone ahead with [the local public school] if we were not an alternative family. Almost feels like a tax or something.
> Noreen: A tax.
> Claire: Yeah, a queer family tax.
> Noreen: Yeah, I feel like that. I think we probably would have.
> Claire: Yeah, so there is that.
> Noreen: We have kind of been in protective mode around that and it is costing us money.

Although Claire and Noreen felt additional pressure seeking out a school that provided the support they wanted in regards to transgender issues, the "queer family tax" was also paid by other families who sought out private and charter schools for their children to mitigate anticipated stigma. The concept can also extend to encompass the economic costs and constraints families imposed on themselves living in expensive towns and neighborhoods in which parents and children will feel supported, celebrated, and not alone (if they can pay these costs at all). However, not all families are able to pay the high costs often associated with these locations and schools, a reminder of the ways that class shapes the stigma management strategies of LGBT families.

Furthermore, the safety of a current location is often framed in relation to the relative danger or stigma families map onto other locations, whether it is another state, another town or even another neighborhood. This is an important caveat to recent findings that LGBT families report low levels of hostility and discrimination in the locations that they live. It is not that they believe the world is safe for them, even if locally or in a very broad sense they think things are getting better, but that threat is spatially located elsewhere. The idea of mapping stigma or threats to their family is reflected in practices such as choosing where they live and the schools their children attend. The practices reflect a sense of ambiguity in the safety and support families may experience across time and place.

These concerns are also reminiscent of the physical danger and uncertainty that Jack Halberstam (2005) associates with queer temporalities, a concept I will return to at the end of the chapter. However, anticipated stigma and the influence of queer temporalities also changes and shifts at different points in family life course, a topic explored in more detail in the next section.

Managing Outness

In addition to strategically selecting where families live and where children go to school as part of their stigma management strategies, interviewed parents were also very conscious of

how their families presented themselves in public spaces and interactions with others. Building on the findings in chapter 4, and consistent with prior research on LGBT families with children (Bergen et al, 2006; Lewin, 2009; Sullivan, 2004; Suter et al, 2008), families do so in order to manage ongoing stigmatizing experiences with people outside of their families. However, I also find that parents negotiated personal and family outness as a means to prepare their children for future interactions with homophobia and heterosexism. Strategies also shifted over time as children became increasingly independent from their parents and the contexts in which they may encounter stigma change. The rest of chapter explores how interviewed parents managed anticipated stigma through their family's outness in day-to-day interactions; specifically, the ways in which they made their sexual identities and queer family structures apparent to others in order to minimize children's experiences of stigma during adolescence.

By coming out, I refer to the ongoing, strategic practice of disclosing one's sexual identity to others. The decision to come out is contingent on whether individuals feel it is appropriate, necessary, or safe to come out in particular contexts, maintaining "layers of outness" (Donovan, Heaphy, and Weeks, 1999). Although individuals can have complex motives for choosing whether to come out or not in a particular interaction, it is largely affected by two factors: the degree of social distance and understanding of potential gains and consequences for coming out at that moment (Orne, 2011). Similar to epileptics in Scambler and Hopkin's (1986) study, LGBT people, aware of stigmatizing views broadly held by many, are strategic about when and how they come out, regardless of whether they have directly experienced discrimination or not. Although anticipated stigma does not completely stop LGBT people from coming out, it is reflected in the discretion practiced given to whom, when, where and how one comes out.

Although most studies discussing anticipated stigma highlight strategies of concealment as the primary management strategy (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009), it is important to acknowledge managing outness is not the only strategy utilized by LGBT people to respond to anticipated stigma. In a study of stigmatized identity management among young, queer adults, Orne (2013) describes three common strategies for dealing with contexts of ambiguous or uncertain acceptance. These strategies include: (1) being upfront about one's identity and addressing issues head on in order to educate those they are interacting with, in hopes of reducing future hostility for themselves and others; (2) tailoring the stigmatized identity labels they use (e.g., "gay" instead of "bisexual", or "lesbian" instead of "pansexual") to the interaction so it is easier for others to accept and understand them; (3) and disengaging from contexts or individuals that have stigmatized them in the past or expect that they will experience hostility. Each of these strategies depict ways in which anticipated stigma may be addressed without resorting to covering or concealment.

Similarly, LGBT identified parents do not only manage anticipated stigma through strategies of concealment. Prior research suggests that their strategies are heavily contingent on social context and specific concerns parents have at different points in time. For example, prospective LGBT parents report using strategies of concealment to avoid anticipated discrimination from adoptive agencies and fertility clinics (Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008). However, once families acquired children, parents report feeling compelled to come out in public contexts in which they may have previously decided to remain in the closet (Almack, 2007; Arnesto & Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008). They report making this shift because they feel hiding their sexual identity, which is now strongly tied to the visibility

and social recognition of their family, would make their family feel inauthentic for children and cause them to internalize stigmatizing messages about their families. Lesbian parent families also report actively resisting internalizing stigma by reinterpreting discriminatory actions taken against them, blaming perpetrators or society at large instead of their sexual identity or family structure (Almack, 2007).

In the following sections I build on LGBT families and stigma scholarship by highlighting how managing outness is an anticipated stigma management strategy that involves a broader array of techniques than the strategies of concealment that the stigma scholarship primarily explored. Respondents engaged in two time sensitive strategies related to managing outness. Parents whose young children had not experienced any directly hostile or traumatizing experiences primarily practiced what I call *preemptive outness*, a strategy of public disclosure in which parents preemptively disclose their family configurations and sexual identities upon entering new social contexts or meeting new people. Among families with older children, parents noted that as children grew older and/or began to experience negative, stigmatizing interactions, particularly in spaces without their parents present, they started to practice what I call *selective outness*, a strategy in which parents move, at least partially, back into the closet in some contexts so that their children can choose whether or not to disclose their family configurations based on their own comfort and assessment of a given moment. Each of these strategies, including how and why they are practiced, will be discussed in turn.

Preemptive Outness

Respondents used preemptive outness to display to new people that their family has same-sex parents or at least one parent who is LGBT. Ruth Adenaur, mother of 2 year old Kay-Kay, discusses her motivations for coming out to people upon first meeting them, a common method for practicing preemptive outness among parents in my sample:

> Ruth: So I just always now, automatically, when people ask me when we are talking about Bobbi or Kay-Kay mentions Bobbi and doesn't know that I'm—I explain. I also want to, part of that is moving the way for [Kay-Kay]. Not just that she feels comfortable for her family; that is obviously important. But so she doesn't have to come out. That she doesn't have to take the burden of that on we just make sure her world knows this. And so she can take it for granted.

Ruth's logic was common among parents I interviewed with young children. They described immediate and projected reasons to engage in preemptive outness. Preemptively coming out upon first meeting someone reduced the chance that the person would make heteronormative assumptions about the parent or their family structure. As discussed in chapter 4, misrecognition was a common phenomenon for families that, among other things, parents felt contributed to children feeling different or abnormal. However, children feeling "normal" was not about children being unaware of the differences between their family's structure and the families of those around them, it came from being able to take their family structure "for granted" in the sense of not having to do any extra interactive work to make it known, recognizable, or justify it. For Ruth, preemptively coming out and explaining their family structure to new people removes that "burden" from her daughter, allowing for Kay-Kay to "take it for granted" that others will recognize her family.

Lily Goldschmidt explains how she uses preemptive outness to psychologically prepare her daughter, 17 month old Mina, to handle discrimination and harassment that Lily anticipates Mina is likely to encounter in the future.

> Lily: It is really important, like I said, I want to be out anyway. It is particularly important to me since she is in this charmed space right now where she doesn't know if there is any other way or that there is such a thing as bigotry. When she encounters whatever the rest of the world thinks of us I want her to have years where we are just a normal family. And that will be an inoculation for her. When she encounters those people she can be like, 'Those people are so silly and what is the matter with them?'

Similar to Ruth, Lily's usage of preemptive outness is a strategy for responding to anticipated stigma in both the immediate and distant future. She believes it is important to be out in public to maintain the "charmed space" that her daughter currently inhabits where it seems like she has a "normal family." Not only does this keep her daughter in the dark about the bigotry her family may encounter but helps to "inoculate" her from stigmatizing interactions Mina may have in the future. These practices "inoculate" Mina in the sense that they imbue her with an understanding of her family as "normal"; imparted to her early in life like an antibody that will prevent the negative attitudes others may have about her and her family from taking root inside her as an internalized stigma in the future. Lily, and other parents engaged in these practices, hope that by reducing the internalized stigma their children may hold in the future they will be better prepared to shrug off external forms of stigma that parents expect they will encounter when they are older.

Building on the themes of location discussed earlier in the chapter, Lily's use of the phrase "charmed space" is also notable. In particular, parents discussed the importance of both finding and creating spaces in which children would feel "normal" and less likely to experience harassment and discrimination, especially at young ages. It also notes a partition between their created "charmed space" and everywhere else, where Lily locates bigotry and the general negative attitudes that she expects people to have about her family. Both the management of families in public spaces and the selection and manipulation of the locations they inhabit were important arenas in which parents attempt to manage anticipated stigma.

However, this does not mean the parents I interviewed were coming out to everyone they passed on the street. Preemptive outness was typically practiced in child centered contexts where parents and children would interact with the same individuals on a regular basis. Common examples included schools, daycare, and organized activities like swimming lessons, sports leagues, etc. These are also contexts children occupied without the constant presence of their parents. As a result, preemptive outness was often geared toward laying the interactive groundwork to avoid feelings of difference for their children in the future. Schools and daycare, however, were the most common contexts in which parents discussed practicing preemptive outness. Reflecting school selection concerns discussed in the first half of the chapter, these are contexts in which parents are not always present and they imagine children are most vulnerable to bullying and ridicule based on their family structure. Thus, preemptive outness focuses on how parents deliberately come out to people embedded in these social contexts that their children will have ongoing interactions with in the absence of their parents.

Respondents reported two common ways of practicing preemptive outness: (1) Coming out to people (such as school staff and administrators) upon meeting them and (2) being a consistently visible presence in specific spaces (e.g. children's schools) through volunteering and organizational involvement. These two approaches also highlight distinctions between declarative strategies of coming out (e.g., telling someone, "I am gay") versus displays of sexual identity and family structure (e.g, being seen in public holding hands with one's same-sex partner.)

Several parents reported that they strategically come out to school administrators and teachers when they first meet them. This practice establishes for school staff and teachers the respondent's queer family structure in order to reduce future misrecognition in the classroom (e.g. a teacher asking the child, "What do your Mommy and Daddy do?") and as a means of actively enlisting their support in making sure their children do not encounter any homophobia or bullying; and if they do, that there is a quick and appropriate response. This strategy of assessing schools and enlisting teachers as allies was common among respondents with elementary school age children and many families began meeting with administrators prior to their child attending the school; blending strategies of preemptive outness with school selection. For instance, Scott Adams, father of 8-year-old Katelyn, described how he and his partner, Dale Prokesch, approached their daughter's prospective school one year before she started.

> Scott: We have been out from the very beginning. We met with the principal the year before Katelyn started just to take her temperature and let her know we're coming and she was great and we have been very out ever since.

"Taking the temperature" of teachers and administrators gave Scott and Dale a sense of the acceptance and support (or possible homophobia) their daughter might encounter from the school in the future. In essence, it allows parents to bear the brunt of any potential homophobia in a location before their children would encounter any of it.

Some families noted meeting and checking in with teachers every year to ensure that teachers were aware of their child's family structure and that there would not be any problems. For example, Elaine Rich described how she met with her daughter's teachers every year through elementary school:

> Interviewer: You mentioned you had conversations with the kindergarten teacher about climate for your child...Did you ever have any other conversations with teachers and administrators?"
> Elaine: Oh, every year. Yeah, every year until she went to junior high because in every year there is just one teacher so you want to let them know who your family is so it is clear you will not run into conflict with that.

Elaine's comments highlight concerns she had of her daughter encountering problems in the classroom. She mediated these concerns by meeting with teachers ahead of time to both come out to the teacher to avoid any presumptions that might single her daughter out as well as to assess the teacher to make sure there will not be any interpersonal problems based on Elaine's sexual identity.

Not all families, however, started with this practice of preemptively meeting with teachers and staff. Other parents, like Gina Wiegel and Angel Appling, picked up the practice following negative incidents at school.

Interviewer: Are there any specific issues or challenges that you face as an LGBT parent?

Gina: I have a fear of them getting harassed or getting flak for having two moms. So far they have never experienced that. But I have that fear.

Angel: Right. And then, like their teacher, who is great, who has never had any issues with, you know, an aging hippie basically. Like on Mother's Day. When [Elsa] was just a baby and [our other daughter] was very young. She had—Elsa was making a card—she was having the kids make cards for Mother's Day. And I think she asked Elsa who it was for and Elsa said it was for me so she didn't have her do another one. So that was, we said something to her about that. We are both mothers. It's not like one of us is and the other isn't. You wouldn't have her do something for the other one on Father's Day.

Gina: Well she said she thought she could do that.

Angel: Well, she felt badly about it like immediately and basically then helped her make another card.

Gina: And Elsa felt bad.

Angel: No, but it was like she felt bad that she let her do—you know, like she didn't know, as the adult, help make it right. So that just let us know that when we have new teachers we need to explain that to them. That it is not like one of us is the father and one of us is the mother but that we are both mothers and on Father's Day they can do something for a grandpa or something. But that was new and the year before that I think she had done something for both parents but that year she was doing something specifically for one.

Gina and Angel illustrate that although not all parents initially practice preemptive outness, like Dale, Ruth, and Elaine. Instead, some families come to practice it in response to negative incidents their family experience early on. In Gina and Angel's case, it was less about coming out, as Elsa's teacher was already aware of their family structure. Instead, their actions were about ensuring that the teachers understood how to engage with their daughters in ways that were acknowledging and respectful of their family structure. However, reflective of a preemptive outness strategy, Gina and Angel note that the experience illustrated to them that they had to be upfront about this with new teachers.

Volunteering at their children's schools was another way in which several parents practiced preemptive outness. Volunteering provided a means for their family to be more collectively visible to school staff as well as other parents and children. Parents noted that a major benefit to early volunteering is that if their children remain at the same school then their peers will have had time to know and understand their family structure and that they will support children (and maybe protect them from bullying) in the future. Tania Alvarez, whose experiences with school selection were described earlier in the chapter, explained how volunteering operates a strategy that normalizes her family's presence for the kids at her son, eight-year-old Porter's, charter school over time as to make their presence a non-issue. She notes, "Since you make your presence known at the beginning of the year the kids don't bat an eye, by the end of the year they

are just like, 'Whatever.'" Similarly, Dan Madsen describes how he and his partner, Danny Che, began volunteering in their son's kindergarten class with the long-term focus of normalizing their family to the community at their son's school.

> Dan: We participate, Danny does more, but everybody at school knows us as a couple. All the teachers, everybody. And I don't know when you get into first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade how much that still happens. So if we were to continue to volunteer at school and do things like that then it may not ever come up because kids would figure it out. But I suppose if you get less and less active like in high school. I don't if my parents ever talked to any of my teachers in high school. Then it is sort of a bigger issue for the kid. If it is an issue for the kid. I don't know. I guess we'll see.

For Dan, Tania, and other parents with young, school-age, children, being active volunteers at their children's school helps to ensure that everyone in those contexts comfortably know them as a family. Namely, they hope that by having their children's classmates see and engage with their family it will normalize their presence so the fact that they are an LGBT family will be a non-issue by the time their child is in junior high or high school, the anticipated time of concern for many parents. Although this practice involves children staying in the same schools or attending roughly the same subsequent middle and high schools to maintain ties with the same classmates, parents note how starting this process early in their child's education was helpful because their kids are likely to encounter the same cohort of classmates each year, reducing the amount of work that goes into coming out each subsequent year.

Although most families described volunteering at schools as an individualized strategy for normalizing the presence of their family to people they would encounter in those spaces, some parents volunteered not only to raise their visibility but also as a means of enacting institutional change. Doing so ensured that there were school policies in place to protect their children and help to broaden the awareness of other families at the school to issues affecting marginalized families. Chris Austenberg, describes how he and his partner, Larry Hass, describe their involvement at their children's private school and other nearby schools.

> Chris: And at their school we have been very, very open and out and every chance we get we go into the classroom and share our family and show pictures of our family and try to take opportunities to tell kids—we do this at [another nearby, private school] too which has us in every year to tell kids things about adoption and like when a kid is adopted you don't ask them who their real parents are because their real parents are their parents. Ask them who their birth parents are if you're curious. We are just trying to educate things that could impact our children. And because of it I know within our community—at our private school—we have been quite impactful, the school is always telling us that too. We are always trying to take an extra step. What if we did a coming out week? What if we did a day of silence? And they are like, "That might not be right for most school kids." And we're like, "Yeah, we get that." And they are always reminding us about how impactful our presence is and that we are on the campus a lot and making

ourselves known. And consequently their peers don't think twice about us. That's what we need to do on a bigger broader level.

In addition to using these moments as an opportunity to positively display their families at their children's schools, Chris and Larry also use them to influence behavior towards LGBT and adoptive families to reduce feelings of alienation their children, and children in similar family structures, might experience. The reluctant, but still overall accommodating, response from their private school also hints again at the power parents in private school settings can wield in terms of getting administration to work with them (even if it is clear the school is unwilling to go as far as the parents desire.) Although, as observed with Chris and Larry, the school is quick to laud the parents for the work that they do in order to provide a sense that they listening to their concerns and committed to creating a supportive environment.

Although some parents noted preemptive outness strategies as proactive ways of garnering visibility and ensuring that their children's schools are supportive environments, other parents reported reservations about this approach. One concern is not wanting to be perceived as pursuing a political agenda at the expense of their child. Mary Jones describes her ambivalence toward seeking institutional reform from her child's school following a Mother's Day incident similar to the one described earlier by Gina and Angel.

> Mary: I never confronted that teacher about the Mother's Day issue. I think we just tried to deal with it with Ryan and kind of repair what happened at school at home. 'And let's think about what special project you could do for Tam-Tam since you were only allowed to do one project at school but you have two mom's 'that's silly, that they would only let you do one project.' Just not really confronting the school system at all. And I think maybe that's my lack of faith in the school system to actually address that in a positive way. And I don't want the boys to be—because it's a small school district and we live in a small community—I don't want them to be known to the school district as 'the kid with those moms who created the big mess about whatever'.

In this example, Mary illustrates some of the limits to preemptive outness as a strategy for shielding their children from homophobia and future stigma. Mary avoids direct confrontation with her son's teacher because she fears such action will be ineffective and negatively raise the profile of her sons in their small community. In other words, the effectiveness of preemptive outness strategies are limited by the ability of schools, and the community as a whole, to respond favorably to one's family once you come out, which cannot, and is not, taken for granted. In places where families felt more vulnerable or less confident in the ability of teachers and school administrators to address their concerns they were less likely to engage with the organization and focused on "repairing" damage as it happens, focusing their efforts on their children (or, as discussed earlier, some families left such schools and sought a charter or private school where they would have more control.)

Even in relatively supportive schools and neighborhoods such activities can still create a backlash or give a family notoriety. Larry and Chris (from the previous example), noted a backlash in response to their complaint regarding a mother's only group at their school.

Chris: We had a little bump early on. The school had this group called Mom's Wine and Whine. They had this thing where they invite the whole class. So it comes out on the yahoo email group, "Hey guys, it's the Mom's Wine and Whine." So the first time I get one I ask, "Hey, doesn't this exclude our family?" And she was like, "Oh my god, how insensitive of me. We have a two dad family. Please come to this thing and we will open it up to the dads." So I get the second invitation two weeks later. "Doesn't this exclude my family?" And they are like, "Oh, it's just a women's thing. There will be a dad's thing later on." And I said, "No, I was told we would get access to all the school events. And we don't have access to this." And it created this whole brouhaha. We started getting this focus and people thinking we are the political correct police. It was one of things where we wondered if we were picking the wrong battles too early on. But for the first year it really rippled through our experience.

Larry: Oh, it was ridiculous. I took [my daughter] to the emergency room one time and we were doing triage and the nurse was signing her in and asked, "What school do you go to?" I told her and as she was writing it down she said, "That's a really good school. You know, I heard about a two dad family there that wanted to get into some kind of mom's group--" And I was thinking, oh my god. Will the madness ever end? Apparently one of [the school's] parents is an attending physician in the emergency room at the hospital and they talked about it.

The notion of "choosing one's battles" came up among other families as well when deciding to what degree they will be involved in their children's schools. In particular, families were selective about when and how they confronted schools about homophobia and heterosexism, with many choosing to only respond in extremely important moments to avoid heightened scrutiny for their families. Jereme Taft, concerned about his own tendency to be outspoken about such issues, has refrained from becoming too involved early on at his 6-year-old son's school, preferring to wait until later when he feels his actions may have a more meaningful impact on his son's experiences. Jereme notes:

Jereme: I mean certainly when they're older I probably will become an officer on the PTA. I just don't want to do it yet. I just want to make sure I smooth it over before I start causing any type of turbulence. Because I foresee myself as causing turbulence. I know I don't have the ability once I'm in to then not say anything so it's safer for me to sit back right now than to go in and cause turbulence.

There are other limitations to preemptive outness as a strategy. First, its practice is heavily curtailed and influenced by the class position of families. For instance, many of the families engaged in preventive outness via volunteering at school; a practice that requires a flexible schedule, the ability to take time off work, or a household arrangement where a parent does not have to work full-time. Approaching teachers and administrators as equals and asking for support is also a strategy more likely practiced by affluent, educated parents. As other research has shown (Lareau, 2003), class heavily shapes the sense of entitlement parents and children have regarding when and how they approach teachers and administrators. Working class families are less likely to have a clear understanding of how to do so in ways that will be

organizationally listened to and effective in the school; or perhaps, as Mary noted, when it will not.

A family's town or community also shapes the effectiveness of preemptive outness as a strategy for normalizing children's experiences. Illustrated in Mary's example, families in the Central Valley and other rural locations were less likely to try to change policies or reach out to school staff. Instead, these families placed more effort into their initial school selection, and, if things did get bad, were less likely to confront school staff about their grievances and more likely to try to address any damage done to children at home. Most of these families did not have the same expectation as Bay Area and (most) Sacramento families that their children's schools would respond to their needs. However, even parents living in accommodating locations, such Chris and Larry, were (eventually) aware of the limits they can reach for without backlash.

Finally, families noted that this strategy is not sustainable in middle and high school. Volunteering and meeting with teachers becomes more challenging as children grow older, have multiple teachers, and classroom volunteer opportunities diminish (or are not desired by the children). Parents stopped talking to teachers usually around the time children enter middle school; both because parents presume children "can speak for themselves" at that point and the organizational structure of middle and high school limits opportunities and ease to make contacts with teachers. In some ways this emphasizes why parents are practicing preemptive outness in the first place; in awareness that there will come a time when their children will have to address stigma and homophobia on their own. Reflecting these future-oriented concerns, parents attempted to "inoculate" children, or make them more resilient to stigmatizing encounters that parents expected they will experience as adolescents. But how do family outness strategies change at that point? The next section discusses this issue.

Selective Outness:

Although preemptive outness was enacted by the majority of families with pre-adolescent children, a different set of strategies were described by parents with older children. Instead, these parents reported that as children grew older, particularly as they enter adolescence, that they were more likely to engage in selective outness, with some noting a deliberate transition from preemptive to selective outness. Selective outness strategies shift the responsibility of coming out in child-centered contexts from parents to children. This reflects the decreasing presence of parents in child-centered spaces, such as schools, and children's growing desire for autonomy. It is also influenced by interviewed parents' perceptions that adolescence is a period of time when their children are most likely to encounter stigma (and by some accounts rightly so). If preemptive outness was a means for children to build a strong sense of self and comfort regarding their families to act as a buffer against future stigma and discrimination, then selective outness is a strategy aimed at providing children the means to avoid and deflect such behavior when it starts to occur.

Whereas preemptive outness was a strategy based on parents proactively coming out so young children would not feel different having to explain their family to peers and strangers, selective outness pushes parents, to varying degrees, into closets. Wanting to give their adolescent children control over when and how they come out to other people, parents take a step back and give their children room to decide when and how that will happen. The timing and practice of selective outness corresponds with a period of time when parents, in general, become less involved in the interpersonal affairs of their growing children. In general, this kind of

distancing may be a common practice for families with adolescent and young adult in the United States who use it as a means to allow children a greater sense of autonomy. However, for the LGBT families I interviewed who envision adolescence and young adulthood as a time in which their children are especially vulnerable to stigma due to their queer family structure, this distancing took on additional layers of meaning. For these parents, this distancing also equips children with a broader array of strategies for managing stigma through the level of visibility of their families.

Selective outness strategies reported by parents can be broadly broken down into two, overlapping practices: (1) linguistic tools they teach children to negotiate their family's outness themselves and (2) parents adjusting their visibility, or outness, in child-centered contexts.

Even as parents practiced some preemptive outness strategies, such as early meetings with teachers, several families also taught children ways of talking about their families that would not explicitly reveal their family structure. For instance, some parents taught their children to refer to them as "parents" instead of "moms" or "dads" so that it is not immediately obvious to strangers that they have two moms or dads. Linda Cohen describes how she taught her daughter, Lila, to use the term "parents" after a school secretary refused to acknowledge that Lila had two mothers during a minor medical emergency at school.

> Linda: [Lila] says, "They wouldn't call Mommy Sherry. They said I don't have two moms. I told them I have two moms." I said, "You have two parents. They need to call both parents."...So after that Lila stopped calling us "moms" and she started calling us "parents." And so now, for the kids who know, they know to ask about Linda or whatever. But everyone else, she uses the term "parents" to get around the conventions of society.

One situation that strongly affects when families began to practice selective outness is when children first experience status loss or discrimination because of a parent's sexual identity or their family structure. Although, in most cases, parents noted this first happening to children in late elementary or middle school, Lila, who was 8 at the time of interview, illustrates that strategies can begin to change earlier in response to traumatic moments. Lila's usage of "parents" instead of "moms", a linguistic shift suggested by her mother, also illustrates how the transition from preemptive to selective outness is one that is sometimes collaboratively developed between parents and children and reflects the development of a family strategy for collectively managing anticipated stigma.

However, Lila's usage of "parents" did not stop her moms from practicing some strategies of preemptive outness at her school. If anything, the incident with the school secretary spurred Linda and Sherry to redouble their efforts in practicing preemptive outness at school. They continued to meet with teachers and were very involved at the school as volunteers and organizers; in part to garner influence at the school to keep incidents like that with the secretary from ever happening again. According to Linda, they were among the top 5 families at their school in terms of volunteer hours. However, the incident still operated as a wake up call for the family that Lila also needed tools through which to manage stigma she may experience as she increasingly enters contexts outside of the preemptive outness groundwork laid by her moms. By teaching Lila both that (1) there are times and places when she may not want to tell people about

her family configurations and (2) how to do so, Linda and Sherry were teaching their daughter how to avoid future stigmatizing encounters.

Some parents set these linguistic strategies in motion early as they anticipated moments in the future when their children would find them useful. Wanda describes such a strategy in her family, referring to her children's godfather (and known donor) as "Papa Tony":

> Wanda: But then, because they don't have a dad in the house, I really wanted them to have a papa who was somebody to go—when somebody says, "Who is your dad?" they will be able to say, "Papa Tony is my dad." So I like using the papa reference for their godfather because it means they don't even have to be out to anybody saying that he is their godfather or saying he's their donor.

Similar to Lila's use of "Parents", Wanda strategizes how her children can respond to future inquiries about their "dad", a common source of discomfort for interviewed families . Although Papa Tony may not be what be exactly who people are asking about with the question, "Who is your dad?", providing their daughters a response to the question and embedding it early in their family vocabulary, not only helps them to avoid coming out to strangers (if they do not want to) but will also reduce feelings of difference that might arise if children had no dad to identify. Wanda demonstrates the degree to which some parents anticipate and strategically account for future potentially stigmatizing encounters their children may have in the future. These practices also illustrate tensions embedded in creatively stretching the meanings of specific normative kin relations that, under SNAF ideologies in a SNAF imaginary. all children are presumed to have. Not challenging the assumption that all children have a father (or merely one) bolsters SNAF at the same time that it subverts this ideological framework by extending the meanings and relations connected to fatherhood.

The second category of selective outness strategies involved parents, to some degree, actively entering closets. This ranged from parents not coming out to individuals in child-centered contexts, like schools, to a parent not being present in those contexts altogether so it is not apparent that a child has two moms or two dads. Parents enter closets in these ways to allow their children the freedom to choose when and how they come out about their parents and family structures.

Oftentimes, this strategy is not spontaneously performed by parents but comes at the request of their children. Rebecca Huntley provides an example when her son Gabriel asked her not to come out to his friends.

> Rebecca: There was a time when Gabriel must have been nine or ten. And there was a boy next door because I lived in a duplex...and there was a kid that he played with right across the way at another duplex. And he told me one day and he moved my face toward his and he said, 'Don't say anything.' And I said, 'Say what?' He said, 'Don't say anything about who you are.' And I had never heard him say that. I mean it never even occurred to me. I said, 'Okay. How about you just tell them I'm your stepmom.' And his fears were allayed. So from that moment on, even though I never heard him address me ever that way, I think it just made him feel that he was safe and that was the first time I realized what it must feel like being a straight boy with a gay mom. That there must be something terrifying about that.

Although Rebecca notes that she never heard Gabriel ever address her as anything other than his mom (at least in her presence), having a strategy of selective outness already prepared helped alleviate his fears and gave him control over when and how to come out about his family.

Among families with a transgender parent, similar concerns regarding selective outness were discussed. For the 2 families in the sample, their concerns revolving visibility as a same-sex couple was similar to other couples with young children. However, concerns regarding visibility and outness regarding transgender identities in public spaces has been an ongoing concern before and after children started school. Noreen, from the previous section, explains why she and her partner, Claire, avoid discussing Claire's transgender identity in their 9-year-old daughter's classroom.

> Noreen: I mean, she, I think, at this age, is already trying to deal with privacy and confidentiality issues around Claire as a transgender person but not really about having two moms. I think the trans thing has been a little bit more of a hot topic for her and she is like, at first, she would blab it out to see what people's reactions were and then she started not talking about it but then she said she was telling just a few people so I think she has a whole process she is going through around that. But I don't think anyone has brought up to her.

Claire and Noreen utilize a complex negotiation of preemptive and selective outness strategies. Following a similar preemptive outness strategy used by other parents in the sample, they actively sought out a school that could describe what kinds of support they could provide to their daughter having a queer family. They are also active volunteers at the school, both in general activities as well as speaking to classes on issues regarding queer families. However, similar to the selective outness strategies practiced by parents with children in middle and high school, Claire and Noreen are selective about the contexts in which they come out about Claire's transgender identity. Claire explains her reasoning for not being out about her transgender identity in her daughter's classroom.

> Claire: We have leadership roles for certain parts of the school activities. But part of what all of this happened was in classroom education and so we each could talk in the classrooms if we wanted to and I just I didn't want to talk in [daughter's] classroom because I have this sense that she has her own transgressive identity as a child of queer parents and I kind of want that to be hers that she can disclose if she wants to.

Claire and Noreen are selective in the contexts in which they come out about Claire's transgender identity in order to provide their daughter with the space to exercise when and how to come out. However, it is worth considering how their approach has been shaped by the preemptive outness work engaged in with school selection and approaching staff outside of the classroom context, ensuring that their daughter would have immediate supports should she choose to come out about her family in class.

Although sometimes preemptive and selective outness strategies overlap, as was the case with Claire and Noreen, as well as Linda and Sherry, it was more often the case that there was a

notable transition from preemptive to selective strategies that becomes more pronounced as children enter middle and high school. Debbie Brunson and Connie Reyes, a divorced couple and mothers of 19 year old Jacklyn, illustrate a transition over time from preemptive to selective strategies of managing outness. When Jacklyn was in elementary school, Debbie noted she was active in her daughter's school. Working a 24 hour shift followed by two days off, Debbie used her time off to volunteer for Jacklyn's class by helping chaperone field trips where she was able to interact with her daughter's teachers, peers, and other volunteering parents. Debbie noted that she got to know the teachers and other parents well during the field trips. Reflecting the indirect coming out strategies discussed in the previous section through school volunteering, other parents learned Debbie identified as gay and about Jacklyn's family structure through these interactions without ever having any "major conversations about that." Debbie also enjoyed these opportunities to volunteer because they let her spend time with her daughter, who primarily lived with her other mother, and feel like a good parent. Although Debbie did not explicitly describe her motives behind these volunteer activities as a preemptive outness strategy, they follow the patterns described in the previous section.

As Jacklyn entered middle school, Debbie and Connie became aware that Jacklyn was being picked on at school for having "2 gay moms." Debbie describes how this affected her and Connie's involvement at school.

> Debbie: And then, with the gay thing, Jacklyn had to deal with all of this and process all this as she grew up. Dealing with—I know some kids picked on her a little bit at different times when she was in school. Some of it she would talk about and some of it she would not. There were times when she struggled with having both of us identify as her moms at school. And so I think she wanted to identify more with Connie, who was her birth mom.

At the same time that Debbie and Connie were made aware of the full extent their daughter was being picked on, Debbie also took to heart her daughter's request for her to be less involved in her school, so it less apparent that she has "2 gay moms." Debbie explains how in doing so she enacted a strategy of selective outness at the request of her daughter.

> Debbie: There have been times when I have wanted to be more involved talking to her teachers or something but Jacklyn wanted me to be less involved and Connie more involved if there is one-on-one communication that had to take place. So I kind of relinquished that to a certain degree. I didn't really speak to her teachers after elementary school so much. I mean, I knew who they were but, you know, she was becoming more independent anyway.

Connie also discussed how even though she was attending school functions, her daughter emphasized that she should remain in the closet in those contexts.

> Connie: But Jacklyn, at school, she doesn't want me to be out at school...before when she was real little she had a real hard time with me and Debbie coming to school. But then she gave in, "Okay fine!" We would go to open house together all the way through high school. I'd tell Debbie, "You want to go to her school so we see and

> meet her teachers?" Sometimes that would embarrass Jacklyn. Because she did not want to deal with the social pressure or suspicion or the like,'Oh my god you have two gay moms!" She didn't want to be teased. She did get teased when she was younger. It was really hard for her. So she kind of put me in the closet even though she was president of GSA [Gay Straight Alliance]. I think that was her way of saying, "Mom, I still support you." But in a roundabout way. Because I would always say, "Do you want me to be a speaker?" "No." [Laughs]. "No. Don't talk about stuff." "Okay."
>
> Interviewer: Was it high school where there was a shift with that?
>
> Connie: I would say more so in high school she was more like, "Eh, whatever." She started to feel a little more competent within herself and that kids are going to be mean and they are going to tease. But she still, to this day, doesn't want me to be out even though I think some people know.

In a turnabout from the preemptive outness strategies reported in the previous section and the importance other studies find that parents place on coming out once they have children (Almack, 2007; Arnesto and Shapiro, 2011; Bergstrom-Lynch, 2012; Gianino, 2008), when respondents were asked by their adolescent and teenage children to step into closets, several acquiesced. In this case Connie notes that from a young age Jacklyn did not want her parents attending school functions together. However, it was only in middle school, when Debbie notes they became most aware of the teasing their daughter experienced and that "she was becoming more independent anyway" that Debbie stopped attending school functions.

Although Jacklyn's negative experiences and her family's usage of selective outness strategies appear incongruous with the majority of research on LGBT families with (mostly young) children, it is reflected in other studies that focus specifically on the experiences adolescents and teenagers raised by gay and lesbian parents. In a study of 17-year-old children of lesbian parents, 50% reported negative experiences because they have lesbian mothers (Gelderen et al, 2012). Similarly, another study of 13 to 18-year-olds raised by same-sex parents found that experiences of homophobia were common (Welsh, 2011). In both studies, stigmatization primarily came from peers at school and included homophobic language, insults, and exclusion from social activities and groups. Like Jacklyn, children in these studies report concealing from their parents the extent of the homophobia they encountered; often in an effort to protect their parents from feeling worried, fearful or sad. Children report that they use strategies of non-disclosure to avoid stigmatization. These strategies include not disclosing their family structure or the sexual orientation of their parents to peers or friends, hiding pictures of their families if their friends come to visit, and limiting their social circle (Gelderen et al, 2012; Welsh, 2011). When studies asked about the conditions in which they do disclose to people their family configurations, it is because an individual displays open-mindedness and/or the children want to develop a significant relationship with them (Lubbe, 2008; Welsh, 2011).

Furthermore, although Connie describes Jacklyn taking a more "eh, whatever" approach in high school, she was still against her parents coming out public spaces with her. Debbie illustrates this with a more recent account of Jacklyn's discomfort with having her family out in public spaces.

Debbie: I went with her last year—she got a moving violation because she rolled through a stop sign on a right turn or something. She had to get some paperwork back to the courthouse for driving school, she had to do driving school. Anyway, this lady at the fax place she said something about me being her mom and I said, "Yeah." But I clarified, "But I'm not her birth mom." I didn't have to say it and I'm not sure why I said it but Jacklyn got annoyed by that. She was like, "She didn't need to know all that." Like she was embarrassed or something. Here's Jacklyn who was like the president of her Gay Straight Alliance in high school [laughs] and in all those activities in favor of who we are but I think she still has some hang-ups about it a little bit maybe. I mean, a lot of teens are kind of, whether that is an issue of something else, because teens can get embarrassed by something their parents do. That's just how kids are. But that kind of stuff bothers me sometimes.

Both Debbie and Connie[35] bring up the contradiction they see between Jacklyn's desire for them to remain in the closet and her involvement in high school as the president of the GSA. Both of them interpret Jacklyn's involvement in LGBT themed organizations and politics as a way of illustrating her lack of personal qualms with their family and, as Connie mentioned, may also be a way of conveying to her moms that she "supports them" in spite of asking them to remain closeted or not become involved in her school. However, her comfort in personally accounting for her family in public spaces is something she wishes to remain in her control, and frequently for it not be discussed at all.

Other parents with teenage children noted similar behavior. Specifically, these children wished to be in control of when and how they chose to come out to others. However, the cost of this was often a lack of control on their parents' part or even an awareness that their children were not telling others about their family. Julie Edelman describes an awkward moment when she realizes that her daughter, 17-year-old Shawna, had not told her friend that she had two moms.

Julie: Just last week [a friend of Shawna] came over and she said, 'But I thought you were a professor.' And I said, 'No, I'm not.' But [Vicky, Shawna's other mother] is I realized. and then she said, 'Shawna said you were a professor.' And I thought, oh no, now she is going to think Shawna is a liar unless I tell her something. But Shawna obviously didn't tell her that she had two mommies so I said, 'Vicky is the professor.' And I left it to Shawna to tell her and I don't know if she told her.

Just as parents may be in the dark to the full extent their children are picked on by others because of their family structure, Julie's story highlights how parents can also have no idea of when and how their children are disclosing their family configurations. When Julie learned that Shawna had not told her friend that she had two moms she tried to balance respecting her daughter's decision with making sure her daughter did not appear as a liar. Ultimately, Julie deciding to partially come out and leave it for her daughter to fully explain the discrepancy to her friend. This story highlights how parents not only take the lead of their children in managing

---

35Because the couple has long been divorced and had very busy schedules they were interviewed separately which allowed for rare moments where I could compare accounts of the same information.

their family's outness as they grow older but also place the burden of responsibility for negotiating the complexities of the closet on them more over time.

Although Jacklyn's parents interpreted her desire to control the circumstances in which her family is, or is not, out in public spaces as means to avoid the possible negative attention being out would attract, other children had different reasons for wanting to determine when and how they tell people about their families. Lucy Burns and Frank Matthews, gay and lesbian co-parents discussed in chapter 4, describe how their 19-year-old son, Jared, was comfortable with people knowing he has gay parents; however, he wants to be one the tell them.

> Lucy: He did, one time, I remember, I was biking with him, and he didn't talk much and we were both biking along and I could tell he was a little upset about something so I started talking to him and he said he was upset because his friend had told somebody that Jared had gay parents...And, I said to Jared, "Does it bother you to have gay parents?" And he said, "Oh no, not at all. Except that I wanted to tell people."
> Frank: Yeah.
> Lucy: So that was what bothered him. That his friend told people and he didn't. So I thought that was interesting. That he just wanted to tell people on his own terms.

Lucy and Frank demonstrate that a common theme in how (and why) families changed the ways in which they were out, as well as the family gatekeepers for that information, was accepting and acknowledging the agency of their children, even if it was just for the sake of allowing them to discuss their family on their own terms.

As these examples illustrate, selective outness operates as a means for parents to help manage anticipated stigma for their children while at the same time trying to respect children's growing agency and independence. Both preemptive and selective outness extend the temporal boundaries in which stigma management is normally conceptualized. They demonstrate a range of shifting strategies that parents attend to over an extended period of time from when children are very young all the way into young adulthood but is focused primarily on managing anticipated stigma occurring during adolescence.

Although both selective and preemptive outness are, in part focused on reducing potential stigma in the moment, they are also focused on psychologically preparing children to respond and the tools they have access to navigate stigma in adolescence. These findings parallel strategies found in the racial socialization scholarship that parents use to prepare children of color for future encounter with racial prejudice and discrimination (Hughes et al, 2006). However, an important distinction for navigating sexual stigma and racial stigma for families is that LGBT family strategies can more readily utilize strategies of passing and concealment. Although, as I show in this chapter, LGBT families use a much broader range of strategies, passing is among the strategies that LGBT parents teach their children and make available to them using selective outness (whether children use them or not).

Finally, the managing outness strategies used by parents highlight how they think about their actions as part of a group stigma strategy. Although parents take the lead on these on managing stigma when children are young through preemptive outness and the modes of family displays discussed in chapter 4, they are part of a strategy intended to aid children in adolescence and young adulthood in their encounters with homophobia and heterosexism. The anticipated

stigma management strategies used by parents are interwoven with the projected actions of children. Rather than thinking of the stigma management strategies used by parents or children as individual practices, we need to think about the ways in which they illustrate how, as a family, their actions are oriented toward the management of children's stigma experiences in adolescence.

Conclusion

Building on the themes of chapter 4, this chapter illustrates the importance of contextualizing the experiences of stigma and stigma management for LGBT families with children in respect to time, location, and life course. Just as families are not private, static structures in relation to public/private boundaries, the practice of family relations is also dynamic and fluid in relation to time. Although scholarly attention is frequently paid to how changes in law and policy, such as adoption and marriage laws, affect LGBT family practices, less explicit attention has been paid to how position in life course also affects families' experiences.

Full understanding of LGBT families' stigma experiences and management requires us to understand how parents spatially and temporally map stigma and how those perceptions shape family practices. Exploring parents' spatially and temporally contingent strategies for helping their children feel normal also reveals how such practices alleviate parents' own anxieties about stigma that they anticipate their children will face in the future. Interviewing families with a broad age range of children illustrates how parents' focus and intent with family practices is projected through time; and sometimes practiced to the benefit of some members of the family over others. We also see how experiences of stigma change as families (and particularly children) move into new social environments and as children age and become more independent.

The ways in which LGBT families spatially and temporally map stigma also challenge the limited parameters defined by Jack Halberstam (2005) for "queer time" and "queer space." Halberstam (2005) defines queer temporalities as punctuated by the politicization and physical uncertainty of queer rights and bodies and in opposition to time oriented around normative kinship and reproductive families.. However, I argue that the LGBT families I interviewed occupy a temporal space somewhere between the "normative family" and "queer" temporalities Halberstam describes. Respondents' lives are structured around a "reproductive time," a personal and familial orientation to time based around raising children. However, in finer detail, the structuring of those activities take into account the uncertainty and danger associated with queer identities for themselves and their children. Parents also view particular moments in the future and specific geographical spaces through these queer lens of danger and uncertainty when they choose where to live, the schools their children attend, and when and how they manage their family's outness in public spaces. Similar to early family building practices described in chapter 3, the lives of respondents and their families, which are oriented toward reproductive family life, are also shaped under a shadow of anticipated stigma based on parents' LGBT identities and queer family structures.

The findings in this chapter also give a sense of how LGBT families, and possibly other stigmatized groups, approach socialization of children not only through direct conversation and teaching children but through selection and manipulation of environment to increase self-esteem or a sense of normality. Whether this sense of normality is productive or not for children in their capacity to respond to future stigma is another question that could be fleshed out with further

research. However, these findings do illustrate how parents are engaging in these strategies because *they anticipate* that they will be helpful to their children in the future.

The outness management strategies used by parents to mediate the ways in which children experience, and later on, are able to respond to stigma, also highlight how stigma management in LGBT families is, at times, an interdependent practice between parents and children. Similar to ways that children's participation in family displays bolstered parents' attempts to deflect or respond microaggressions in chapter 4, managing outness is part of a group stigma management strategy that is ultimately practiced by parents to bolster their own attempts to manage stigma children will (or do) encounter as adolescents and young adults. Although preemptive outness is orchestrated through the actions of parents with the intent of keeping children from being involved in stigma management at a young age, it is also a strategy designed to better prepare children for dealing with stigma in the future. Similarly, selective outness, which for parents involves reducing the visible queerness of their families, is part of a (sometimes implicit) collaboration with children who granted greater control of when, how, and to whom they reveal their queer family structure based on their own level of comfort and sense of safety. In both cases, the outness management strategies of parents are practiced because parents presume that they are an influential component to the stigma management strategies available to their children.

Aside from fleshing out what we know about the experience and group management of stigma for LGBT families with children, this study also helps build a more comprehensive knowledge of the ways in which individuals manage anticipated stigma. Whereas most of the research up to this point has found that covering and passing are the most common management strategies, families utilizing preemptive outness, in which they proactively disclose potentially stigmatizing identities to strangers and figures of authority, illustrates alternative approaches that have not yet been fully considered.

Looking at LGBT parents' motives and strategies for coming out also provides a broader sense of what coming out can look like in, as Seidman (2002) puts it, a "post-closet" world. Following other scholars who look at coming out at as an ongoing strategic practice (Orne, 2013; Donovan, Heaphy, and Weeks, 1999), this work adds to a growing understanding of the motives, contexts, and conditions in which LGBT people come out. Looking at the day-to-day contexts and strategies used by LGBT families to come out builds on prior research focusing on young adults and single people but also demonstrates the fluidity of practices used by individuals through time and at different moments in family life course. Parents strategically chose whether to come out or not with an awareness of their family's changing contexts and needs over time, especially as children grow up, enter school, and navigate new social spaces independently.

These choices also serve as an important reminder that coming out is not always in the best interest of LGBT people (or their families) and choosing to not disclose a queer identity should not be seen negatively. Instead, careful attention should be paid to the motives behind coming out in a social context and how these choices are socially embedded in day-to-day life.

Finally, the reports from this chapter, as well as the findings from subsequent chapters, highlight the complicated relationship LGBT families have with notions of normality. Although LGBT families sit on the margins of normative family ideologies on the basis of parents' sexualities, managing that stigma frequently involves practicing family in other ways that align with SNAF beliefs. Regardless of motive, the stigma management practices of LGBT parents are

still practiced in some relation to the normative family ideologies that place them on the margins in the first place.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The experiences of LGBT families with children in post-closet culture in the United States are marked by tensions between unprecedented growth in their legal recognition and cultural acceptance alongside the persisting realities of heterosexism and homophobia. There is a growing intolerance for overt and hostile expressions of homophobia in mainstream society (Dean, 2014; Seidman, 2002). Similarly, LGBT families have experienced a growth in legal rights and recognitions including greater access to assisted reproductive technologies, fewer restrictions on domestic adoption, and greater recognition of legal parentage through growing access to second-parent adoption and nationwide access to same-sex marriage. Same-sex couples and LGBT parents are also included in a growing portion of the public's conceptions of family (Powell et al, 2005) and in an increasing number of positive depictions in mainstream entertainment and media (GLAAD, 2014; Seidman, 2002; Walters, 2012). All of this is leading to a sense that sexual identity is increasingly less relevant in many spheres of everyday life (Seidman, 2002; Savin-Williams, 2005).

This sense of growing acceptance is also reported by the LGBT parents that I interviewed. Consistent with other scholarship on LGBT families with children, my respondents report few instances of overt discrimination and hostility in their day-to-day lives (Almack, 2007; Mercier and Harold, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Suter et al; 2008). Several parents report feeling that their experiences of family life are comparable to other (heterosexual) families in their neighborhoods; and that these experiences (or lack thereof) made them feel "lucky." The sense that they are "lucky," or that at some level they expected things to be worse, however, belie the complexity of their experiences and concerns.

Despite growing legal rights and protections for LGBT people and families, these gains have not been complete. Even with the recent recognition of same-sex marriages in the United States, second parent adoption laws, and non-discrimination laws remain unavailable in several states. State level laws regarding parenthood, custody, and ART vary, and even within states, these new laws are interpreted differently by judges, leading to inconsistent and unpredictable rulings. There is also a sense that these laws can be repealed, reflecting past political and social backlashes that LGBT people have historically experienced. Recent examples include the passage of proposition 8 in California in 2008 following the State Supreme Court ruling in favor of same-sex marriage or, 2015, the repealing of Houston's Human Rights Ordinance granting civil rights protections in housing, employment, and access to public facilities on the basis of, among other categories, sexual and gender identity.

Sometimes in the same breath that the parents I interviewed noted few instances of overt hostility and homophobia in their lives, they reported that they still had to prepare for the worst, especially where their children were concerned. Despite parents feeling that more individuals with discriminatory views feel compelled to keep their opinions to themselves than in the past, blatant displays of homophobia (as well as overt expressions of sexism and racism) could still can pop up in their lives in sudden and traumatic ways. Feeding these concerns are stories that parents hear of uncommon, but persisting, experiences of violent attacks, parents losing custody of children, and LGBT and gender-nonconforming youth committing suicide due to bullying. Although there is a sense among respondents that things are "getting better," parents painfully expect that things can also get worse. The lives of the families that I interviewed are heavily shaped by the persistence of heterosexism and homophobia in society and the seemingly contradictory views of the present and the future created by these conditions.

In this chapter, I return to the primary questions of my study. What kinds of stigma do LGBT families with children experience? What kinds of stigma management strategies are used? How do their experiences and practices change over time? In doing so, I elaborate on what these experiences reveal about the persistence of heterosexism and homophobia for LGBT families in post-closet culture and how contradictory views of growing acceptance and looming danger are sustained. I discuss how the stigma experiences of LGBT families can expand scholarly understandings of stigma. I also consider the implications that my work has for political understandings of LGBT families. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my findings and suggest directions for future research.

Main Findings and Contributions to Stigma

Drawing on accounts from interviews conducted with 51 LGBT families with children living in Northern California, I argue that their experiences of stigma are subtle, at times nebulous, and—compared to experiences of overt hostility and discrimination—easily overlooked. However, these stigma experiences, and how parents manage them, heavily shape the creation and day-to-day lives of families. These experiences can be broken down into two categories: (1) anticipated stigmas, or the fear that oneself or one's family will encounter violence, discrimination, or prejudice on the basis of their LGBT identities or queer family structure in the immediate or distant future; and (2) microaggressions, or subtle forms of insults, invalidations, and modes of discrimination that are consciously and unconsciously deployed in day-to-day interactions. These accounts also help us understand how parents spatially and temporally map stigma and the consequences this mapping has for a range of family practices.

Although LGBT parents may experience their lives "getting better" in that there are *fewer* laws in place enshrining discrimination against them and they are *less likely* to encounter overt hostility and hatred in daily social interactions than in the recent past, the prevalence of anticipated stigma and microaggressions illustrates the persisting, haunting presence of homophobia and the ongoing legacy of heterosexism in their lives. Scholarship on racism and sexism have also noted, despite highly dubious societal claims that we are in a "post-racial" and "post-gender" moment that has resolved past issues of racism and sexism, prejudice and discrimination continue to persist through institutional logics and microaggressions that do not rely on deliberate intent on the part of individuals (Acker, 1990; Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967; Sue, 2010; Swim et al, 1995).

Despite the seeming innocuous nature of many of these experiences, they have a widespread and extensive influence on family creation and day-to-day family practices. Anticipated stigma and microaggressions affect a range of practices for LGBT families including: methods for having children, legal interventions taken in family building, how children refer to their parents, naming children, where families choose to live, which schools children attend, parent volunteerism in schools, and the degree to which a family is out. Families' experiences and management of stigma also varied according to the age of children and position in family life cycle.

The far-reaching influence that anticipated stigma and microaggressions have on the lives of LGBT families is not surprising given deeply-rooted ties between heteronormativity and conceptions of "normal" families. Despite growing changes in the types and configurations of families throughout the United States (Fischer and Hout, 2006), notions of what families "are" and "ought to be" are still strongly shaped by assumptions of heterosexual couples, gender

conventionality, and biologically-produced children (Butler, 2002; Oswald et al, 2005; Smith, 1993). However, the shifting demographics of families and the growing diversity of family configurations, including LGBT families, creates the potential for challenging these heteronormative family definitions and developing new ways to "do family" (Dunne, 2000; Powell et al, 2010; Sullivan, 2004). Although this transformative potential exists, among the families I interviewed, I found this potential constrained in their stigma management strategies, which heavily drew on normative family ideologies as a means of enacting "protective normalcy" in response to concerns they had about stigma they or their children may experience in the near and distant future. These findings highlight some of the limits to the transformative potential of LGBT families discussed in other scholarship (Clarke, 2002; Dunne, 2000; Padavic and Butterfield, 2011; Sullivan, 2004; Weston, 1991) and highlights the homonormativity embedded in many of their stigma management strategies.

In the following sections I will expand on these findings and their contributions to scholarship on stigma. The first section focuses on anticipated stigma, the second on microaggressions, and the third on the implications that temporal and spatial mapping of stigma has for LGBT families at different points in family life course.

Anticipated Stigma and Family Building

The uneven and, at times, ambiguous state of rights and social acceptance LGBT people experience is the foundation on which anticipated stigma rests and the ways in which LGBT families negotiate potential risks, discrimination, and prejudice through their family practices. In chapter 3, parents explained how anticipated stigma shaped their early family building practices. While existing scholarship on LGBT family building primarily focuses on challenges and concerns embedded in the process itself, I focus on how concerns and anxieties located in possible futures influence their early family practices. Two sets of related concerns drove much of the anticipated stigma reported by parents. The first set of concerns revolves around maintaining custody of children and legal recognition as parents. The second set revolves around maintaining social recognition of their families by extended kin and people outside of their families.

The first set of concerns revolved around maintaining parental rights and custody of children in the future. Respondents felt that both their LGBT identities and use of "non-conventional" means for having children, such as adoption and ART, created a context of legal ambiguity that would leave their legal parent status vulnerable in the future. However, for the majority of interviewed parents, this sense of vulnerability did not reflect their access to legal recognition as a parent at the time. Due to legal access to domestic partnerships, marriage, and "intent to parent" declarations in California, the majority of respondents had children in a context where, among couples, both parents were legally recognized. Despite the recognition they receive in the present, parents reported future concerns regarding custody if those laws were ever repealed, if they relocated to another state with more regressive laws, or, if a custody issue was brought to court, that these protections would be ineffectively enforced.

Many of these practices were shaped by concerns that families had over possible—though probabilistically unlikely—events or family crises that could leave parents vulnerable to losing custody. However, the stakes of these potential events are heightened by respondents feelings of vulnerability and concern based on their LGBT identities. Parents reported concerns about maintaining custody and full parental rights of children conceived with the help of a

gamete donor and/or a surrogate were heightened due to the possibility that a judge's potential heterosexist or homophobic biases may shape how they would adjudicate a custody dispute; especially when making a decision in relation to newly established and relatively untested laws. Or whether a non-biological parent would be more vulnerable in court if a couple separates and custody battle with a biological parent occurs, especially if the case is adjudicated in a state restricting access to same-sex marriage and/or second parent adoption. Parents also considered whether extended family would be supportive if tragedy befell their families, either through death or severe physical or psychological impediment of a partner. In those cases, respondents wondered if extended family would support them and, if not, will the legal recognition and autonomy of their families endure through court? Although respondents noted that these concerns were unlikely to ever come to fruition, the risk that they could occur was enough to shape their family creation practices.

Parent's management of future legal recognition was deeply embedded in decisions and practices related to family building. Their responses to these concerns, though influential, frequently blended into decisions and practices already considered in having children. However, these concerns heavily shaped the decisions that they made. These concerns affected the routes in which parents chose to have children (e.g. adoption versus ART) and choices made within those routes (e.g. types of adoption, how adoptive families maintain contact with biological parents, using a known or an unknown sperm donor, using a family member as a gamete donor or a surrogate). In particular, these practices were shaped by broader strategies that respond to the cultural and legal preeminence allocated to biological parenthood under SNAF to either bolster recognition of one or both parents or to diminish the biological claims of donors, surrogates, and biological parents in adoptive families. In other words, the family building practices of LGBT families involves strategic efforts to create strong legally and culturally visible boundaries between the families they are creating and people outside of their families that could make claims on their children or disrupt their family autonomy in the future.

Parents also explicitly managed these anticipated legal issues by shrouding their families in layers of legal and pseudo-legal forms of recognition and protection. Although these extra layers of legal protection, such as applying for a second parent adoption, were presently redundant for families, these practices helped parents manage concerns related to the uncertainty of their lives (e.g. death or separation in the family, having to relocate to another state) and the uncertain efficacy of the legal system claiming to protect them. These findings highlight how the persisting influence of discriminatory laws in other states continue to affect the lives of LGBT families in states, like California, that do provide legal rights and recognitions have for LGBT families. These findings are not meant to diminish the immediate, detrimental impact that these laws have for LGBT families living in states with these discriminatory laws, but to highlight the pervasive, negative influence these laws can have on families currently living outside of those state borders.

The family building practices of LGBT families are also an example of how law shapes the construction of identity. Parent identity in these cases is defensively shaped to respond to ways in which others may attempt to legally and/or socially undermine their position as parents. In these cases, laws surrounding ART and second parent adoption are both a means through which to construct a parent identity and a catalyst driving respondents to draw upon a broad means of practices through which to enact and display parenthood. The forms of legal recognition that they draw on, while presently redundant, act as a safeguard to the practice of

those identities against potential backlash if legal rights are rescinded and/or a family relocates to an area where they have less rights or their efficacy is uncertain.

The second set of concerns revolved around social recognition of parents and their families. In particular, parents shaped their early family building practices to bolster recognition and acceptance from intimates, such as friends and extended family members, and outsiders, such as acquaintances and strangers. Similar to concerns about legal recognition, concerns about social recognition were often located in possible futures. In particular, parents were concerned about the level of acceptance their families would receive from extended kin and harassment and microaggressions that their families may encounter from intimates and outsiders. At times, concerns about social recognition entwined with concerns about legal recognition. In particular, respondents felt that the more individuals socially recognized and accepted their families, the less likely they were to legally or bureaucratically challenge their status as families or parents.

Anticipated stigma from intimates was also shaped by past negative experiences of disapproval from families of origin. Although many families note that they have been able to reconcile with families of origin and attain varying degrees of acceptance, some also note the potential fragility of this acceptance and attempt to bolster it by aligning their family practices with SNAF expectations that they believe of families of origin hold. Building on the sociological accounts scholarship, I find that parents manage anticipated stigma related to social recognition by drawing on a range of strategies that try to align their families closely with SNAF expectations. Similar to the array of family building practices used to manage anticipated stigma related to legal recognition, practices related to social recognition included: methods for having children, deciding which parent (if any) will be a biological parent, selection of donors and surrogates (e.g. known versus unknown donors, using a biological relative as a surrogate or donor, and race of surrogates and donors).

Parents noted how surname selection for children, and whether parents would share a surname, was also shaped by concerns related to social recognition. Shared family surnames and, more commonly, shared surnames between parents and children were utilized to ensure that all parents of a child were mutually recognized. Concerns about mutual social recognition were especially salient among families with asymmetric biological ties to children, with families especially concerned that non-biological parents would be socially discounted. Parents were also strategic about selection of children's surnames as a means to socially reinforce a child's connection to extended families who may be less likely to otherwise acknowledge kinship.

Through these practices parents sought to bolster ties with extended kin, increase the mutual social recognition of parents, and reduce instances in which their families are harassed or stigmatized by others in the future. Parents also used these practices to try to cultivate a sense of normalcy to bolster acceptance from others and to reduce the likelihood that children will internalize a negative sense of difference regarding their families in the future. Although many of the parents' practices to manage anticipated stigma related to legal and social recognition are banal ones that occur among all families (or, for some practices, among families using ART), the stakes of these practices were heightened by respondents feelings of vulnerability and concern based on their LGBT identities.

Respondents' family building practices are also a reminder of the ways in which anticipated stigma imposes constraints to the transformative potential of LGBT family practices. Although several respondents did express personal investment in particular SNAF expectations that shaped their practices, other families aligned their practices to these expectations because

they feared that if they did not it would leave them vulnerable to legal discrimination and social stigma in the future. The specific practices utilized by many families, including seeking additional layers of legal protection and expensive reproductive interventions, highlight the dependence of these strategies on class privilege. From choosing to undergo second parent adoptions, to the use of private adoptions or use of expensive forms of ART, to the use of legal interventions or even physically relocating oneself away from extended families and progenitors of children, in all of these cases respondents' are flexing their class power and privilege to contend with stigma that they expect may manifest in the future.

These findings also challenge the conflation between internalized stigma and anticipated stigma that occurs in much of the stigma scholarship. As Link and Phelan (2001) note, a key component to expressions of stigma are uneven power relationships between the stigmatized and "normative" members of society. The basis for the anticipated stigma experienced by LGBT families has to do with, on a broader level, the prevalence of heteronormativity in society at large that continues to allow an uneven power balance to be exerted on LGBT people. Although the foundation of this power imbalance is more unstable than it has been before and the frequency in which individuals exercise that power against (some) LGBT families may be lessened in post-closet society, its persistence is a reminder to LGBT families of their vulnerability and acts as a catalyst for anticipated stigma. In other words, anticipated stigma does not reflect internalized heterosexism or homophobia; it reflects LGBT parents' expectations that they remain vulnerable to discrimination and prejudice which, while perhaps less likely than in even the recent past, can still occur. The practices of these families are based on potential negative assessments and corresponding behavior from others, not a sense that they hold negative views of themselves. As other scholars have noted (Almack, 2007; Orne 2013) LGBT people and parents' actions are influenced by their awareness of the cultural pervasiveness of heteronormativity in ways similar to Du Bois' (1903) concept of double consciousness, in which marginalized groups learn to understand society both from their marginalized position and the position of the dominant, allowing them to understand the perceptions of the dominant without relying on that perspective to define themselves.

LGBT parents' family building practices also highlight connections between managing anticipated stigma and emotion work. While prior research has emphasized how anticipated stigma management practices operate as a means to avoid stigmatizing encounters that individuals expect to experience in particular contexts, limited attention has been paid to the emotional dimensions of these practices. These family building practices can be seen as a form of emotion work, or a means through which parents control or downplay fears that they have about the about the future. In particular, respondents highlight how anticipated stigma casts a shadow over family creation. Due to the possibility of future discrimination and prejudice, couples and parents must confront some of the worst possible scenarios that could occur to their families and some of the worst possible future versions of themselves, partners, and extended family members. Their family building practices not only help to prepare for and sidestep these potential dangers, they help to alleviate present day anxieties related to these concerns.

Finally, these findings illustrate connections between anticipated stigma and temporally contextualized theories of social action. Building on Emirbayer and Mische (1998)—who assert that social action in the present can be oriented toward expectations and concerns related to the future—I demonstrate how anticipated stigma experienced by LGBT families is an example in which the future looms heavily over the lives and actions of individuals. Even from as early as

prospective parenthood, concerns about stigma that their families may experience in the near and distant future have implications for a range of family activities, ranging from very banal ones (such as child surname selection) to seeking out extensive, and presently redundant, layers of legal recognition. In doing so, I also extend the temporal durations normally considered for anticipated stigma. While most work on anticipated stigma considers possible stigma one might encounter in the immediate and ongoing future, my work highlights how anticipated stigma can also be focused on distant future moments, a point I will return to again later in this chapter.

Microaggressions and Day-to-Day Stigma Experiences

While anticipated stigma illustrates how the daily lives of LGBT families are shaped by parents' expectations of future prejudice and discrimination, microaggressions point to daily, ongoing, subtle expressions of stigma that LGBT families experience in post-closet culture. Although overt hostility and discrimination were uncommon experiences for respondents, they did report ongoing experiences of stigma in the form of microaggressions. In chapter 4, I explore two common forms of microaggressions reported by parents that I categorize as moments of *misrecognition* and *hyperscrutiny*. Similar to anticipated stigma, these microaggressions influentially shape a number of LGBT family practices and modes of public display.

Misrecognition refers to instances in which strangers are unable to recognize LGBT family relations. It includes moments in which LGBT family relations are rendered invisible, or familial ties between partners or between a parent and child go unrecognized. It also includes moments in which family relations are misconstrued and reimagined through a heteronormative lens (e.g. a couple as "sisters," a parent as a "grandparent" or a "helpful friend"). Misrecognition can also manifest in the structure and logic of organizations that presume heterosexual, two-parent families. A common example includes forms that only include spots for a "mother" and a "father." Families who diverge from SNAF imaginaries in additional ways (e.g. older parents, interracial families, complex biogenetic ties) experienced misrecognition compounded by these multiple, marginalized identities.

Misrecognition contributes to the erasure of LGBT relationships (and other forms of marginalized families) in everyday life. As LGBT families are reimagined under a lens of heteronormativity, it is a tacit promotion of heterosexuality as a normative ideal. Although respondents note that misrecognition can, at times, be funny, especially given the strange array of relationships that strangers can imagine before considering a queer family structure, these moments are more often described as frustrating and annoying; creating a sense of non-belonging for families and additional interaction work for them in correcting strangers' false assumptions.

However, when LGBT family relations are recognized by strangers, respondents report experiences of hyperscrutiny. Hyperscruinty refers to the denial of privacy and forced accountability imposed on LGBT families in social interactions, usually in the form of strangers asking unprompted, detailed questions about family creation and day-to-day family practices. While these types of questions might not seem out of the ordinary in conversations with close friends and family, these questions were frequently asked by strangers and newly met acquaintances; calling for respondents to account for their family relations through a series of questions and justifications that would seem absurd and intrusive to ask different-sex couples under similar circumstances.

Common questions include: How did you get your children? Who is the "real" mother or father? Did you use the same [sperm donor/egg donor/surrogate] for all of your children? What do your children call you? Embedded in these questions are, usually implicit, value judgments that undermine the legitimacy of family relationships that do not fit SNAF expectations. Respondents reported questions often took on an antagonistic quality in which the content and language in which the question is asked undermine the legitimacy of their parent identities and family relations (e.g. identifying biological parents as "real" parents, referring to gamete donors and surrogates as "parents".)

These experiences operate as form of microinsult for LGBT families, with strangers denying them the same level of privacy normatively presumed for families. The influence of these moments for families is also exacerbated, as are all microaggressions, by the high frequency in which they occur, and the implicit assumptions embedded in the encounters. Similar to misrecognition, the sense of heightened visibility in public spaces can create a sense of abnormality and non-belonging for parents and, they fear, for their children. Experiences of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny were especially stressful, and more common, for new parents, who were still establishing their parenting identities and more vulnerable to emotional stress from having those identities discounted.

I categorize misrecognition and hyperscrutiny as microaggressions because they are frequent, ongoing occurrences in the daily lives of respondents. They are subtle, often causing parents to second guess the nature and intent of a comment or action. They also manifest quickly in social interactions, forcing respondents to quickly process the nature of the encounter and whether or not, and how, to respond to it. Furthermore, these stigmatizing experiences frequently occur outside of the conscious awareness of the perpetrator. Building on existing scholarship of microaggressions experienced by LGBT people, misrecognition and hyperscrutiny reflect tacit endorsements of heteronormativity and heterosexism (Nadel, 2013). They underlie insidiously pervasive cultural assumptions of the heterosexuality of families that, consequently, either renders LGBT families illegible or, when they are visible, they are a curiosity subject to public explanation and inquiry.

Reflecting other scholarship on microaggressions (Nadel, 2013; Sue, 2010), respondents were worried about the effects that these "little battles" would have on children's self-esteem regarding their families. These subtle, but frequent, moments of enacted stigma create a pervasive sense of being an outsider, that one is unwelcome. The ongoing surveillance for possible microaggressions, the emotional management of such actions, and concern about potential long term effects they could have on their children (and themselves) also contribute to heightened stress. The diffuse, ambiguous hostility fostered by microaggressions can also contribute to an ongoing sense of unease toward the future and, as a result, LGBT families' experience of anticipated stigma.

Respondents also noted challenges in their attempts to directly respond to these microaggressions. Because misrecognition and hyperscrutiny are usually unintentional and rooted in deeply held cultural beliefs informed by heteronormativity, respondents noted it was easy to be seen as the aggressor in such a situation and have their grievance dismissed or ignored, a microinvalidation in its own right. Parents also note that they want to avoid the perception that they are using their children as a vehicle to drive a political agenda, a common accusation lobbed at LGBT parents calling for policy or cultural changes meant to create inclusion for marginalized families. As a result, parents are circumspect about calling out

microaggressions and many note that they "choose their battles" carefully. They also try to frame their grievances in ways that connect their concerns to issues affecting a broader range of families. The challenges that families encounter responding to interpersonal and structural microaggressions are a reminder that the tentative acceptance offered to some LGBT families is, to an extent, based on their quiet assimilation into normative understandings of family and mainstream culture, not their capacity to change it.

However, families were not passive in dealing with microaggressions. Respondents noted how a number of their family practices and public interactions with strangers were shaped to preempt issues of misrecognition and undercut the normative judgments embedded in hyperscrutiny. In particular, I found that interviewed families' selection and daily use of parent terms were a part of their strategy for managing microaggressions. Parent terms functioned as a form of family display, or a family practice meant to be observed by others to connote particular family relationships (Finch, 2007). These practices were meant to heighten visibility and preemptively clarify family relations to reduce misrecognition. However, the selection of normative terms were also intended to keep families from standing out too much in public spaces, which could lead to greater hyperscrutiny.

Similar to the pervasive influence that anticipated stigma had on the family building practices of interviewed LGBT families, their day-to-day experiences of microaggressions highlight the persistence of stigma in the absence of more overt expressions of homophobia and heterosexism. It also highlights how the management of this stigma can affect deeply personal and emotionally charged aspects of family life, such as how one is referred to by their children. The use of parent terms as a mode of display to respond to potential microaggressions also highlights tensions that can emerge between using these practices as a form of stigma management *and* as a means through which new parents enact and build parenting identities and relationships with their children. The conflict between the personal meanings that families hold for parent terms and the public recognition of parent identities and families is heightened by the social illegibility of same-sex couples, of LGBT people as parents, and the absence of biological ties for one or both parents.

At a very basic level, respondents want their family identities validated through the recognition of others. However, the double-bind of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny highlights the paradox of public identity management for LGBT families. Either they are not seen as a part of the constellation of families and rendered invisible, or they are visible but represent a social breach that, even when the intent is supportive and trying to be inclusive, puts a spotlight on their families based on their difference. As the accounts from parents illustrate, negotiating these tensions is a difficult, ongoing process.

These findings expand the scholarship on microaggressions by highlighting new perspectives on the types of microaggressions experienced by LGBT people. While existing scholarship on microaggressions for LGBT people assert they are more likely to experience microassaults—or subtle, but deliberate, putdowns—my respondents reported that their experiences were more commonly microinsults and microinvalidations (Nadel, 2013; Sue, 2010). I argue that this reflects the ongoing transition into post-closet culture in which heterosexism and homophobia is either subtly enacted to avoid public sanction, or it is unconscious, reflecting the persisting influence of heteronormativity in society-at-large and, in particular, how people think about families, kinship, and parenthood.

The family practices utilized by respondents also build on the microaggressions literature by illustrating a broader range of strategies for responding to microaggressions. For instance, while Sue's (2010) model frames response and management of microaggressions almost exclusively in the moments in which they occur and their implications, I highlight how the management of ongoing microaggressions is enmeshed in the fabric of day-to-day life and the practice of family relations to mitigate the possibility of future microaggressions. In other words, the families I interviewed illustrate subtle and ongoing ways to respond to respond to subtle and ongoing microaggressions they experience; as opposed to calling them out in the moments in which they occur, which has shown limited success in other studies (Sue, 2010).

These practices also demonstrate how family displays that are used to respond to misrecognition and hyperscrutiny can be understood as a form of sociological accounting. While classic conceptions of accounts describe it as a form of response to justify committing a social breach or having a visible, stigmatized identity (Scott and Lyman, 1968), I argue that accounts also occur in these cases as a means of responding to misrecognition and hyperscrutiny; which implicitly discount LGBT family relations or demand that their validity be demonstrated. Furthermore, building on Garfinkel's (1967) observation that all behavior is understood and invisibly accounted for against social norms, I argue that all family practices can be mutually understood as an account and as a display operating at different degrees of intensity based on one's alignment with SNAF.

Finally, the reduced frequency and salience of misrecognition and hyperscrutiny as children grow older highlights how the stigma experiences of LGBT families change through family life course. It illustrates the importance of paying attention to position in family life cycle when discussing experiences of stigma and the ways in which families manage them. Also, as we have seen throughout these chapters, that perception of stigma and how families respond to it must be viewed not only through their current position in family life course but also how their present day actions are shaped by future-oriented concerns; a point discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Locating Stigma in Time and Place

A recurring theme in LGBT families' stigma experiences and management has been the importance of temporal and spatial contexts. Temporal contexts are important in two ways. We need to pay attention to how expectations about stigma in the future affects the lives LGBT families and how their experiences and management of enacted stigma change at different points of family life course. As discussed in chapter 3, the creation and practice of LGBT families is strongly influenced by anticipated stigma located in potential futures. Building on temporally nested theories of social action (Emirbayer, and Mische, 1998; Mead, 1932; Schultz, 1967), in which all meaningful social action is oriented in relation to time; with some actions more oriented to either the past, present, or the future, I find that concerns about the future occupy the minds and shape the actions of LGBT families. As a result, in order to understand the persisting influence of stigma for LGBT families with children, we need to pay attention not only to reports of prejudice and discrimination they *have* experienced but also what they expect they *might* and how those expectations shape their lives.

Similarly, stigma experience and management is also influenced by the ways in which LGBT families spatially map stigma (i.e. what locations do they imagine are supportive or stigmatizing) and the actual locations they inhabit. Although these themes are touched on in

chapters 3 and 4, chapter 5 expands on these ideas by illustrating how the temporal and spatial mapping of anticipated stigma influences where parents choose to live, the schools their children attend, and parents' strategies for managing family outness.

The selection of locations and schools was motivated by a desire to reduce feelings of difference children may experience and to find environments supportive of LGBT families and social stigma would be less salient. Families made distinctions between locations on various scales—comparing states down to cities and even neighborhoods. Aside from general inferences that parents made about locations based on state laws and reputations of areas for being LGBT friendly (or not), parents reported 3 features that they looked for in locations and schools: (1) Visibility of other LGBT families; (2) diversity of family configurations and a local culture that supports family diversity; and (3) signs that a location is safe and supportive for LGBT families. Parents selection of the spaces that their families inhabit—and ones that they do not—illustrates how anticipated stigma creates a restrictive map of where parents feel that they can live and their children can attend school feeling safe, supported, and included.

The most desired feature was the presence of other LGBT families with children. Respondents felt that the presence of other queer families would help reduce the sense of difference that children might experience by giving them the opportunity to see and have daily interactions with "families like theirs." They also believed it would reduce the frequency of stigmatizing moments as the people in these neighborhoods and schools would be more acclimated to the presence of LGBT families. Parents living in these locations also often benefited from the work of other LGBT parents in schools advocating for family inclusive policies and curriculum. For some parents, the work of these other families allows them to experience a sense of normalcy that comes from their inclusion in schools and communities without ever having to advocate for it.

Parents also desired locations and schools with a diverse array of families and a local family culture that celebrates diversity. They looked for communities and schools that embodied a broad array of family configurations that included ethnic and racial diversity, different religious affiliations, families with older parents, and nontraditional family configurations (e.g. single parents, adoptive families, and children living with custodial guardians who are not their parents, such as grandparents, aunts, or uncles.) Just as families desired locations with other LGBT families, many respondents sought out diverse schools and communities in order to ensure other aspects of their families that diverge from SNAF ideals were represented by others, highlighting how strategies for managing stigma related to marginalized identities can overlap. However, in locations without a strong LGBT family presence, family diversity and cultures that celebrate diversity were also seen as an alternative indicator of a supportive community. This was especially notable in school selection where, in the absence of other LGBT families, schools could express a philosophy that celebrates family diversity and incorporates queer families into a larger constellation of celebrated families.

Although all families abstractly wanted safe and supportive communities, in the absence of other LGBT families or local family diversity, respondents looked for locations where they could find some measure of support and possibly build communities of support around them. This theme was most prevalent among families living in the San Joaquin Valley. Although parents noted feeling like the locations in which they live are not the best for LGBT families, usually citing economic or personal reasons for staying, they continued to seek out schools that could provide some support to their families and looked to build, sometimes far reaching,

support networks for their families so they did not feel alone. The sense of immediate urgency and effort put into building those relationships was much greater for families living in areas with fewer visible queer families and without LGBT organizations that they could readily plug into for those connections. Families living in areas that they did not describe as generally welcoming to LGBT people also put a strong emphasis on finding safe and supportive schools for their children. Reflecting these concerns, the majority of families in the San Joaquin Valley have (or plan to have) their children attend selected charter and private schools. Parents report feeling that they wield more influence in charter and private schools, giving them more power to manage their children's potential stigma experiences.

Among interviewed families, class privilege was central to where they chose to live and schools their children attend. Parents draw upon class-based resources in choosing to live in states with strong legal protections for LGBT people, in expensive cities and neighborhoods with other LGBT families and local cultures that promote family diversity, and sending their children to charter and private schools where they feel they will they have more control over their experience. Several respondents note high costs of living and private school tuition as the price that they pay for feeling safe and included; or as one family put it, the "queer family tax."

Class privilege is also embedded in how respondents discussed diverse family neighborhoods and local cultures that celebrate diversity. Notably, class was conspicuously absent in all but 1 respondents discussions of diversity, highlighting how some forms of diversity are desirable and others are not. The complicity of LGBT families in this "desirable" diversity framework highlights how some parents, while trying to navigate anticipated stigma for their families, end up in collusion with broader systems of oppression that maintain the heteronormativity that stigmatizes them in the first place. It highlights the pragmatic tensions, and complex allegiances, that parents and families sometimes have to broader SNAF ideologies.

The temporal mapping of anticipated stigma also affected parents' strategies for managing their families' outness. Parents with young children were especially concerned about the stigma that they anticipated their children were likely to encounter in the future, particularly during adolescence. Responding to this anticipated stigma, parents of young children practiced *preemptive outness*, immediately coming out in new social contexts or upon meeting new individuals. Parents practiced preemptive outness in order to reduce the likelihood that their children will experience moments in which people make wrong assumptions about their family configurations and to ensure that the spaces their children inhabit are safe and supportive. In this way, preemptive outness blends with strategies used by parents to preempt day-to-day instances of misrecognition. However, one of the primary concerns that parents reported regarding microaggressions were the lasting effects they might have on their children's self-esteem. As a result, the motives behind preemptive outness simultaneous respond to multiple, interrelated temporal contexts, managing concerns related to microaggressions in the present and anticipated stigma located in children's futures.

However, parents' expectations that their children would encounter stigma as they grow older was realized in the experiences of families with older children. Parents with older children noted that stigmatizing experiences did increase for many of their children and that they had less capability to control their children's environment to shield them from it. As the experience of stigma moved primarily from parents' anticipated stigma to children's enacted stigma, parents transitioned from practicing preemptive outness to practicing *selective outness*, in which they at least partially move into closets in some contexts so that their children could choose whether or

not to disclose their family configurations in social interactions. In other words, although parents attempted to mitigate the amount of stigma children experienced when they were young and tried to cultivate a strong sense of self so that they would be more resilient to homophobia and heterosexism, parents also shifted strategies in order to give children more control over how they could respond to potentially hostile situations and people. This included enabling a broad array of strategies for managing potential stigma that would not have been available to children if parents were prominently out, such as passing.

Examining the day-to-day coming out strategies of parents offers several important insights into stigma scholarship. Exploring these strategies improve our conceptualization of anticipated stigmas by pushing our understanding of the range of projected time affecting actions and concerns. Similar to the family creation practices discussed in chapter 3, the outness strategies of parents are primarily focused on concerns of future social stigma and discrimination. Although much of the scholarship on anticipated stigma focuses on ongoing experiences of stigma located in a generalized future (i.e. things that one might generally expect to happen in the course of one's day-to-day life), my findings highlight how anticipated stigma may be oriented toward specific, distant points in the future as well. In addition, parents shifting outness strategies also highlight how management of anticipated stigma associated with specific points in time—such as children's adolescence and young adulthood—adjusts as their temporal orientation with that period of time changes. Similarly, identifying spatial arrangements of stigma highlights how families imagine *where*—in addition to *when*—threat resides and the emotion work embedded in being able to temporally and spatially locate stigma away from one's self amidst persisting, uncertain, and ambiguous heterosexism and homophobia in society.

The preemptive outness strategies of parents also expand documented strategies for managing anticipated stigma. Most scholarship on anticipated stigma up to this point has focused on discreditable—as opposed to discredited—groups and finds that strategies for managing anticipated stigma revolve around passing (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009). Although LGBT identities are usually considered a discreditable group, with the capacity, for some, to pass as heterosexual or as cisgender, LGBT parents noted that logistical and ethical issues that frequently made passing undesirable and, at times, not possible. Parents with young children described feeling that it was important to be out in order to demonstrate to their children that they had nothing to hide and, ironically, to avoid their children feeling that their families were problematically different. Such families drew on strategies of preemptive outness to confront any negative responses to their families head on so that their children will not have to. Preemptive outness is not a strategy of passing, parents are very upfront about their family structure and individual identities, nor is it a strategy of covering, with families putting their queer identities preemptively front and center in order to clarify, as well as assess, any problems in advance.

If anything, this strategy has more in common with Goffman's (1963) notion of "normification", in which stigmatized individuals push back against the stereotypes and negative valuations associated with their identities. Interviewed parents came out with an insistence on ensuring that their families, and especially their children, do not receive any negative treatment. In fact, many families spoke of their hope that others interacting with their families would help to further banish any assumptions that LGBT families were any different from heterosexual ones and that the only differences that do arise result from the wrongful application of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. However, it is also important to note how their use of preemptive outness is also shaped by most parents' expectations of being safe and receiving support from

strangers while doing so. These practices, which are mediated by both concerns regarding stigma in the future and general expectations of safety in the present, highlight the ongoing tensions between acceptance and persisting heterosexism and homophobia in post-closet culture.

However, I am not arguing that LGBT families do not engage in practices of covering and passing. For instance, in practicing selective outness, parents tried to downplay the extent to which their LGBT identities and queer family structures were immediately visible in child-centered spaces, such as schools. In doing so, parents attempted to give their adolescent and teenage children control over how people understood about their families so that they could make decisions on what people know based on their own comfort and sense of safety. The anticipation that children may want, or need, to be able to pass or cover in relation to their family structure is a useful reminder that it is not always in the best interests of individuals to "come out" and that we need to consider the motives behind coming out in particular social contexts and how these choices are socially embedded in day-to-day life.

Parents' outness strategies also highlight how their actions are interconnected with their children's (projected) actions to create a family stigma management strategy. Rather than thinking of the stigma management strategies used by parents or children as individual practices, we need to think about the ways in which they illustrate how, as a family, their actions are oriented toward the management of children's stigma experiences in adolescence.

In some ways, this temporal and spatial management of stigma, all to the goal of protecting children from stigma in the present and preparing them for dealing with it themselves reflects strategies of racial socialization used by families of color to prepare their children for racial discrimination that their children are expected to encounter through life. However, while racial socialization scholarship primarily focuses on discursive and educational strategies for preparing children for dealing with racism, such as verbally discussing or modeling how children can respond to racist comments and actions, or drawing on cultural information to build a greater sense of in-group culture and esteem (Hughes et al, 2006), the families I interviewed illustrate how less direct practices, such as choosing and shaping the environments families reside in, might also be thought of in conjunction to these socialization practices in mitigating the social stigma and discrimination children encounter.

Similar to parents' selection of where to live and schools children attend, managing outness is shaped by class privilege. For instance, several preemptive outness practices—including seeking support from school officials and volunteering at schools— required comfort maneuvering and speaking with professionals, and a flexible work schedule that allows one the time to volunteer. The use of class-based resources to practice these stigma management strategies is a crucial reminder about the potential limitations that working class and poor LGBT families may encounter in managing stigma compared to the predominantly privileged families interviewed, who can flex economic resources and cultural capital to control environments and socially maneuver within them. It also highlights how families more closely aligned to SNAF expectations— such as being middle or upper class—benefit from concrete material advantages and easier engagement with social environments that presume these resources.

Cultural and Legal Implications

Protective Normalcy and the Transformative Potential of LGBT Families

The accounts from parents regarding anticipated stigma and how they manage it highlights the important role that cultivating a sense of normalcy plays in their strategies and, in turn, their day-to-day family practices. Stigma management strategies centered around cultivating a sense of normality for children also frequently involved aligning family practices with SNAF expectations. I argue that these practices illustrate limits to the transformative potential of LGBT families, especially ones able to leverage class and racial privilege, while also highlighting the ambivalence in which many families engage in normative practices. This ambivalence emerges from the limited ideological investment families had with many SNAF ideals while still pragmatically enacting some of them as part of the their family's anticipated stigma management strategy. I use the term "protective normalcy" to describe this pragmatic enactment of heteronormative SNAF ideals in order to cultivate a sense of normalcy for children.

Protective normalcy involves enacting normative family ideals centered around a racially homogenous, legally bound (heterosexual) couple, with normative gender expressions, and children biogenetically related to (both) parents. It also involves, in contrast to Weston's (1991) expansive accounts of queer kinship, maintaining strong social and legal boundaries demarcating who is family and who is not. Reflecting other critiques of the conditional acceptance that LGBT people experience in post-closet culture, acceptance is contingent on families challenging oppressive systems based on classism, heteronormativity, and white privilege as little as possible (Duggan, 2003; Seidman, 2002).

In early family building, normalcy is enacted by aligning decisions related to family building with what parents think extended family, friends, and sometimes strangers imagine as normal and acceptable. Examples include: methods for having children, selection of surrogates and donors, and selection of family and children's surnames. These practices align with normative family expectations by racial (and particularly white) homogeneity in families, having children biogenetically related to parents, and engaging in "affinity practices" (Mamo, 2007) that socially display ties between parents and children (e.g. choosing a donor with a similar appearance as nonbiological parents, parents and children sharing surnames, etc.). It is also reflected in respondents' interests in constructing clear boundaries on who is, and who is not, part of their family (e.g. donors, surrogates, biological parents of adopted children) and the "ontological choreography" (Thompson, 2005) performed in conjunction with legal authorities, adoption agencies, and fertility clinics to create and bolster these boundaries. Although there were exceptions among respondents whose families maintain ongoing contact with donors, surrogates, and biological parents so that children are not kept in the dark about their biological and cultural ancestry, these relationships are frequently practiced in the midst of legal contexts that give parents great power over the relationship and the ability to end it if their autonomy is threatened.

These normative expectations also affected the selection and ongoing use of parent terms for families with young children; who balance personal and identity building aspects of terms alongside the competing desire to be socially recognized as a family by others without seeming "too far out there" and on display as a queer family. Balancing public legibility and personal meanings associated with terms also involved parents negotiating the gendered meanings associated with parent terms. For instance, lesbian parents who would have preferred their parent terms to align with their masculine gender expressions (e.g. "daddy") ended up using either gender normative parent terms (e.g. "mommy", "momma") or terms whose meanings were not

immediately present to others in the locations they live (e.g. "babbo") in order to balance concerns related to public legibility and visibility as a queer family.

Cultivating normalcy was also a strategy shaping where families choose to live and how they manage their outness. In particular, parents of young children look for ways to keep children in a "charmed space" where they do not experience their family structure as a form of salient difference. In doing so, parents equated children experiencing a sense of normalcy with the cultivation of a greater sense of self-esteem and resilience to heterosexism and homophobia which parents felt children would need to combat stigma that they were likely to encounter in the future. However, the realization of this "charmed space," as noted in the previous section, involved, for many respondents, leveraging middle and upper class economic resources and privilege to select and control the environments that their families inhabit.

Although LGBT families have been critiqued for their capacity to embody and reinforce heteronormativity and SNAF (Duggan, 2003; Warner, 1999), it is important to consider the motives and contexts in which such behaviors occurs. LGBT families with children protectively cultivate normalcy, but in a strained, contingent way. In this respect, I argue that LGBT families simultaneously occupy both the queer *and* heteronormative family temporalities that Halberstam (2005) theorizes. On one hand, they do organize daily life and their sense of time around normative ideals of reproductive family life. However, the way they structure those normative practices is also constrained by two forces related to queer temporalities: (1) Persisting heteronormativity in how family life is structured and (2) acknowledging and preparing for the future uncertainty and danger that is associated with a queer lives.

Jasbir Puar (2007) notes the attendant dangers that remain for LGBT people complicit with homonormative regimes and that these spectral alliances do not erase the possibility of violence:

> "The spectral resistances to gay marriage, gay adoptive and parental rights, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policies, and the privatization of sexuality entail that the protection of life granted through national belonging is a precarious invitation at best. Seond, there is no organic unity or coheison among homonationalisms; these are partial, fragmentary, uneven formations implicated in the pendular momentum of inclusion and exclusion, some dissipating as quickly as they appear. Thus, the cost of being folded into life might be quite steep, both for subjects who are interpellated by aspire to the tight inclusiveness of homonormativity offered in this moment, and for those who decline or are declined entry due to the undesirability of their race, ethnicity, religion, class, national origin, age, or bodily ability" (10).

I argue though that it is precisely in this space of spectral alliances, potential threats, resistance, and exclusions that we see the blurring of queer and normative temporalities.

Although I do find reflections of homonormativity in respondent's' family practices, I also found simultaneous moments of transgression and a deeper negotiation of normalcy that is largely predicated on the protection of their children. One spot where this is seen most clearly is when families attempt to negotiate competing desires of social recognition with the development of a personally meaningful parent identities and family practices. For instance, some parents draw on ambiguous parent terms, such as "Babbo", inflected with transgressive, but important personal meanings that challenge normative notions of gendered parenting. However, the same

family may also use a term's public illegibility, considered a problem for many families, to their advantage to selectively change their public narrative of a term as needed to maintain a sense of safety and normalcy (i.e. it is referred to as a child's made up name for parent in some contexts and Italian for "daddy" in others). A similar tension appears in the practice of preemptive outness, in which a sense of normalcy for children (i.e. not being aware of the social salience and difference associated with their family structure) is realized through parents aggressively coming out in new social contexts and aggressively seeking out support for their children in these spaces. As Berkowitz (2009) has noted in her response to normative critiques of LGBT families, we need to pay attention to the ways in which normative and transformative qualities can exist simultaneously in actions.

Taking this perspective one step further, I argue we also need to pay close attention to the motivations behind actions. It is not just the ideological investment in normative family ideologies that account for their continued reproduction, especially among queer populations, who continue to enact them for pragmatic, rather than ideological reasons. While some families did express an ideological commitment to assimilation or homonormative LGBT family ideals— or the idea that they really are no different and that should be a political goal—other families expressed ambivalence to these ideals and noted that they pragmatically engaged in SNAF practices as a means of protecting their children from anticipated stigma in the present and in the future. Furthermore, even as many families choose to remain complicit to these heteronormative structures and enact "protective normalcy", there are also moments when they directly challenge these structures. Families note that they often engage in "choosing their battles" and having to balance concerns with enacting change and the consequences that too aggressive or demonstrative actions may have for their children, even while they struggle with the effects that these heteronormative practices have on them as well.

We benefit from a broader, more nuanced understanding of the actions and motivations behind queer families' normative practices. It allows us to avoid the trap of thinking that LGBT families with children exist in a "post-gay" world free from stigma and discrimination; resulting in a privileged sense of normalcy. If anything, the feeling that families can "forget that they are gay" emerges as another method of stigma management; revealing a complex and pervasive array of associated family practices motivated by anticipated stigma. Two, it helps us have a more comprehensive picture of why LGBT families do draw normalcy in their family practices. For many, it is a protective measure; by drawing on heteronormative practices, as well as class and white privilege, they do so as a route to protect or manage stigma that their children may encounter. This does not change the fact that many of these practices do reinforce systems of oppression, or absolve families complicit in these practices. However, my findings reveal a much more complex story behind their enactment. Identifying the pragmatic and defensive character of LGBT families' normative practices, shaped by broader structural forces and uncertainty for safety in the future, also points to directions for cultural and policy change to enlarge the possibility of transformative change for these families.

Anticipated Stigma and the State of LGBT Family Policy

The stigma experiences reported by the LGBT families that I interviewed highlight the limitations of legal rights, such as same-sex marriage and second parent adoption, as a singular solution to heterosexism and homophobia. Although accounts from respondents highlight the importance of these legal improvements, both as a tool for family creation and maintaining a

sense of emotional safety, they also illustrate that increasing their access to legal rights and recognitions *alone* will not eradicate the stigma that they experience. These findings are especially important given how much the same-sex marriage movement has put a spotlight on the rights and privileges of marriage, which while important for many families, ignores the subtle persistence of heterosexism and homophobia in their daily lives. Despite legal gains, LGBT families still have to negotiate a complex landscape of social interaction that affects their life chances.

Although nationwide access to same-sex marriage is an important step in ensuring the rights and recognition of LGBT families, marriage is not the only, or best, means for ensuring legal recognition. Laws focused specifically on recognizing parenthood, such as California's intent to parent laws or second parent adoption, which do not presume or require that parents are a romantic couple or that both parents are biologically related to children, better accommodate the range of family configurations and conditions in which people, LGBT or not, become parents. Intent to parent laws are also more accommodating of families having children using ART and adoption by allowing easier identification of who is intended to be a legal parent in situations where normative cultural and legal assumptions fall short. The expansion of laws that allow the possibility of legal recognition of more than 2 parents, such as California's S.B. 274, which allows, in rare circumstances for courts to decide that it is in a child's best interest to have more than 2 individuals recognized as parents, also opens possibilities for greater legal recognition of LGBT families that span across households and multiple couples. However, the expansion of laws related to family recognition must still be carefully worded and implemented in ways that allow individuals constructive control over family creation without granting the State unreasonable authority to impose additional parentage and family relations unwillingly (Minnow, 1991).

My findings, focused on LGBT families in California, highlight how state-level discriminatory laws are not a only a problem for LGBT people and families living in those locations but also affect the creation and practice of families in states that do grant legal rights and recognition. As an increasingly mobile society, respondents noted with fear the possibility of having to relocate to places where their legal recognition as parents, and custody of children, could become vulnerable. As a result, parents shaped the creation of their families accordingly to respond to the worst, possible circumstances regarding relocation and changes in political climate. These concerns were especially salient for families who experience heightened marginalization, including families with transgender parents and families removed from SNAF imaginary in multiple ways (e.g. older families, multiracial and transracial families, etc.). As long as a public discourse of heterosexism and homophobia persists, whether it is dominant or not, I argue that LGBT families will continue to hedge their bets on relocation and possible political backlash by seeking out as many ways in which they can claim legal and social recognition and, in doing so, will go above beyond what might be seen as basic requirements for obtaining legal and social recognition. One way to respond to these concerns would be to move away from seeking state-level rights and recognitions for LGBT people and families and focus on national level reform.

Even with access to greater legal rights and recognition, the persistence of subtle (and not so subtle) expressions of heteronormativity in family cultures and spaces will also continue to shape the lives of LGBT families. For example, although families living in conservative, rural, and semi-rural locations in California had the same access to legal rights and protections as

families living in suburban and urban locations, they expressed greater concerns relating to day-to-day experiences of stigma. For example, respondents living in these locations experienced a lack of inclusion and cultural awareness in school curriculums, daycares, and interactions with strangers. As some families experienced amidst the Proposition 8 campaign, the general lack of support for same-sex marriage and LGBT parenting fostered a sense of diffuse hostility and discomfort. These findings indicate that we cannot presume that access to legal rights and recognitions alone can address how heterosexism and homophobia affect the lives of LGBT families. We also need to pay attention to local family cultures and attitudes toward LGBT people when assessing the the level of support available to LGBT families,

Even among families living in locations described as LGBT family friendly, such as the California Bay Area, respondents noted limits to this acceptance; especially when they challenged heteronormative school policies or advocated for LGBT-family inclusive school curriculums and events. The acceptance and support that respondents had come to expect from school officials and fellow parents was put to the test when they called for changes to events that presume heterosexual couple families, challenge school endorsements of organizations hostile to LGBT people and families (e.g. Boy Scouts of America, Mormon Church), or advocate for the integration of age appropriate discussions of LGBT people and families into school curriculums. These conflicts highlight the limits of the conditional acceptance that LGBT families experience. In these moments, it most apparent that their acceptance is tied to their ability to integrate into communities and schools without disrupting heteronormative family beliefs or policies.

The experiences of LGBT families in California, and other states at the vanguard of LGBT legal recognition and cultural acceptance, are a window into the kinds of issues and struggles that LGBT families across the United States are likely to experience going forward in time. While the ongoing diffusion of legal recognitions is likely to help mitigate some of the concerns expressed by the families that I interviewed, and possibly families in other states in the future, my findings illustrate that LGBT families will continue to experience anticipated stigma and microaggressions related to the subtle and persistent presence of heteronormativity in day-to-day understandings of what families "are" or "ought to be". We need to be responsive not only to instances of direct hostility toward LGBT families, but the ways in which day-to-day understandings of families and subtle microaggressions create a sense of difference and concern for LGBT parents and their children. As my respondents have noted and advocated for, proactive policies, such as inclusive school curriculums that create spaces for acknowledgment, celebration, and dialogue about family diversity and gender expression, are instrumental to unpacking and changing these cultural assumptions. As definitions of families expand and the ways in which kinship is practiced continue to diversify and grow, addressing these cultural assumptions will be of increasing importance to all families, not just LGBT ones.

Directions for Future Research

In this dissertation I have attempted to expand scholarly understandings of the stigma experiences and management strategies of LGBT families with children. In particular, I have made the argument that, even with growing social acceptance and legal recognition for LGBT people and families, we must be attentive to the subtly, persisting influence of heterosexism and homophobia in their lives. Among the families I have interviewed, I have highlighted how anticipated stigma and microaggressions shape the creation of families and influence the practice of their day-to-day lives. However, this study has focused on a limited sample of 51 families

with a particular set of characteristics (i.e. predominantly white, educated, affluent, living in California) and my findings should be approached cautiously in making statements about the experiences of LGBT populations as a whole. The limits and boundaries of my findings though indicate directions for future research.

Although I have argued that the experiences of LGBT families living in California—a state on the forefront of the growing legal and cultural recognition granted in post-closet culture —can be seen as an indicator of the experiences and issues that families in other parts of the United States are likely to experience if legal rights and recognitions for LGBT people continue to accrue, additional research on families in other states will help to enrich our understanding of this phenomenon as it unfolds. The need for exploration into the experiences of families in other states with different cultural and legal contexts is even more pressing with recent nationwide recognition of same-sex marriage. This work will also be especially helpful in distinguishing between parent recognition rights for same-sex couples from other important aspects of recognition highlighted in my study, especially those related to families constructed using ART and adoption. As families in different locations of my California sample have demonstrated, even when legal recognitions are the same though, the cultural context and social resources available to families also matter. A deeper exploration of how families in other contexts conceptualize, locate, experience, and manage stigma is needed.

Another limitation of this study is the cross-sectional approach used to make tentative arguments about change over time through family life course. I have tried to mitigate the absence of longitudinal data by using a combination of families with young children reporting current experiences and projected concerns alongside the present day and retrospective accounts of families with older children; looking for ways in which their narrative corroborate and diverge. However, there are dangers with using retrospective accounts as these narratives, alongside present-day accounts, can be shaped by ongoing concerns and ideals of families. Further research on the temporal themes discussed in this study may take a longitudinal approach interviewing the same families at different points in family life course to expand on my tentative findings.

Populations underrepresented in this study also highlight the need for further, demographically targeted research. One such population are families with transgender parents. Two transgender parents and their partners did participate in this study and provided rich details on experiences of stigma and stigma management. I found that, in many ways, the experiences of these families mirrored the larger sample, noting that anticipated stigma and microaggressions related to public recognition shaped their family practices. Unsurprisingly though, I also found that their stigma experiences went beyond the subtle forms described by cisgender parents, expressing a greater fear of overt hostility in daily life that heavily shaped their family practices. However, the small number and focus on transgender parents in same-sex couples severely limits the breadth of these findings and calls for further research.

Further exploration of the experiences of transgender parents and their families, an understudied topic in both scholarship on families and LGBT populations, could also help further elucidate how kinship is normatively imagined through lenses of gender, embodiment, heteronormativity, and biological relatedness. The complex ways in which gender and embodiment are embedded in normative notions of parenting make transgender and gender nonconforming parents an interesting population to further examine these underlying cultural beliefs and explore ways in which they are undone and reconfigured in contemporary society.

Additional research can also more closely explore the stigma experiences and management of LGBT families of color and working class families. Further research is needed exploring the intersection of race and LGBT families. Although this project has been attentive to the interweaving issues of stigma and social recognition for multiracial and transracial families in my sample, this is a limited sample and also does not adequately address the experiences of monoracial families of color and non-white interracial families. As other research has noted (Mezey, 2008; Moore, 2011), life course patterns and expectations surrounding families can also vary for LGBT people in different racial and ethnic groups and attention to specificity in the intersecting identities of parents is needed.

Similarly, as my mostly affluent respondents have illustrated, many of their preemptive stigma management strategies involved leveraging economic resources and privileges (e.g. school selection, volunteering at schools, expensive methods for having children, choosing where to live, costly overlapping legal processes). Among the less affluent families in my sample, there preemptive strategies, such as where they could live and send their children to school, were limited and some reported having more reactive strategies to dealing with heterosexism and homophobia their families experienced. Further research is needed though to more deeply explore the stigma management practices of working class and poor families. As other family scholarship has shown (Fischer and Hout, 2006; Hansen, 2004; Stacey, 1990), these families may actually be the vanguard of transformative practices and less inclined (and able) to engage in protective normalcy.

<u>References</u>

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2), 139-158.

Allan, G. (1980). A note on interviewing spouses together. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42(1), 205-210.

Almack, K. (2005). What's in a name? The significance of the choice of surnames given to children born within lesbian parent households. *Sexualities*, 8(2), 239-254.

Almack, K. (2007). Out and about: Negotiating the layers of being out in the process of disclosure of lesbian parenthood. *Sociological Research Online*, 12(1)

Anderson, E. (2002). Openly gay athletes: Contesting hegemonic masculinity in a homophobic environment. *Gender and Society*, 16, 860–877.

Anderson, E. (2011). Masculinities and sexualities in sport and physical cultures: Three decades of evolving research. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(5), 565-578.

Arksey, H. (1996). Collecting data from joint interviews. *Social Research Update*, 15.

Armesto, J. C., & Shapiro, E. R. (2011). Adoptive gay fathers: Transformations of the masculine homosexual self, *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 7(1-2), 72-92.

Bailey, L. (2001). Gender shows: First time mothers and embodied selves. *Gender & Society*, 15(1), 110-129).

Baxter, L. A. (1987). Symbols of relationship identity in relationship cultures. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 4, 261-280.

Benkov, L. (1994). *Reinventing the family*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

Bergen, K. M., Suter, E. A., and Daas, K. L. (2006). "About as solid as a fish net": Symbolic construction of a legitimate parental identity for nonbiological lesbian mothers. *Journal of Family Communication*, 6(3), 201-220.

Bergstrom-Lynch, C. A (2012). How children rearrange the closet: Disclosure practices of gay, lesbian, and bisexual prospective parents. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 8(2), 173-195.

Berk, H. L. (2015). The legalization of emotion: Managing risk by managing feelings in contracts for surrogate labor. *Law & Society Review*, 49(1).

Berkowitz, D. (2009). Theorizing gay and lesbian parenting: Past, present, and future scholarship. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 1, 117-132.

Berkowitz, D., & Marsiglio, W. (2007). Gay men: Negotiating procreative, father, and family identities. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 366-381.

Berry, M., Cavazos Dylla, D. J., Barth, R. P., and Needell, B. (1998). The role of open adoption in the adjustment of adopted children and their families. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 20(1/2), 151-171.

Biblarz, T., & Stacey, J. (2010) How does the gender of parents matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 3-22.

Blumstein, P. & Scwartz, P. (1983). *American couples*. New York, NY: Morrow.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, J. P. (2002). Is kinship always heterosexual? *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 13(1), 14-44.

Butler-Sweet, C. (2011). 'Race isn't what defines me': exploring identity choices in transracial, biracial, and monoracial families. *Social Identities*, 17(6), 747-769.

Carmichael, S. & Hamilton, C. (1967). *Black power: Politics of liberation*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Carrington, C. (1999). *No place like home: Relationships and family life among lesbians and gay men.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Cherlin, A. (1978). Remarriage as an incomplete institution. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84(3), 634-650.

Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Clarke, V. (2002). Sameness and difference in research on lesbian parenting. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 12, 210-222.

Cody, P., & Welch, P. (1997). Rural gay men in northern New England. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33(1): 51-67.

Collins, P.H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cooley, C. H. (1983). *Human nature and social order*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Coontz, S. (1992). *The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

D'Emilio, J. (1983). Capitalism and gay identity. In Snitow, A., Stansell, C., & Thompson, S. (1983), *Politics of desire: The politics of sexuality*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.

D'Emilio, J. & Freedman, E. B. (1988). *Intimate matters: A history of sexuality in America*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.

DaCosta, K. (2007). *Making multiracials: State, family and market in the redrawing of the color line*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Dean, J. J. (2014). *Straights: Heterosexuality in post-closeted culture*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Del Mino, K. A., Appleby, G., & Fisk, D. (2007). Lesbian mothers with planned families: A comparative study of internalized homophobia and social support. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 77(1), 165–173.

DeVault, M. L. (1999). Comfort and struggle: Emotion work in family life. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 561, 52-63.

Donovan, C., Heaphy, B. & Weeks, J. (1999). Citizenship and same-sex relationships, *Journal of Social Policy*, 28(4), 689-709.

Doucet, A. (2006). *Do men mother? Fathering, care, and domestic responsibility*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (1996). Affirmative action, unintentional racial biases, and intergroup relations. *Journal of Social Issues*, 11, 315-319.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of black folk*. Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg.

Duggan, L. (2003). *Twilight of equality: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Dunne, G. A. (2000). Opting into motherhood: Lesbians blurring the boundaries and transforming the meaning of parenthood and kinship. *Gender and Society*, 14(1), 11-35.

Earnshaw, V. A. and Quinn, D. M. (2012). The impact of stigma in healthcare on people living with chronic illnesses. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 17(2), 157-168.

Edelman, L.(2004). *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Emirbayer, M. & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *The American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962-1023.

Eskridge, W. (1999). *Gaylaw: Challenging the apartheid of the closet*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Finch, J. (2007). Displaying families. *Sociology*, 41(1), 65-81.

Fischer, C. & Hout, M. (2006). *Century of difference: How America changed in the last one hundred years*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation Publications.

Fisher, S. and Groce, S. (1990). Accounting practices in medical interviews. *Language and Society*, 19(2), 225-250.

Fox, B. (2009). *When couples become parents: The creation of gender in parenthood*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Gabb, J. (2005). Lesbian m/otherhood: Strategies of familial linguistic management in lesbian parent families." *Sociology,* 39(4), 585-603.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies of Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Gelderen, L., Gartrell, N., Bos, H. M. W., Rooij, F. B., & Hermanns, J. M. A. (2012). Stigmatization associated with growing up in a lesbian-parented family: What do adolescents experience and how do they deal with it? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(5), 999-1006.

Gianino, M. (2008). Adaptation and transformation: The transition to adoptive parenthood for gay male couples, *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 4(2), 205-243

Giddens, A. (1993). *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love, and roticism in modern societie*s. Thousand Oaks, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gillis, J. (1996). *A world of their own making: Myth, ritual, and the quest for family values*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

GLAAD. (2014). "Where we are on TV." glaad.org/whereweareontv14.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Goldberg, A. E., Kinkler, L. A., Richardson, H. B., and Downing, J. B. (2011). Lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples in open adoption arrangements: A qualitative study. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73, 502-518.

Gray, M. (2009). *Out in the country: Youth, media, and visibility in rural America*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Grotevant, H. D., McRoy, R. G., Elde, C. L., and Favel, D. L. (1994). Adoptive family system dynamics: Variations by level of openness in adoption. *Family Process*, 33, 125-146.

Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Hansen, K. V. (2004). *Not-so-nuclear families: Class, gender, and networks of care*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Harry, J. (1984). *Gay couples*. New York, NY: Praeger.

Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hays, S. (2003). *Flat broke with children: Women in the age of welfare reform*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Herek, G. M. (2007.) Confronting sexual stigma and prejudice: Theory and practice. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(4), 905-925.

Herek, G. M. (2009). "Hate Crimes and Stigma-Related Experiences Among Minority Adults in the United States: Prevalence estimates from a National Probability Sample." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(1), 54-74.

Hicks, G. R. & Lee, T. (2006). Public attitudes toward gays and lesbians. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51(2), 57-77.

Hill, J. S., Kim, S., & Williams, C. D. 2010. The context of racial microaggressions against indigenous peoples: Same old racism or something new? In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact*: 105–122. New York, NY: Wiley.

Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University Press.

Howell, S. (2006). *The kinning of foreigners: Transnational adoption from a global perspective*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E., Johnson, D., Stevenson, H., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(5), 747-770.

Human Rights Campaign. (2014). Parenting laws: Second parent adoption. www.hrc.org/statelaws.

Jacoby, A. (1994). Felt versus enacted stigma: A concept revisited. Evidence from a study of people with epilepsy in remission. *Social Science Medicine*, 38(2), 269-274.

Johnson-Hanks, J.A. and King, R. 2011. A conjuctural history of reproduction and adoption. In Johnson-Hanks, J.A., Bachrach, C.A., Morgan, S.P., & Kohler, H.P. *Understanding family change and variation: Toward a theory of conjunctural action*. New york, NY: Springer.

Johnston, M. P., & Nadal, K. L. (2010). Multiracial microaggressions: Exposing monoracism in everyday life and clinical practice. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 123–144). New York, NY: Wiley.

Jones, C. (2005). Looking like a family: Negotiation bio-genetic continuity in british lesbian families using donor insemination. *Sexualities*, 8(2), 221-237.

Katz, S. and Nevid, J. S. (2005) Risk factors with posttraumatic stress disorder symptomatology in HIV-infected women. *AIDS Patient Care and STDS*, 19(2): 110-120.

Kellas, J. K., LeClair-Underberg, C., & Normand, E. L. (2008). Stepfamily address terms: "Sometimes they mean something and sometimes they don't." *Journal of Family Communication*, 8(4), 238-263.

Keller, R. M., & Galgay, C. E. (2010). Microaggressive experiences of people with disabilities. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 241–267). New York, NY: Wiley.

Kenagy, G. P., & Bostwick, W. B. (2005). Health and social service needs of transgender people in Chicago. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 3(2/3), 57-66.

Lareau, A, (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race and family life.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lewin, E. (2009). *Gay fatherhood: Narratives of family and citizenship in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lindsay, J., Perlesz, A., Brown, R., McNair, R., de Vaus, D., & Pitts, M. (2006). Stigma or respect: Lesbian-parented families negotiating school settings. *Sociology,* 40, 1059-1077.

Link, B. G., Cullen, F. T., Struening, E., Shrout, P. E., and Dohrenwend, B. P. (1989). A modified labeling theory approach to mental disorders: An empirical assessment. *American Sociological Review*, 54(3), 400-423.

Link, B. G., Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363-385.

Lubbe, C. (2008). The experiences of children growing up in lesbian-headed families in South Africa. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 4(3), 325-359.

Mamo, L. (2007). *Queering reproduction: Achieving pregnancy in the age of technoscience.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Markowitz, F. E. (1998). The effects of stigma on the psychological well-being and life satisfaction of persons with mental illness. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 39(4), 335-347.

Mason, J. (2008). Tangible affinities and the real life fascination of kinship. *Sociology*, 42(1), 29–45.

McCarthy, J. R., Edwards, R., & Gillies, V. (2003). *Making families: Moral tales of parenting and step-parenting*. Durham, UK: Sociology Press.

McConahay, J. B. (1986). Modern racism, ambivalence, and the modern racism scale. In J. R Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 91-126). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Mead, G. H. (1932). *The philosophy of the present.* Chicago, Il: Open Court Publishing Company.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, & society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mercier, L. R., Harold, R. D. (2003). At the interface: Lesbian-parent families and their children's schools. *Children & Schools*. 25(1), 35-47.

Messner, M. (1992). *Power at play: Sports and the problem of masculinity.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Mezey, N. J. (2008). *New choices, new families: How lesbians decide about motherhood*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Miller, D. (2007). What is a relationship? Is kinship negotiated experience? *Ethnos*, 72(4), 535-554.

Mills, C. W. (1940). Situated actions and vocabularies of motive. *Annual Sociological Review*, 5(6), 904-913.

Minnow, M. (1991). Redefining families: Who's in & who's out?. *University of Law Review*, 62(2), 269-285.

Morgan, D. H. J. (1996). *Family Connections*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Morgan, D. H. J., (2011). *Rethinking family practices*. New York, NY: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Moore, M. (2008). Gendered power relations among women: A study of household decision making in black, lesbian stepfamilies. *American Sociological Review*, 73, 335-356.

Moore, M. R. (2011). *Invisible families: Gay identities, relationships, and motherhood among black women*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Nadal, K. L. (2010). Gender microaggressions and women: Implications for mental health. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Feminism and women's rights worldwide: Vol. 2. Mental and physical health* (pp. 155–175). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Nadal, K. L. (2013). *That's so gay!: Microaggressions and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Nadal, K. L., Issa, M., Leon, J., Meterko, V., Wideman, M., & Wong, Y. (2011). Sexual orientation microaggressions: "Death by a thousand cuts" for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8, 234–259.

Nadal, K. L., Issa, M.-A., Griffin, K., Hamit, S., & Lyons, O. (2010). Religious microaggressions in the United States: Mental health implications for religious minority groups. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 287–310). New York, NY: Wiley.

Nadal, K. L., Rivera, D. P., & Corpus, M. J. H. (2010). Sexual orientation and transgender microaggressions in everyday life: Experiences of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender individuals. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 217–240). New York, NY: Wiley.

Nadal, K. L., Skolnik, A., & Wong, Y. (2012). Interpersonal and systemic microaggressions toward transgender people: Implications for counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 6, 55–82.

Nadal, K. L., Vargas, V., Meterko, V., Hamit, S., & McLean, K. (2012). Transgender female sex workers: Personal perspectives, gender identity development, and psychological processes. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Managing diversity in today's workplace* (pp. 123–153). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Nadal, K. L., Wong, Y., Griffin, K., Sriken, J., Vargas, V., Wideman, M., & Kolawole, A. (2011). Microaggressions and the multiracial experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1, 36–44.

National Center for Lesbian Rights. (2015). Legal recognition of LGBT Families. www.nclrights.org.

National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce. (2009). "Adoption laws in the U.S." http://www.thetaskforce.org.

Orbuch, T. (1997). People's accounts count: The sociology of accounts. *Annual Review of Sociology,* 23, 455-78.

Orne, J. (2013). Queers in the line of fire: Goffman's stigma revisited. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 54, 229-253.

Oswald, R.F., Blume, L.B., & Marks, S.R. (2005). Decentering heteronormativity: A model for family studies, in Bengtson, V.L, Acock, A.C., Allen, K.R., Dilworth-Anderson, P., Klein, D.M. (ed) *Sourcebook of family theory & research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Oswald, R.O., & Coulton, L.S. (2003). Under the rainbow: Rural gay life and its relevance for family providers. *Family Relations*, 52, 72-81.

Padavic, I., & Butterfield, J. (2011). Mothers, fathers, and "mathers": Negotiating a lesbian co-parental identity. *Gender and Society*, 25(2), 176-196.

Parsons, T. and Bales, R. (1955). *Family, socialization,and interaction process.* Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Pascoe, C.J. (2007). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Pierce, C, Carew, J., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Willis, D. (1978). An experiment in racism: TV commercials. In C. Pierce (Ed.), *Television and education* (pp. 62-88). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Pinel, E. (1999). Stigma consciousness: The psychological legacy of social stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(1), 114-128.

Powell, B., Bolzendahl, G., Claudia, G., Steelman, L. C. (2010). *Counted out: Same-sex relations and Americans' definitions of family*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Puar, J. K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Quinn, D. M. & Chaudoir, S. R. (2009). Living with a concealable stigmatized identity: The impact of anticipated stigma, centrality, salience, and cultural stigma on psychological distress and health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(4), 634-651.

Raleigh, E. (2012). Are same-sex and single adoptive parents more likely to adopt transracially? A national analysis of race, family structure, and the adoption. *Sociological Perspectives*, 55(3), 449-471.

Reissman, C. (1993). *Narrative Analysis.* London: ENG: Sage Publications Press.

Risman, B. (1998). *Gender Vertigo*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.

Rivera, D. P., Forquer, E. E., & Rangel, R. (2010). Microaggressions and the life-experience of Latina/o Americans. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestations, dynamics, and impact.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Rosenfeld, D. (2009). Heteronormativity and homonormativity as practical and moral resources. *Gender & Society*, 23(5), 617-638.

Rosenfeld, S. (1997). Labeling mental illness: The effects of received services and perceived stigma on life satisfaction. *American Sociological Review*, 62(4), 660-672.

Rubin, G. (1993). Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality. In Abelove, H., Boyale, M., & Halperin, D. (1993). *The lesbian and gay studies reader.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Rubin, L. B. (1985). *Just friends: The role of friendship in our lives*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.

Rubin, L.B. (1994). *Families on the faultline: America's working class speaks about the family, the economy, race, and ethnicity.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing.

Ruddick, S. (1995). *Maternal thinking: Towards a politic of peace*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. Salvatore, J., & Shelton, J. N. (2007). Cognitive costs of exposure to racial prejudice. *Psychological Science*, 18, 810-815.

Savin-Williams, R. (2005). *The new gay teenager.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Scambler, G. and Hopkins, A. (1986). Being epileptic: Coming to terms with stigma. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 8(1), 26-43.

Schultz, A. (1967). *Phenomenology of the social world.* Evanston, IL:Northwestern University Press.

Schneider, D. (1968). *American kinship: A cultural account*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Schneider, J. and Conrad, P. (1980). In the closet with illness: Epilepsy, Stigma potential and information control. *Social Problems*, 28.

Scott, M. B. and Lyman, S. M. (1968). Accounts. *American Sociological Review*, 33(1), 46-62.

Sears, D. O. (1988). Symbolic racism. In P. A. Katz & D. A. Taylor (Eds.), *Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy* (pp. 53-84). New York: Plenum.

Segal-Sklar, S. (1995) 'Lesbian parenting. radical or retrograde?', in Karla, J. (ed.) (1995). *Dyke Life*, 174–83. London, ENG: Harper Collins.

Seidman, S. (2002). *Beyond the Closet: The Transformation of Gay and Lesbian Life*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Shapiro, J. (1999). A lesbian-centered critique of second-parent adoptions. *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*, 17.

Shelton, K. & Delgado-Romero, E. (2011). The experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer clients in psychotherapy. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(2), 210-221.

Slater, S. (1995). *The lesbian family life cycle*. New York, NY: Free Press

Smith, D. E. (1993). The standard North American family: SNAF as an ideological code. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14(2), 500-65.

Snyder, C. (2012). Racial socialization in cross-racial families. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 38(2), 228-253.

Solorzano, D. and Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and latcrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308-342.

Stacey, J. (1990). *Brave new families: Stories of domestic upheaval in late twentieth-century America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Stacey, J. (1996). *In the name of the family: Rethinking family values in the postmodern age.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Stacey, J. (2006). Gay parenthood and the decline in paternity as we knew it. *Sexualities*, 9(1), 27-55.

Stacey, J. (2011). *Unhitched: Love, marriage, and family values from West Hollywood to Western China*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Stacey, J. and Biblarz, T. (2001). (How) Does the sexual orientation of parents matter? *American Sociological Review*, 66(2): 159-183.

Stack, C. (1974). *All our kin*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Steele, C. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629.

Steele, C. M., and Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of *African Americans. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797-811.

Stein, A. (2001). *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Steinbugler, A. C. (2012). *Beyond loving: Intimate racework in lesbian, gay, and straight interracial relationships*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stotzer, R. (2009).Violence against transgender people: A review of United States data. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 14, 170-179.

Stotzer, R. (2012). Comparison of hate crime rates across protected and unprotected groups – An update." The Williams Institute. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/violence-crime/comparison-hate-crime-rates-update

Strauss, A. L. (1959). *Mirrors and masks: The search for identity*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Sue, D. W. (2003). *Overcoming our racism: The journey to liberation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K.L., & Torino, G. C. (2007). Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13, 72-81.

Sue, D. W., & Capodilupo, C. M. (2008). Racial, gender, and sexual orientation microaggressions: Implications for counseling and psychotherapy. In D. W. Sue & D. Sue (Eds.), *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. (2008). Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 39, 329-336.

Sullivan, A. (1995). *Virtually normal: An argument about homosexuality.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Sullivan, M. (2004). *The family of woman: Lesbian mothers, their children, and the undoing of gender.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Suter, E. A., Daas, K. L., & Bergen, B. M. (2008). Negotiating lesbian family identity via symbols and rituals. *Journal of Family Issues,* 29(1), 26-47.

Swim, J. K., Aikin, K. J., Hall, W. S., & Hunter, B. A. (1995). Sexism and racism: Old fashioned and modern prejudices. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 68, 199-214.

Sykes, M. R. (2011). Adoption with contact: A study of adoptive parents and the impact of continuing contact with families. *Journal of Family Therapy,* 23, 296-316.

Teman, E. (2010). *Birthing a mother: The surrogate body and the pregnant self.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Thompson, C. (2005). *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Thorne, B. (1992). Feminism and the family: Two decades of thought. In Thorne, B. & Yalom, M. (Eds.), *Rethinking the family: Some feminist questions.* (pp. 3-30). Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Vaid, U. (1995). *Virtual equality: The mainstreaming of gay and lesbian liberation.* New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Walters, S. (2012). The kids are alright but lesbians aren't: Queer kinship in US culture. *Sexualities,* 15(8), 917-933.

Ward, J. (2008). *Respectably Queer: Diversity Culture in LGBT Activist Organizations.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Warner, Ml. (1999). *The trouble with normal: Sex, politics, and the ethics of queer life.* Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Welsh, M. G. (2011). Growing up in a same-sex parented family: The adolescent voice of experience. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies,* 7(1-2), 49-71.

Westbrook, L. E., Bauman, L. J., and Shinnar, S. (1992). Applying stigma theory to epilepsy: A test of a conceptual model. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 17(5), 633-649.

Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Williams, C. L., Giuffre, P. A. & Dellinger, D. (2009). The gay-friendly closet. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy: Journal of NSRC*, 6(1), 29-45.

Wolfgram, S. M. (2008). Openness in adoption: What we know so far--A critical review of the literature. *Social Work*, 53(2), 133-142.

Yoshino, K. (2006). *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights*. New York, NY: Random House.