

## Division of Labor Among Lesbian and Heterosexual Parents: Associations With Children's Adjustment

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This study compared lesbian and heterosexual parents' division of household labor, satisfaction with division of labor, satisfaction with couple relationships, and associations of these variables with psychological adjustment of children. Participating lesbian ( $n = 30$ ) and heterosexual ( $n = 16$ ) couples all became parents by using anonymous donor insemination and had at least 1 child of elementary-school age. Although both lesbian and heterosexual couples reported relatively equal divisions of paid employment and of household and decision-making tasks, lesbian biological and nonbiological mothers shared child-care tasks more equally than did heterosexual parents. Among lesbian nonbiological mothers, those more satisfied with the division of family decisions in the home were also more satisfied with their relationships and had children who exhibited fewer externalizing behavior problems. The effect of division of labor on children's adjustment was mediated by parents' relationship satisfaction.

In recent years, increasing numbers of lesbian women have used donor insemination to become parents within the context of lesbian relationships (Patterson, 1992, 1995a, 1995b).

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With the increase in lesbian parenting, questions have been raised about the family structure of lesbian-headed homes and about potential impacts of lesbian-headed households on children's adjustment and functioning. Previous research suggests that children of divorced lesbian mothers are developing within normal parameters (e.g., Tasker & Golombok, 1997), but less is known about factors affecting development of children born to lesbian mothers (Patterson, 1992).

Research on lesbian-headed families has provided insight into lesbian-parenting-couples' relationships (Koepke, Hare, & Moran, 1992) and into their distribution of labor within the family (e.g., Flaks, Ficher, Masterpasqua, & Joseph, 1995; McCandlish, 1987; Patterson, 1995a). Initial studies have reported relationship satisfaction among lesbian mothers to be generally high (Flaks et al., 1995; Koepke et al., 1992; Patterson, 1995a). Lesbian mothers have also reported greater satisfaction with the allocation of family labor (e.g., housework, child care, decision making) than heterosexual mothers, especially when tasks were shared relatively equally between partners (Patterson,

1995a). In addition, research has focused on how mothers' biological relatedness to the child might be associated with a lesbian mother's role within the family (Hand, 1991; Patterson, 1995a). Biological mothers have reported somewhat more involvement than nonbiological mothers in child care, whereas nonbiological mothers have reported working more hours in paid employment than biological mothers (Hand, 1991; Osterweil, 1991; Patterson, 1995a).

Early findings suggest that allocation of family labor may be accomplished differently in lesbian-parent versus heterosexual-parent households. Hand (1991) found that lesbian mothers who conceived via donor insemination shared parenting more equally than did heterosexual parents who conceived children via the conventional means. Although Osterweil (1991) and Patterson's (1995a) studies did not involve heterosexual comparison groups, they remarked on lesbian mothers' generally egalitarian distribution of housework and contrasted this finding with results from research among heterosexual families that have shown women to be responsible for more of the child care and housework than men (e.g., C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Hochschild, 1989). Thus, although indications from early research are that lesbian parents divide both paid and unpaid labor differently than do heterosexual parents, it remains possible that observed differences are attributable to differing methods of conception (i.e., donor insemination vs. conventional conception) rather than parental sexual orientation. For instance, Golombok and her colleagues documented differences in the quality of parenting as a function of the mode of conception among a sample of heterosexual-headed families (Golombok, Cook, Bish, & Murray, 1995).

In the current study, we compared division of family labor among a group of lesbian-headed families and a comparable group of heterosexual-headed families, all with school-age children. All mothers in the current study used anonymous donor insemination to become pregnant. For this reason, both heterosexual and lesbian families included one parent who was biologically related to the child (i.e., the biological mother) and one who was not (i.e., the nonbiological lesbian mother or the father). This unique family structure allowed us to address questions regarding sexual orientation separately from questions regarding biological relat-

edness. The main purpose of our study was to compare the allocation of paid employment, the allocation of unpaid family labor (e.g., household tasks, decision making, and child care), satisfaction with the division of labor, and satisfaction with couple relationships among lesbian and heterosexual parents. The family-systems perspective posits that subsystems within a family do not function separately from each other; thus, we also explored associations between parental division of labor and children's adjustment in both lesbian and heterosexual families.

Research on heterosexual families consistently describes shifts toward more traditional divisions of family labor during the transition to parenthood (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; MacDermid, Huston, & McHale, 1990), and this pattern continues through the childhood years (e.g., fourth and fifth grades; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). Parenting couples have reported a steep decline in joint activities (Kurdek, 1993b) and that mothers take on more housework and child-care duties than do fathers; fathers in turn are described as spending more time in paid employment (Belsky & Pensky, 1988; C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). In addition, wives have generally been found to experience greater marital dissatisfaction than their husbands (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Ruble, Hackel, Fleming, & Stangor, 1988). One hypothesis suggests that when husbands do not share child-care and household duties to the extent that wives anticipated during pregnancy, the wives' expectations are violated, and marital dissatisfaction may result (P. A. Cowan, Cowan, & Kerig, 1993; Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Huber & Spitze, 1980; Ruble et al., 1988).

In contrast to heterosexual couples, lesbian couples in general report remarkably equal divisions of household duties (Kurdek, 1993a; Peplau & Cochran, 1990; Peplau, Veniegas, & Campbell, 1996). Lesbian couples are likely to avoid traditional gendered divisions of household tasks and, instead, divide household labor according to personal factors, such as interest, ability, and time availability (Kurdek, 1993a; Peplau & Cochran, 1990; Peplau et al., 1996). Research findings suggest that lesbian couples place higher value on equality in their relation-

ships than do heterosexual or gay-male couples (Kurdek, 1993a, 1995a, 1995b).

Given the family-systems perspective, research on the division of household labor among lesbian couples can be seen as raising questions about the possible impact these arrangements might have on children. Especially in view of the data on transition to parenthood and subsequent changes in the distribution of family labor among heterosexual couples (e.g., C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990), questions can be entertained about the impact of parenthood on lesbian partners' division of labor in the family. Do the demands of parenthood lessen the importance of an ethic of equality among lesbian parents and result in division of family labor that is more like that in heterosexual parented families? Does the lesbian biological mother experience a "second shift," the work of caring for children and maintaining the home in addition to full-time work outside the home, which some heterosexual mothers experience (Hochschild, 1989)?

Initial research with lesbian-headed families suggests that lesbian partners continue to share family labor to a great extent after the transition to parenthood (Hand, 1991; Osterweil, 1991; Patterson, 1995a). It is interesting that in one study lesbian biological mothers viewed their parental roles as more salient than did heterosexual or nonbiological lesbian mothers (Hand, 1991). Heterosexual fathers viewed their occupational roles as more salient than did any of the lesbian or heterosexual mothers (Hand, 1991). Taken together, the studies by Hand and by Osterweil suggested that lesbian parents with young children reported considerable sharing of family tasks, with biological mothers performing somewhat more child care than nonbiological mothers. In addition, lesbian-headed families with young children shared parenting to a greater extent than heterosexual-headed families with children of the same age (Hand, 1991).

In her study on the division of family labor in lesbian-headed families who have experienced the transition to parenthood, Patterson (1995a) reported similar findings. Consistent with the results of Hand (1991) and Osterweil (1991), lesbian parents in Patterson's study also reported dividing housework and family decision making equally. In the area of child rearing, however, biological mothers reported performing some-

what more child care, and nonbiological mothers worked somewhat longer hours in paid employment. Although nonbiological mothers did spend more hours in paid employment, both partners nevertheless rated the nonbiological mother as actively involved in child care. Both mothers also expressed the desire for equal sharing of child-care tasks. Even with the added demands of child rearing, lesbian parents apparently continued to share many if not most family responsibilities equally (Patterson, 1995a). These findings suggest that at least some lesbian parents have managed to balance the distribution of family and paid labor in such a way as to largely avoid the second shift (Hochschild, 1989).

In research on heterosexual parents, an association between marital satisfaction and satisfaction with the division of family labor has been clearly established (e.g., Belsky & Pensky, 1988; C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1987, 1992; Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Suitor, 1991; Ward, 1993). In particular, wives report greater marital satisfaction when their husbands share housework and child care more equally (Belsky & Pensky, 1988; C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1987, 1992; Ross, Mirowsky, & Huber, 1983). Greater relationship satisfaction has itself been shown to be associated with more favorable adjustment among children (P. A. Cowan et al., 1993; Emery, 1982; Erel & Burman, 1995). Thus, among heterosexual families, associations between parental division of labor and child functioning have been reported.

Lesbian couples with children have described average to high levels of relationship satisfaction (Chan, Raboy, & Patterson, 1998; Flaks et al., 1995; Koepke et al., 1992; Patterson, 1995a) and have reported considerable satisfaction with their division of family labor when tasks are shared between partners. In turn, lesbian mothers' greater relationship satisfaction has been shown to be associated with better adjustment among children (Patterson, 1995a). Through what processes do such associations occur? Research among heterosexual families experiencing the transition to parenthood (e.g., P. A. Cowan et al., 1993) has suggested that associations between children's adjustment and parents' division of household labor are mediated by parents' marital relationship. In the present study, we sought to examine the degree to which

this might also be true of lesbian-mother families.

Overall, this study examined lesbian-headed and heterosexual-headed families' division of household labor, their satisfaction with the distribution of labor, their satisfaction with couple relationships, and their children's functioning among families formed via donor insemination. From the existing literature, our main expectations were that lesbian parents would report more equal distributions of both paid and unpaid labor than would heterosexual parents. We also expected nonbiological lesbian mothers and nonbiological heterosexual fathers to be less involved in child care and to spend more hours per week in paid labor than lesbian and heterosexual biological mothers, although results of earlier work have suggested that these differences may be less pronounced for lesbian than heterosexual parents. Finally, in a more exploratory vein, we examined whether arrangements about the division of household labor among this sample of families would be associated with outcomes for children within the family system such that, as in families formed by traditional means, better outcomes for children would occur in families in which parents shared labor evenly and were more satisfied with their couple relationships.

## Method

### *Recruitment and Participants*

Participating families were drawn from among the former clients of The Sperm Bank of California (TSBC). This sperm bank is a provider of reproductive technologies that has been supplying services to clients regardless of sexual orientation or relationship status for more than 15 years. From TSBC files, clients who conceived and gave birth to children prior to July 1990 (and who thus had children at least 5 years of age at the beginning of data collection<sup>1</sup>) were selected and invited to participate in the current study. From this pool, 6 families headed by lesbian couples who had already participated in the Bay Area Families Study (e.g., Patterson, 1994) were excluded in order to maintain independence of data between the two studies. After these exclusions, we were able to contact 108 families. From this group, 81 families were headed by couples; the present research focused on these families headed by couples (information on the complete sample is available in Chan et al., 1998). Using letters and telephone calls, TSBC was able to contact 57 (70.4%) of the 81 eligible couple-headed families.

To evaluate the degree to which families who could be reached were representative of the population from which they were drawn, we followed the procedures suggested by Berk and Ray (1982), and we conducted logistic regression analyses. Results indicated that there were no differences in success of contact as a function of children's age,  $\chi^2(1, N = 81) = 9.1, ns$ , or gender,  $\chi^2(1, N = 81) < 1, ns$ . However, families headed by lesbian mothers were more likely to have been successfully contacted than were those headed by heterosexual parents,  $\chi^2(1, N = 81) = 20.1, p < .05$ .

Out of the pool of 57 families we were able to contact, 46 families (80.7%) agreed to participate in the research. To evaluate the degree to which families who agreed to participate were representative of those who had been contacted, we conducted logistic regression analyses (Berk & Ray, 1982). Results revealed that there were no differences in the agreement to participate as a function of children's age,  $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 8.1, ns$ , or gender,  $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 3.6, ns$ . Differences in families' agreement to participate did emerge, however, as a function of parental sexual orientation,  $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 15.1, p < .05$ . Families headed by lesbian mothers were more likely to participate than were those headed by heterosexual parents. Among those who chose not to participate, the most common reason given was lack of time.

The final sample included 46 families headed by couples (16 heterosexual and 30 lesbian couples), with 30 boys and 16 girls.<sup>2</sup> Initial analyses revealed no significant differences as a function of child's gender or child's age among the variables of interest; thus, we are able to rule out any potential main effects from these variables. All analyses reported in this article were collapsed across children's gender. Children ranged from 5 to 11 years of age ( $M = 7.4, SD = 1.7$ ), and biological mothers ranged from 33 to 47 years of age ( $M = 40.9, SD = 3.7$ ). Parents were mostly well educated, employed at least part time, and partnered on average 8.6 years ( $SD = 4.0$ ). The families were, on average, relatively affluent, with family incomes well above national averages (see Table 1).

We explored the possibility that demographic differences existed between the two family types by using a 2 (lesbian vs. heterosexual)  $\times$  2 (biological

<sup>1</sup> Families with infants and very young children were not invited to participate in this study so that our division-of-labor findings would not be confounded by inclusion of child-care tasks that cannot be divided, such as breast feeding.

<sup>2</sup> The high ratio of boys to girls in this sample is representative both of the population of children born via donor insemination during the 1980s and also of the specific population from which we recruited our participants (B. Raboy, personal communication, October 1, 1997).

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Parents and Children as a Function of Parental Sexual Orientation*

Variable	Lesbian couples			Heterosexual couples			F value		
	Biological mother	Nonbiological mother		Biological mother	Father	Within-families reporter effect	Between-families sexual orientation effect	Reporter $\times$ Sexual Orientation effect	Significant contrast
No. of families	30			16					
No. of boys	20			10					
No. of girls	10			6					
Child's age in years	7.1 (1.6)			7.9 (1.8)			3.0* <sup>b</sup>		
Annual household income in thousands	89.8 (40.1)			76.3 (31.4)			3.9, <i>ns</i>		
Length of relationship in years	8.8 (3.8)			8.1 (4.5)			<1, <i>ns</i>		
Age in years	41.2 (3.7)	43.0 (5.5)		40.4 (3.8)	40.7 (4.0)	2.4, <i>ns</i> <sup>c</sup>	<1, <i>ns</i>	<1, <i>ns</i> <sup>c</sup>	
Educational attainment <sup>a</sup>	4.1 (1.1)	3.9 (1.2)		3.3 (1.2)	3.1 (0.8)	1.4	3.8* <sup>c</sup>	2.4	
Hours per week in paid employment	31.8 (14.5)	37.1 (11.5)		34.7 (11.9)	40.8 (13.4)	<1	1.1, <i>ns</i>	<1	Lesbians > heterosexuals
Annual income in thousands	40.6 (28.4)	49.2 (28.2)		31.9 (17.4)	44.4 (19.5)	3.6	1.0, <i>ns</i>	<1	
						5.0	<1, <i>ns</i>	<1	

Note. Standard deviations are given in parentheses unless otherwise noted.

<sup>a</sup>Educational attainment: 1 = no high school, 2 = high school graduate, 3 = college graduate, 4 = some graduate school, 5 = graduate degree. <sup>b</sup>Multivariate  $F(3, 41)$  for child's age, annual household income, and length of relationship. <sup>c</sup>Multivariate  $F(4, 40)$  for age, educational attainment, hours per week in paid employment, and annual income.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

mother vs. nonbiological mother/father) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measure on the second variable. We found a significant multivariate main effect for sexual orientation,  $F(4, 40) = 3.8, p < .05$ . Follow-up univariate tests indicated that only one significant demographic difference emerged between lesbian- and heterosexual-headed families. Lesbian mothers, on average, had attained higher levels of education when compared with heterosexual parents,  $F(1, 40) = 13.1, p < .001$ . No significant difference emerged between biological and nonbiological parents from these analyses (see Table 1). In short, lesbian- and heterosexual-parented families were quite well matched on a number of demographic variables, including length of relationship, age, income, and hours spent in paid employment.

## Materials

**Division of labor.** To assess division of labor in the household and satisfaction with the division of labor, we used C. P. Cowan and P. A. Cowan's (1990) Who Does What? test. The Who Does What? (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1988, 1990) provides a way of assessing the division of household tasks, decision making, and child care within a couple. This instrument enables researchers to understand each partner's perception of the current and ideal distribution of family labor and parents' satisfaction with allocation of family tasks. Spearman-Brown split-half reliability and Cronbach's alpha have been reported in the .92 to .99 range for all subscales (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1988, 1990).

The Who Does What? test (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1990) is divided into three sections. We made minor adjustments in the wording of questions to make them suitable for lesbian mothers (e.g., *partner* instead of *spouse*, see Patterson, 1995a). The beginning of each section instructs participants to rate on a scale, ranging from 1 to 9, their actual and ideal distribution of particular family tasks (1 = *my partner does it all*, 5 = *we both do this about equally*, 9 = *I do it all*). Section 1 includes 13 household tasks (e.g., meal preparation and cleanup, writing letters, car care), Section 2 includes 12 family decision-making areas (e.g., making financial decisions, deciding about religious practices, deciding about community involvement), and Section 3 includes 20 child-care tasks (e.g., reading to child, bathing, feeding, choosing toys, visiting parks and playgrounds).

The end of each section of the Who Does What? test (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1990) asks each partner to indicate his or her overall satisfaction level with the specific area of family labor (1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*). In addition, in the decision-making and child-care sections, respondents are asked to provide global ratings of both partners' influence over family decisions (1 = *my partner has more influence*, 2 = *we have about equal influence*,

3 = *I have more influence*), and involvement in child care (1 = *none*, 2 = *secondary*, 3 = *shared*, 4 = *primary*, 5 = *sole*).

**Parental-relationship qualities.** To provide a global assessment of relationship quality, we used the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (LWMAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). The LWMAT is a 15-item self-report test designed to measure marital adjustment of spouses in heterosexual marriages. Minor semantic adjustments were required to make the LWMAT suitable for use with same-sex as well as different-sex couples (Patterson, 1995a). Possible scores on the LWMAT range from 2 to 158; higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.

For ratings on more specific aspects of the couples' relationships, we administered the Braiker and Kelley Partnership Questionnaire (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). The Partnership Questionnaire is a 25-item instrument that assesses components of a close relationship; in this study we used two scales: (a) Love (i.e., caring and emotional attachment, 10 items), and (b) Conflict (i.e., problems and arguments, 5 items). Each partner indicates agreement or disagreement on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all or very little* to 9 = *very much or very often*) in response to each item; higher scores indicate more love and more conflict (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Burger & Milardo, 1995).

**Child adjustment.** Children's social competence and behavioral adjustment were used as indices of children's functioning and were assessed by using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991a) as well as the Teacher Report Form (TRF; Achenbach, 1991b). The CBCL uses parent reports and yields scores for three broadband scales (Social Competence, Internalizing, Externalizing) and a total-behavior-problems score (Total Behavioral Problems). Social competence is measured by a series of questions about the frequency of the child's participation and performance in various social arenas (e.g., sports, hobbies, friendships, sibling relationships, and school). Internalizing, externalizing, and total behavior problems are assessed by using 118 items rated on a scale from 0 to 2 (0 = *not true*, 1 = *somewhat or sometimes true*, 2 = *very true or often true*). The Internalizing scale score summarizes the child's withdrawn behaviors, somatic complaints, anxiety, and depression. The Externalizing scale score summarizes aggressive, disruptive, and delinquent behaviors. Finally, the score for the Total Behavioral Problems scale takes into account internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as well as social, thought, and attention problems (Achenbach, 1991a).

The TRF is similar to the CBCL but was designed to use reports by a teacher or child-care provider. Although 22 symptoms that appear on the TRF are specific to the classroom situation (e.g., afraid to make mistakes, fails to finish, talks out of turn), the broadband scales (i.e., Internalizing and Externalizing) are similar to those on the CBCL. In addition, on

the TRF, an Academic Performance and Adaptive Functioning scale (e.g., how happy is the child) replaces the Social Competence scale on the CBCL (Achenbach, 1991b; McConaughy, 1993). The TRF and CBCL were chosen for use in the present study because they are highly regarded child-assessment instruments for which national norms are available for both clinical and nonclinical (i.e., normal) populations. Furthermore, raw scores can be converted to standard *T* scores that allow comparisons across age and gender (Achenbach, 1991a, 1991b; Patterson, 1994). *T* scores are used in this article.

## Results

The results are presented in three sections. The first section describes parental division of labor within lesbian and heterosexual couples and compares parental division of labor between lesbian and heterosexual couples. The second section reports data on satisfaction with the division of labor among lesbian and heterosexual couples. The third section explores associations among satisfaction with the division of labor, relationship satisfaction, and children's adjustment.

### *Parental Division of Labor Within Couple Types*

Lesbian and heterosexual biological and nonbiological parents' reports about actual and ideal division of family labor are summarized in Table 2. A score of 5 on the actual or the ideal items indicates that both partners share tasks equally. Scores above 5 indicate that the respondent performs more work than her or his partner. Scores of less than 5 indicate that the respondent's partner performs more of the work. Generally, correlations between partners' scores range from .24 to .77. Overall, lesbian parents' actual and ideal scores clustered around 5, suggesting that in concert with parental wishes, household tasks, family decision making, and child care were all seen as being shared relatively equally. Heterosexual couples' scores showed somewhat more variation. Heterosexual couples reported sharing many tasks relatively evenly, with scores ranging from 4.5 to 5.3 for household tasks and family decision making. The main exception was child care, for which heterosexual couples reported a distinctly gendered division of labor; mothers, on average, were reported to be doing more ( $M = 6.6$ ,

$SD = 1.1$ ) and fathers less ( $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) of the labor involved in child care.

Using a 2 (lesbian vs. heterosexual)  $\times$  2 (biological mother vs. nonbiological mother/father) MANOVA with repeated measures on the second variable, we compared the actual and ideal distribution of labor among parents. Multivariate tests indicated a significant within-families reporter main effect,  $F(6, 27) = 6.0$ ,  $p < .01$ , as well as a significant Reporter  $\times$  Sexual Orientation interaction effect,  $F(6, 27) = 3.9$ ,  $p < .01$ . However, the between-families sexual orientation main effect was not statistically significant,  $F(6, 27) = 2.5$ , *ns*. Follow-up univariate tests indicated that in both actual and ideal levels of child care, there were significant within-families reporter main effects,  $F(1, 27) = 27.8$ ,  $p < .001$ , and  $F(1, 27) = 30.7$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively. In areas of household tasks and family decision making, all parties reported sharing these responsibilities relatively equally and also preferring to share these responsibilities equally.

In the area of child care, differences did emerge. Inasmuch as there was a significant Reporter  $\times$  Sexual Orientation interaction effect for the actual level of child care,  $F(1, 27) = 15.6$ ,  $p < .01$ , we compared parents' reports separately by sexual orientation and by reporter. Among heterosexual couples, but not among lesbian couples, parents' scores for actual division of labor differed significantly in the area of child care,  $F(1, 10) = 20.4$ ,  $p < .01$ ; as expected, wives were more responsible than husbands for child care. Among biological mothers, heterosexual mothers were performing more child care when compared to lesbian biological mothers,  $M = 6.6$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ , and  $M = 5.5$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ , respectively,  $F(1, 27) = 11.0$ ,  $p < .01$ . Among nonbiological parents, lesbian nonbiological mothers were performing more child care than heterosexual fathers,  $M = 4.9$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ , and  $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ , respectively,  $F(1, 27) = 16.0$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Similarly, for the ideal distribution of child care, a significant Reporter  $\times$  Sexual Orientation interaction effect emerged,  $F(1, 27) = 30.7$ ,  $p < .001$ . Consistent with the actual distribution of labor among heterosexual couples, ideal scores also differed significantly for child care,  $F(1, 10) = 13.1$ ,  $p < .01$ . Ideally, heterosexual mothers indicated that they would prefer to share an almost equal portion of child-care tasks with their husbands,  $M = 5.5$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ , but





husbands preferred that wives assume more responsibility for child care,  $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 0.4$ . When compared across families, lesbian nonbiological mothers desired a more equal distribution of child care than did heterosexual fathers,  $M = 5.0$ ,  $SD = 0.3$ , and  $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 0.4$ , respectively,  $F(1, 27) = 46.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ; biological mothers from both types of families desired relatively equal distribution of child care,  $F(1, 27) = 4.1$ , *ns*. Inasmuch as lesbian parents, on average, received more education than heterosexual parents, we reanalyzed these data by using parental education as a covariate. Results were largely the same, except that when education was statistically controlled, the within-families reporter main effect was no longer significant. All other results remained exactly as reported above. Thus, the main results suggest that regardless of sexual orientation, mothers desired a more equal division of child care than did fathers. In other words, lesbian parents both wanted and practiced more egalitarian division of the labor involved in child care than did heterosexual parents.

Summary statistics for parents' reports on satisfaction with the division of labor are presented in Table 3. Regardless of how the actual division of labor was accomplished by these couples, all parties reported that they were satisfied with the division of labor in their families. Multivariate tests from a 2 (lesbian vs. heterosexual)  $\times$  2 (biological mother vs. nonbiological mother/father) MANOVA with repeated measure on the second variable yielded no significant between-families sexual orientation main effect,  $F(4, 26) = 0.7$ , *ns*, no significant within-families reporter main effect,  $F(4, 26) = 2.2$ , *ns*, and no significant Sexual Orientation  $\times$  Reporter interaction effect,  $F(1, 26) = 1.2$ , *ns*.

Summary statistics for couples' relationship satisfaction from the Locke-Wallace (1959) Marital Adjustment Test and the Braiker-Kelley Love and Conflict (1979) scores are also presented in Table 3. Lesbian as well as heterosexual couples' average relationship adjustment scores exceeded the mean score of 100 on the LWMAT (Locke & Wallace, 1959), and all parents reported relatively high levels of love and low to moderate levels of conflict in their relationships, suggesting that parents were generally satisfied with their couple relationships. Multivariate tests from a 2 (lesbian vs. heterosexual)  $\times$  2 (biological mother vs. nonbio-

logical mother/father) MANOVA yielded a significant between-families sexual orientation main effect,  $F(3, 27) = 2.9$ ,  $p < .05$ ; however, follow-up univariate tests indicated no significant difference between heterosexual and lesbian couples on any of the relationship satisfaction measures. Similarly, multivariate tests suggested a significant within-families reporter main effect,  $F(3, 27) = 4.1$ ,  $p < .05$ ; follow-up univariate tests revealed no significant differences between reporters on individual relationship satisfaction measures. No significant Reporter  $\times$  Sexual Orientation interaction effects emerged from these analyses,  $F(3, 27) = 1.0$ , *ns*. Thus, on average, lesbian and heterosexual couples reported about the same levels of love, conflict, and satisfaction in their relationships.

### *Child Adjustment*

Children's psychosocial functioning as reported on the CBCL by parents and on the TRF by teachers revealed that, on average, children in the present sample were well adjusted. Means and standard deviations for children's adjustment scores are presented in Table 4. On average, even though agreement between reporters was modest (e.g., biological mother-nonbiological parent average was  $r = .44$ ; parent-teacher average was  $r = .21$ ; see also Achenbach, McConaughy, & Howell, 1987), all reporters (i.e., biological mothers, nonbiological parents, and teachers) agreed that children in both lesbian and heterosexual parented families were functioning well. Average scores on the Internalizing, Externalizing, and Total Behavior Problems scales were substantially below clinical cutoffs ( $T$  score of 65 or above; Achenbach, 1991a, 1991b). In addition, the average Social Competence and Academic Performance and Adaptive Functioning scores for all children were substantially and significantly above the clinical cutoffs ( $T$  score of 30 or below; Achenbach, 1991a, 1991b). As we have reported elsewhere (Chan et al., 1998), children's adjustment did not differ as a function of parental sexual orientation.

### *Division of Labor and Children's Adjustment*

To explore possible associations among parents' satisfaction with the division of household labor, parents' relationship satisfaction, and

Table 3  
*Parents' Reports of Satisfaction With Division of Labor and With Couple Relationships*

Variable	Lesbian couples			Heterosexual couples			F value		
	Biological mother	Nonbiological mother		Biological mother	Father		Within-families reporter effect	Between-families sexual orientation effect	Reporter × Sexual Orientation effect
No. of reporters	24	18		12	11				
Household tasks	4.0 (0.9)	3.8 (1.2)		3.8 (1.0)	3.8 (0.6)		2.2, <i>ns</i> <sup>a</sup>	<1, <i>ns</i> <sup>a</sup>	1.2, <i>ns</i> <sup>a</sup>
Decision making	4.2 (1.0)	4.3 (0.7)		4.4 (0.7)	3.8 (0.8)		<1	<1	<1
Child care: self	4.3 (0.9)	4.3 (1.0)		4.4 (0.5)	3.8 (1.0)		5.0	<1	3.8
Child care: partner	4.2 (1.0)	4.6 (0.8)		3.9 (1.3)	4.4 (0.5)		3.7	1.7	1.9
							<1	1.2	<1
Satisfaction with the division of labor									
No. of reporters	25	20		13	12				
Locke-Wallace adjustment score	113.6 (20.1)	120.9 (15.8)		110.2 (22.6)	113.6 (19.4)		2.9* <sup>b</sup>	4.1* <sup>b</sup>	1.0, <i>ns</i> <sup>b</sup>
Braiker-Kelley: love	7.5 (0.9)	7.3 (0.9)		7.3 (1.1)	7.4 (1.0)		<1, <i>ns</i>	<1, <i>ns</i>	<1
Braiker-Kelley: conflict	5.0 (1.3)	4.5 (1.3)		4.5 (1.0)	3.9 (1.4)		2.4, <i>ns</i>	<1, <i>ns</i>	1.1
							4.1, <i>ns</i>	2.2, <i>ns</i>	<1
Satisfaction with couple relationship									

Note. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>Multivariate  $F(4, 26)$  for satisfaction with household tasks, decision making, child care by self, and child care by partner. <sup>b</sup>Multivariate  $F(3, 27)$  for the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment score and the Braiker-Kelley Love and Conflict scores.

\* $p < .05$ .

Table 4

*Average T Scores From the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and Teacher Report Form (TRF)*

Variable	Lesbian-couple families						Heterosexual-couple families					
	Biological mother		Nonbiological mother		Teacher		Biological mother		Father		Teacher	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
No. of reporters	29		22		19		16		12		10	
Social Competence/Academic Performance <sup>a</sup>	46.2	10.6	46.8	9.5	54.7	8.4	47.2	8.5	47.8	10.7	56.7	8.4
Total behavior problems	49.1	10.5	50.8	11.5	49.1	12.0	50.8	9.5	45.0	11.1	52.8	9.0
Internalizing behavior problems	47.8	9.4	49.5	9.1	46.6	9.9	51.1	9.8	43.2	9.7	48.6	11.0
Externalizing behavior problems	49.2	10.9	50.6	11.2	50.8	11.6	47.6	6.4	45.0	9.1	52.3	6.3

<sup>a</sup>The Social Competence subscale is from the parents' reports on the CBCL; the Academic Performance and Adaptive Functioning subscale is from the TRF.

children's adjustment, we computed Pearson product-moment correlations among the variables of interest. Initial data analyses revealed different relations among these variables for heterosexual- and lesbian-headed families. Thus, analyses were performed separately for the two groups of families.

To explore associations between parents' satisfaction with the division of labor, parents' relationship satisfaction, and children's adjustment, we computed simultaneous regression equations. The question of interest was whether parents' satisfaction with the division of labor accounted for the variance in children's adjustment; thus, children's externalizing behavior problems were regressed on parent's satisfaction with the division of household tasks, decision making, and child care. Although many interaction effects can be entertained in these models, given the modest sample size and the fact that we had no *a priori* hypotheses that would predict significant interactions, we elected to focus our current analyses on uncovering main effects in each of our regression models. Although both within- as well as cross-reporter associations were examined, because of the restrictions imposed by sample size and for the sake of clarity in presentation, we excluded all nonsignificant predictors in our final regression models and present only the most parsimonious models in this article. Thus, these regression models are exploratory in nature and should be interpreted with caution.

Results from the simultaneous regression analyses are presented first for all families, then for families headed by heterosexual parents, and

finally for families headed by lesbian mothers. For all families, teachers' reports of lower levels of children's externalizing problem behaviors were associated with nonbiological parents' report of greater satisfaction with the division of household tasks,  $R^2 = .31$ ,  $F(2, 21) = 4.28$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Among families headed by heterosexual parents, biological mothers' reports of lower levels of externalizing behavior problems were associated with fathers' (i.e., nonbiological parents') reports of greater satisfaction with the division of family decision making but lower satisfaction with the division of household tasks,  $R^2 = .53$ ,  $F(2, 10) = 4.57$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Among families headed by lesbian mothers, several interesting associations emerged. First, biological mothers' reports of lower levels of children's externalizing behavior problems were associated with biological mothers' reports of greater satisfaction with the division of household tasks,  $R^2 = .27$ ,  $F(2, 23) = 3.39$ ,  $p < .05$ . Second, nonbiological mothers' reports of lower levels of children's externalizing behavior problems were associated with biological mothers' reports of greater satisfaction with the division of household tasks, as well as nonbiological mothers' reports of greater satisfaction with the division of family decision making,  $R^2 = .67$ ,  $F(4, 17) = 9.61$ ,  $p < .001$ . Third, teachers' reports of lower levels of children's externalizing behavior problems were associated with biological mothers' reports of greater satisfaction with the division of family decision making,  $R^2 = .69$ ,  $F(4, 12) = 4.39$ ,  $p < .05$ . It is worth mentioning here that results from these regres-

Table 5  
Summary of Simultaneous Multiple Regression Models Based on Nonbiological Mothers' Reports

Variable	Model 1: Relationship adjustment				Model 2: Externalizing behavior problems				Model 3: Externalizing behavior problems			
	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	t	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	t	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	t
Intercept	45.0	14.0	.0	3.2**	99.1	10.6	.0	9.3***	116.8	12.0	.0	9.7***
Satisfaction with division of decision making	17.6	3.2	.8	5.5***	-10.9	2.4	-.7	-4.5***	-3.9	3.6	-.3	-1.1
Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test									-.4	.2	-.6	-2.4*

Note. For Model 1,  $R^2 = .66$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 30.5***$ ; for Model 2,  $R^2 = .56$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 20.3***$ ; for Model 3,  $R^2 = .68$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 15.9***$ .  
\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

sion models are largely based on cross-rater reports; furthermore, the most parsimonious models presented here accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in each case.

Finally, we also examined the impact of the actual levels of household labor on children's adjustment. In contrast to results for parents' satisfaction with the division of labor, only one significant association emerged for the actual level of household labor. Consistent with the results reported by Patterson (1995a), among lesbian mother families, when nonbiological mothers participated in more child-care tasks, biological mothers reported the child as having fewer externalizing behavior problems,  $R^2 = .48$ ,  $F(3, 17) = 4.33$ ,  $p < .05$ .

#### *Relationship Satisfaction, Division of Labor, and Children's Adjustment*

To test the hypothesis that associations between children's adjustment and parents' division of household labor were mediated by parents' relationship satisfaction (P. A. Cowan et al., 1993), we followed the procedures for testing mediation models suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). To test this model, we calculated three simultaneous regression equations using nonbiological mothers' reports: (a) Nonbiological mothers' relationship adjustment (LWMAT) was regressed on their satisfaction with the division of family decision making; (b) nonbiological mothers' reports of children's externalizing problem behaviors was regressed on their satisfaction with the division of family decision making; and finally (c) nonbiological mothers' reports of children's externalizing problem behaviors was regressed on both their ratings of relationship adjustment and their ratings of satisfaction with the division of family decision making. The mediation model was tested with nonbiological mothers' reports only because initial correlation analyses indicated that in this sample of families formed by means of donor insemination, the association between couples' relationship satisfaction and satisfaction of the division of household labor was found only among nonbiological mothers. Furthermore, the mediation model was not predictive of biological mothers' or teachers' reports of children's externalizing behaviors. Summary statistics for these regression models are presented in Table 5.

Results indicated that, as expected, nonbiologi-

cal mothers reported higher relationship adjustment when they were satisfied with the division of family decision making,  $R^2 = .66$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 30.5$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 1). Furthermore, when biological mothers reported higher levels of satisfaction with the division of family decision making, they described their children as having fewer externalizing behavior problems,  $R^2 = .56$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 20.3$ ,  $p < .001$ . Finally, when the effects of relationship adjustment as well as satisfaction with the division of family decision making were considered simultaneously, only the relationship-adjustment variable retained its predictive power,  $R^2 = .68$ ,  $F(2, 17) = 15.9$ ,  $p < .001$ . In summary, as shown in Figure 1, our results showed that the association between parental satisfaction with division of labor and child adjustment was mediated by parental relationship satisfaction; children of lesbian mothers were rated as better adjusted when their parents reported greater relationship satisfaction.

### Discussion

How do lesbian and heterosexual parents compare in their division of family labor? We found that lesbian parents reported more equal

distributions of unpaid family labor than did heterosexual parents, even though all parents worked similar hours in paid employment. Both lesbian and heterosexual parents shared household tasks and family decision making relatively evenly, but differences arose in the area of child care. Lesbian couples shared the work involved in child care more evenly than did heterosexual couples. Parental satisfaction with these arrangements, rather than the actual levels of labor, was associated with more favorable adjustment among children of lesbian mothers.

Consistent with the findings of earlier research (Hand, 1991; Osterweil, 1991; Patterson, 1995a), we found that heterosexual mothers performed the majority of the child-care tasks within their families, whereas lesbian biological and nonbiological mothers shared child-care tasks more equally. Because parents in the heterosexual comparison groups in earlier research (e.g., Hand, 1991) did not conceive through donor insemination, it was unclear whether lesbian couples shared parenting more evenly because they were lesbian parents or because shared parenting is characteristic of couples who use donor insemination. Heterosexual couples who conceived through reproductive technology (e.g., anonymous donor insemination)

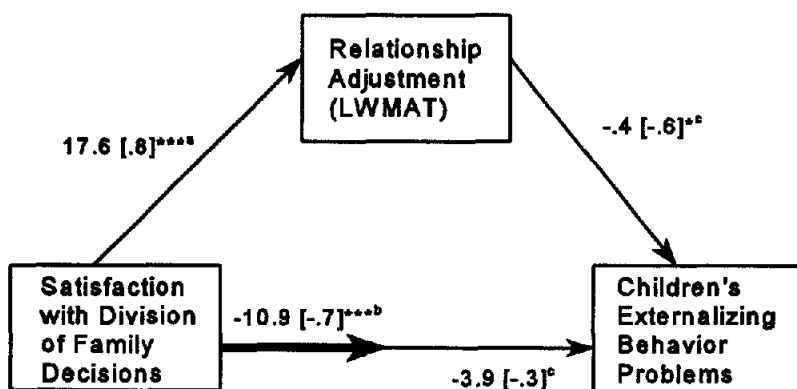


Figure 1. Pictorial representation of the mediational model. Regression coefficients are given in the form  $B[\beta]$ . LWMAT = Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test.

<sup>a</sup>Model 1: Relationship adjustment regressed on satisfaction with division of decision making,  $R^2 = .66$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 30.5$ ,  $p < .001$ . <sup>b</sup>Model 2: Children's externalizing behavior problems regressed on satisfaction with division of decision making,  $R^2 = .56$ ,  $F(1, 17) = 20.3$ ,  $p < .001$ . <sup>c</sup>Model 3: Children's externalizing behavior problems regressed on relationship adjustment and satisfaction with division of decision making,  $R^2 = .68$ ,  $F(2, 17) = 15.9$ ,  $p < .001$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

nation) have been found to be more motivated parents than couples who conceived naturally (Golombok et al., 1993, 1995), and this motivation might result in more equal participation in child care by nonbiological parents. Results from the present study, which included a matched comparison group of heterosexual parents who also used anonymous donor insemination, suggest that shared parenting is a distinguishing feature of lesbian parenting rather than simply a characteristic of parents who utilize reproductive technology.

The child-care findings for heterosexual parents were very clear. Consistent with previous findings (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Dancer & Gilbert, 1993; Hochschild, 1989; Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992; Presser, 1994; Starrels, 1994), heterosexual mothers took on the responsibility for the majority of child care, including direct (e.g., bathing and feeding), indirect (e.g., choosing toys for child, doing child's laundry), and recreational (e.g., taking child out to parks and playgrounds, reading to child) tasks. Heterosexual mothers wanted their husbands to take more responsibility for child care so that fathers would assume responsibility for almost half of the child care. In contrast, fathers did not wish to expand their child-care involvement to the degree preferred by their wives. Thus, although fathers were quite satisfied, mothers continued to wish for more egalitarian child-care arrangements.

Consistent with expectations, our results showed that lesbian parents, like lesbian couples without children (Kurdek, 1993a, 1995a), placed high value on equality in the domestic sphere and expressed a greater desire than did heterosexual parents for an equal division of family labor. Differences between parents in preference for equality were not as pronounced in lesbian couples as they were in heterosexual couples. Regardless of sexual orientation, all of the women tended to want child care to be shared relatively equally between partners. The importance of equality to lesbian couples may thus be a function of their female gender rather than a function of their sexual orientation.

A gender socialization perspective provides one theoretical explanation for lesbian nonbiological mothers' greater preference for involvement in the caregiver role (i.e., parent and home caretaker) in comparison with fathers' preference for lesser involvement in day-to-day

child-care and household tasks. Chodorow (1978) and Gilligan (1982) proposed that women's identity formation is characterized by attachment and emotional relatedness, whereas men's identity formation is characterized by differentiation from others. Such a socialization-developmental framework might predispose women to embody nurturing, caregiver roles within their relationships. Thus, lesbian nonbiological mothers' desire for equal participation as a family caregiver and men's lesser concern with equal participation in family labor coincides with Chodorow's and Gilligan's theories about the importance of interpersonal responsibility to women and the importance of individuation to men. Although women have traditionally been defined by their unpaid familial role, men have been defined by their status in the paid-labor market. As a result of this socialization, fathers may not incorporate the caregiver role into their self-concept to the same extent as do women (Hall, Walker, & Acock, 1995; Hochschild, 1989). However, observers have also argued that some fathers may interpret their involvement in paid employment as caregiving for the child. Consistent with this gender socialization perspective, a number of researchers have reported that women place greater importance on their role as parents, whereas fathers view their role in paid employment as more salient (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Hand, 1991).

In this sample of relatively highly educated parents, we also observed that educational attainment attenuates the discrepancy between fathers' and mothers' reports of actual and ideal levels of child-care responsibilities. This finding may suggest that more highly educated fathers share child-care responsibilities to a more equal extent with their wives than do fathers with lower levels of educational attainment. Indeed, the impact of parental education on the arrangement of household labor is an interesting topic of investigation for future research.

Contrary to earlier findings (e.g., Patterson, 1995a), the present data revealed that lesbian nonbiological mothers did not work significantly longer hours than lesbian biological mothers in paid employment. Lesbian and heterosexual biological mothers reported similar numbers of hours spent in paid work as did lesbian nonbiological mothers and heterosexual fathers. Because of the equal involvement of

both lesbian mothers in family tasks and paid work, neither of these women appeared to assume the second shift of household labor and child care that heterosexual mothers in the present sample seemed to shoulder (Hochschild, 1989).

Satisfaction levels indicate that lesbian and heterosexual parents showed equally high satisfaction with their involvement in family tasks and with their couple relationships. Despite differing arrangements for the division of child care between lesbian and heterosexual couples, consistently high satisfaction levels suggest that their differing child-care arrangements were acceptable to parents in both lesbian and heterosexual couples. One explanation for heterosexual wives' satisfaction with unequal distributions of family labor relies on a distributive justice perspective in which women's perceptions of fairness determine their satisfaction with the labor division (Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995). The heterosexual women in the present study may have interpreted their husbands' greater earnings as sufficient justification for wives' additional child-care responsibilities (Hawkins et al., 1995; Thompson, 1991). Ruble and her colleagues (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Ruble et al., 1988) have suggested that heterosexual mothers' satisfaction with child-care arrangements and with their marriages may be mediated by the degree to which their expectations are confirmed or violated. Maternal dissatisfaction may emerge if paternal child-care participation does not meet mothers' expectations. Thus, an interpretation for both lesbian and heterosexual couples' reports of high satisfaction may be that confirmed expectations mediate satisfaction (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Ruble et al., 1988). Lesbian parents expect an equal division of child care, whereas heterosexual parents may expect a traditional gendered division of labor (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Ruble et al., 1988). Although the present study could not identify the factors that mediate lesbian and heterosexual parents' satisfaction, our results revealed that satisfaction with family division of labor did not vary substantially despite important differences in the actual division of labor among lesbian-headed and heterosexual-headed families.

Examination of the associations among parents' satisfaction with the division of household labor, parents' relationship satisfaction, and

children's adjustment revealed that children's adjustment was more often associated with parents' satisfaction with the division of labor rather than with how much each parent was actually doing. Although mean differences emerged in the domain of child care, reflecting quantitative differences between lesbian- and heterosexual-couple families in the division of labor, we also observed process or qualitative differences between lesbian- and heterosexual-couple families in that among lesbian families, satisfaction with family decision making was associated with couple's relationship satisfaction and children's adjustment. More specifically, it was among reports from lesbian nonbiological mothers that we found an association between satisfaction with the division of household labor and satisfaction with couple relationships; nonbiological mothers who were more satisfied with the division of family decision making also rated their children as exhibiting fewer externalizing behavior problems. Using a mediational model (Baron & Kenny, 1986), we were able to demonstrate that the association between nonbiological mothers' satisfaction with the division of family decision making and children's adjustment was mediated by their satisfaction level with couple relationships. This finding is consistent with those in the current literature for heterosexual families showing that associations between children's outcome and parental division of labor are mediated by parents' levels of satisfaction in the marital relationship (e.g., P. A. Cowan et al., 1993).

Associations between division of household labor and couples' relationship satisfaction were not found among heterosexual parents or among lesbian biological mothers in this sample. Indeed, for biological mothers as well as for fathers, satisfaction with the division of household labor and couples' satisfaction seem to be unrelated. However, consistent with previous findings (Chan et al., 1998; Emery, 1982; Erel & Burman, 1995; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994), reports of couples' satisfaction were related to children's adjustment in that children from both lesbian- and heterosexual-parented families were more competent and exhibited fewer behavior problems when their parents reported greater relationship adjustment, more love, and less conflict in their relationship. Thus, in light of the family-systems perspective,

satisfaction between parents in the parental dyad influences the relationship between parents and child and may ultimately promote more positive adjustment among children. Of course, numerous other factors in addition to those examined in this article, both within and outside the family system, contribute to children's competence and functioning. The findings from this study, nonetheless, extend the generalizability of earlier work (e.g., C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992) on the association between parental division of labor and children's adjustment from heterosexual families to lesbian-mother families.

When interpreting the results of the present study, a number of limitations should be acknowledged. The study relied solely upon self-report measures of family distributions of labor, and no observational or diary measures were used. The sample was predominantly White, well educated, and relatively affluent. In addition, although the study did include a matched heterosexual comparison group, fewer heterosexual families than anticipated took part in this study, resulting in a small sample of heterosexual parents. One possible methodological concern with this study was the lower participation rate of heterosexual parents as compared with lesbian parents. The difference in participation rates may result in a heterosexual sample that is not representative of the population of heterosexual couples who use anonymous donor insemination. Thus, these results should be viewed as exploratory until they can be replicated in an independent sample. Although there were limitations of this sample, findings were nevertheless consistent with previous research on the division of child-care responsibilities among heterosexual families (e.g., C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Hochschild, 1989; Presser, 1994).

Overall, comparisons between lesbian and heterosexual parents revealed that lesbian parents not only shared family labor to a greater extent than did heterosexual parents but also expressed a greater preference for equality in division of family labor than did heterosexual parents. The present results suggest that despite their differences, both types of families were relatively satisfied with their divisions of labor. Among children growing up in lesbian- but not in heterosexual-parent households, nonbiological parents' satisfaction with couple relationships was associated with fewer behavior

problems. These findings contribute to understanding of the role that sexual orientation plays in family life and suggest the importance of examining both similarities and differences among varied types of families.

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