

Statement of Dr. Theodora Sirota in response to Dr. Rick Fitzgibbons misuse of her research

“It has come to my attention that Dr. Fitzgibbons mis-reported and misrepresented the results of my 2009 research in this blog. I wish to clarify the findings, conclusions and implications of my study for the record. My study was a quantitative descriptive survey with no interviews. I compared adult attachment style dimensions, a measure of quality of adult love relationships, in a sample of 68 adult women raised in their fathers' heterosexually -organized marriages where fathers were identified as gay or bisexual with 68 adult women raised in their fathers' heterosexually -organized marriages where fathers were identified as heterosexual. The findings indicated highly statistically significant differences between the two groups. For this sample, women raised in heterosexually- organized families where fathers were gay or bisexual were significantly less comfortable with closeness and intimacy, less able to trust and depend on others and experienced more anxiety in relationships than women in the comparison group.

“The overall conclusions and implications of my study were based not only on the attachment data but also on much other data collected in this research. For example, I found that attachment history (a measure of quality of caregiving) to their heterosexual mothers was significantly more insecure and current relationships with mothers significantly less close among women raised in heterosexually-organized families where fathers are gay or bisexual than among women from families where fathers were heterosexual. This finding suggests that mother-daughter relationships may play an especially significant role toward influencing daughters' adult attachment style dimensions in families where fathers are gay or bisexual. Additionally, I found that attachment history to fathers tended to be insecure among both study groups irrespective of fathers' sexual orientation. This finding supports prior research indicating that daughters generally perceive fathers as emotionally and physically distant and less of an influence on their lives as mothers. Overall, my research data suggests that family relational processes and issues that occur in heterosexually -organized marriages where fathers are gay or bisexual, such as divorce, maternal anger/bitterness, father absence, etc., may be more related to the finding of greater attachment insecurity in women with gay or bisexual fathers than the fact that their fathers are gay or bisexual.

“Although my sample was relatively large, the participants were all self-selected and probably did not represent the entire population of adult women with gay or bisexual fathers who were raised within fathers' heterosexually-organized marriages. Therefore, the findings must be viewed with caution and cannot be generalized to all such women.

“My study was only about women raised in the context of heterosexually-organized marriages where fathers were identified as gay or bisexual. My research was not about and did not measure anything in women raised by gay parent couples or by single gay fathers. The women I studied were not raised in the context of gay or lesbian partnerships or by single gay fathers actively rearing their children. Therefore, no conclusions about gay or lesbian fitness to adopt children or quality of active gay parenting can be drawn from the findings of my research. No conclusions about the well-being of children who are or were actively raised by gay or lesbian parents can be drawn from the findings of my research.”