Narrating connections and boundaries:

Constructing relatedness in lesbian known donor familial configurations

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology in the University of Canterbury

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2017

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Acknowledgements

> So much sweat and tears goes into producing such a neat and tidy package of words. (Smart, 2010, p. 10)

The support of a number of people enabled me to persevere throughout each stage of the doctoral journey. I am indebted to my supervisors. Rosemary Du Plessis brought vision and enthusiasm to the project from beginning to end. Always positive and encouraging, her insight and incisive critique allowed me to hone my skills as a researcher and writer. Kathleen Quinlivan's lively engagement, provocative questions, empathy and humour meant more than I can say. Ruth McManus, who joined my supervisory team at the half way mark, pushed my thinking in new directions at critical moments and reminded me, when I struggled in the final stages, that it is always darkest before the dawn. Their collective wisdom and faith in my ability allowed me to see this thesis through to completion. My sincere thanks to each of you.

Thanks to Missy Morton, my Head of School, for thoughtfully balancing my research and teaching commitments and ongoing interest in this project.

Thank you to my family. Not a day has passed since my father died part way through this journey that I haven't felt him willing me on. My mother Barbara and my sister Ruth deserve special mention. Mum's unconditional care nourished me in a myriad of ways both big and small. Ruth has walked this path before; she knew just what to say and when to say it.

Without the stories of the women and men I interviewed, the story I have crafted here could never have been told. Their generosity in sharing their stories so openly with me is humbling. I thank you all.

While many saw the sweat and tears that went into producing this 'neat and tidy package of words', none saw them more often than my partner Eva, whose steadfast love and emotional and practical support sustained me each and every day. I am profoundly grateful.

Abstract

In a time of unprecedented possibilities for intimate life, lesbian known donor reproduction is an emerging form of kinship practice. While experienced as unique to the biographies of particular lesbian couples, known donors and their partners, practices of relatedness occur against the background of neoliberal discourses, processes of normalisation and legislative frameworks that are increasingly responsive to the rights claims of lesbian parents. This thesis investigates this phenomenon in contemporary New Zealand. Examining the meanings attached to cultural constructs such as 'kinship', 'family', 'parenthood', 'motherhood' and 'fatherhood', the thesis illustrates how familial boundaries and sets of relations are narratively constructed.

The research draws on interviews with 60 women and men across 21 lesbian known donor familial configurations at different stages of forming family through known donor insemination, focusing in depth on nine core family narratives. Participants included lesbian parents and parents to be, gay and heterosexual known donors, and partners of donors. The thesis argues that participants are innovative *in* conformity and *through* constraint. Although the participants live amid the same dominant heteronormative public narratives, they are *differently* normative. They pursue different familial scenarios, which creates different possibilities for lesbian couple and parenting selves and identities relative to donors and their partners. The picture emerging suggests donors and partners remain supplementary to lesbian couples. How their status is expressed is a central theme of the thesis that demonstrates the power of neoliberal agendas of personal responsibility, freedom, agency and choice. Tensions between a sense of empowerment and constraint in family-building activities are closely linked to these agendas. Contributing to debates about the operation of homonormativity in a neoliberal context, this thesis explores the discursive power of heteronormative family models and the implications of this for innovation in the intimate lives of same-sex and heterosexual subjects.

Prologue: The back story

My personal and professional histories provided the incentive and direction for this research. For many years I was an "other mother" to a now adult niece.[1] As one of four lesbians sharing part-time parenting of my sister's daughter across two households, I was well acquainted with non-traditional family forms. But where were the public narratives to help make sense of my experiences of social parenting? Very few stories legitimated my role in my niece's life, and even fewer legitimated my partner Eva's role in her life. Sometimes, I felt this lack of recognition keenly.

I came to parenting my niece by chance. Eva too, came to parenting by chance, as the result of our partnering. However, further impetus for this project came when we decided to bring a second child into our lives by pursuing intentional parenthood in the context of our relationship, a plan that absorbed our attention for many months.

Without an institutional framework specific to our circumstances or inseminating lesbian parent role models in our immediate social circle, we imagined we could construct our parenting selves freely and creatively, unencumbered by tradition. Intending to conceive using known donor insemination, we pondered what qualities were important to us in a donor, who we might ask to become our donor, and what place he would have in our future child's life. This time, public narratives to help navigate collaborating with a donor, the humour and awkwardness of sperm pick-ups, self-insemination, the pregnancy that followed, my projected self as birth mother and Eva's projected self as non-birth mother were missing altogether. Nor were there stories that could bring meaning to the shared, but individually painful experience as a lesbian couple of my later miscarriage.

As a teacher educator and researcher, these experiences honed an interest in the inclusion of diverse families in early childhood education in New Zealand. *Te*

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[1] "Other mother" was one of the names my niece liked to use for me, in her early years.

Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996) provides clear direction on ways in which all families might come to experience belonging in environments where their right to belong is upheld. Which families actually have this right has been a focus for my teaching and research for more than a decade (see for example, Gunn et al., 2004; Gunn & Surtees, 2004; Purdue, Gordon-Burns, Gunn, Madden, & Surtees, 2009; Surtees, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008; Surtees & Gunn, 2010).

The participant stories in this thesis reflect some of my own stories. They validate my stories and add to them. Sharing them here is a privilege.

Chapter 1: Narrating new familial scenarios: "It's a long story"

> "Have you got the Spermfactor?" Auckland lesbian couple crowd-sourcing sperm on Facebook. (One News Now, October 2015)

> Daddy cool. What women want in a sperm donor. (New Zealand Listener, 11 June 2016)

> Lesbian couples' stories about their experiences of trying to conceive together, including what might happen in relationships with donors, are not stories that are easily told or heard, and there is no established script for managing the procedure. (Nordqvist, 2013, p. 66)

Complex stories that produce new familial scenarios in New Zealand are at the heart of this thesis. Informed by narrative inquiry, this thesis is "a long story"[2] that examines the ways a set of lesbian couples negotiate affinities with procreative partners. These couples include those who had previously become parents through known donor insemination or who were pregnant, actively pursuing conception, or planning future parenthood using this method. Ethnographically rich, qualitative interview data captures the divergent ways the lesbian couples, gay and heterosexual known donors and some of the known donors' partners story their experiences of practising or anticipating family relationships, different forms of relatedness, and processes of kin differentiation, connection and disconnection. Across the lesbian known donor familial configurations,[3] stories about relationships with known donors and known donor partners, and their place in the lives of actual and imagined children feature prominently.

In this thesis I argue that the lesbian couples, known donors and known donor partners are innovative *in* conformity and *through* constraint. Put another way, the participants are innovative in their skilful negotiation of conventional kinship or the state of being related, including constraints imposed under conditions of neoliberalism. Constantly inventive, they endlessly make up their lives in interaction with others, figuring things out as they go, using the

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[2] Here I refer to the chapter title 'chaser', a statement from Freida, one of the study participants.
[3] My use of this term and other key terms in this thesis are described on pages 20 – 22 of this chapter.

resources they have to hand and what they think will be useful to them. These resources include key cultural resources unique to the New Zealand context and an ingenious mix of old and new ideas about families, mothers, fathers and parents. This bricolage-like process of adaption and improvisation provides insight into the exercise of agency within structural constraints.[4] Although the participants live amid the same dominant heteronormative public narratives, because they use the available resources in different ways they are *differently* normative. They pursue different familial scenarios, which creates different possibilities for the construction of lesbian couple and parenting selves and identities relative to known donors and known donor partners. Both how participants innovate (in conformity and through constraint), and explanations for the variety across their familial configurations contribute to debates about the interconnections between agency and structure that the agency-structure debate in the literature highlights (see for example, Giddens, 1984). Both also contribute to debates about the operation of homonormativity and processes of normalisation.

The fine details of participant stories show tensions between a sense of empowerment and curtailment in family-building activities. These tensions are closely linked to neoliberalism and associated neoliberal agendas, with the former popularly understood as a state economic ideology and policy model underpinned by agendas of free-market capitalism, competition and self-interest (W. Brown, 2005). Participants are simultaneously expanded by the spaces these agendas create and curtailed by them; although they perceive that they are generating innovative familial scripts of their own making, established, conventional heteronormative scripts delimit the possibilities of new ones. This thesis explores the bounded negotiation of these spaces—bounded because rights previously considered the exclusive domain of heterosexuals are conditional on good sexual citizenship, which compromises possibilities for

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[4] 'Bricolage' is a French concept popularly understood as 'making do' (de Certeau, 1984). Traversing different ontological positions, the concept has since emerged in qualitative research as a "critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry" (Rogers, 2012, p. 1). It has also been used in relation to agency and structure (Duncan, 2011), a point I develop in Chapter 8.

unlimited innovation. Taken together, these tensions and agendas explain how homonormativity is performed in neoliberal sites such as New Zealand.

The research problem

This study addresses the problem of how to view relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction. Relatedness, in this context, refers to particular forms of connectedness that can arise out of this emerging kinship practice—a practice unexplored in New Zealand. The first study of its kind in this country, it documents how people who do not have access to sperm form relationships with people who have, in order to conceive children. Figuring out where these people will fit in the lives of resulting families occurs against the background of pressures for fathers to be known biogenetically and socially. The outcome is a set of highly complex practices.

The first reference to lesbians conceiving children through self-insemination using known donors in New Zealand appeared in Saphira's (1984) volume, following reports of lesbians self-inseminating in the 1970s in the United States.[5] Today, many lesbians continue to conceive children through self-insemination using known donors in New Zealand; this simple conception method involves inserting donated sperm into the vagina using a needless syringe. Increasingly however, many lesbians prefer insemination to be mediated through a fertility service provider, using either a known donor or a knowable donor.[6] Lesbians have become a niche market in the reproductive economy, contributing to a demand for sperm that outstrips supply at fertility clinics. As fertility clinic waiting lists continue to grow, an estimated 60% of coupled lesbians and coupled or single heterosexual women using New Zealand's largest fertility service provider, Fertility Associates, choose to recruit a known donor to work with them through the clinic, rather than wait for a knowable donor to become available (Chisholm, 2016).

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[5] Saphira's (1984) volume was the first study about lesbian parents in New Zealand. The majority of participants had become parents in the context of heterosexual relationships. In keeping with the context of the time, the purpose of the book was to provide information about lesbian parents to the Family Court in an effort to counter prejudicial custody decisions.

[6] I clarify the knowable donor distinction later in this chapter.

A variety of factors has contributed to the increasing trend for lesbians and heterosexuals to use known donors in New Zealand, besides fertility clinic sperm shortages and waiting lists. These factors include New Zealand's unique cultural context and an increasing preoccupation with genetic inheritance (Grace, Daniels, & Gillett, 2008; Grace & Daniels, 2007). Father-right debates, father-right movements, the valorisation of fatherhood and the construction of fatherless families as a social crisis by conservative scholars are also significant, particularly for lesbians and single heterosexual women (see for example, Ancona, 1999; Blankenhorn, 1995; Dennis & Erdos, 1993; Popenoe, 1996).

Little is known about the social ramifications of the known donor trend. Specifically, there is a lack of knowledge about the position and role of known donors in the family lives of the children whose conception they contribute to. This has impacted on understandings about possibilities for both lesbian known donor relatedness and heterosexual known donor relatedness. With lesbians making up 28% of sperm recipient clients for Fertility Associates (Chisholm, 2016), a focus on how relatedness is constructed in lesbian known donor reproduction, regardless of whether sperm is accessed through a fertility clinic or by private arrangement, will begin to redress this knowledge gap. At a time when reproductive technologies are contributing to an increasingly complex relational landscape, new ways of negotiating relatedness have significance for both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies.

The research questions

The overarching research questions addressed are:

- What possibilities are there for relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction?
- How is relatedness constructed in lesbian known donor reproduction?

Additional questions that subsequently emerged include:

- What are the relationships between lesbian couples, known donors and known donor partners, and between children, known donors and known donor partners?

- How do lesbian couples maintain the core significance of their conceiving and parenting dyad while also negotiating social relationships with known donors and known donor partners?

The aim of the study

The overall intention of this research was to explore the contours of lesbian known donor reproduction through a close analysis of the negotiation of the place of known donors in the social networks of the children they help to conceive. In seeking to understand and analyse this kinship practice, I aimed to contribute to theoretical debates on the sociology of the family, and more specifically, new family forms. At the same time, I aimed to document and make accessible new possibilities for family relationships and practices of relevance for others, not only those who identify as lesbian or gay.

Process of inquiry

To generate information to address the research questions, I recruited 60 adults—comprising lesbians, known donors and known donor partners—across 21 lesbian known donor familial configurations throughout New Zealand. I visited these women and men in their homes, where I conducted group, couple and individual interviews, eliciting stories of planned or actual lesbian family formation through known donor insemination. The detail of the ethical, practical and process aspects of the research is discussed in Chapter 4.

Donor insemination in New Zealand: The right to know

Donor insemination in New Zealand is at the cutting edge with respect to the right to know genetic origins. As an advocate of open information sharing, this country has led the way internationally (see for example, Daniels & Lewis, 1996b; Gibbs & Scherman, 2013). The shift towards openness did not occur in a social cultural vacuum. Historically, donors were anonymous and remained unknown to married heterosexual recipients[7] and the children subsequently conceived. This method of conception was a medical technique predicated on

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[7] Single heterosexual women and lesbians were initially denied access to fertility clinic services. In 1994 the Human Rights Commission ruled that fertility clinics could no longer deny women access to their services on the basis of their sexuality or marital status.

secrecy (Daniels, 1998; Daniels & Lewis, 1996a). However, honouring the Treaty of Waitangi[8] demanded that new developments in assisted reproductive technologies acknowledge and preserve the rights and responsibilities of the two partners to the Treaty, Māori and Pākehā,[9] including the right to know genetic origins. While this right is of particular relevance to Māori because of the cultural emphasis on knowing one's whakapapa,[10] it is also relevant to many Pākehā, because the reach of whakapapa, as an ideal for Māori, has had a broader impact. The Treaty was a guiding principle for the Ministerial Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (MCART), a committee appointed by the New Zealand Government in 1993 to investigate these developments. The Committee's 1994 report recommended that all children conceived with donated gametes or embryos should have access to identifying information about their donors (MCART, 1994).

In due course, knowable donors emerged as the only legislated alternative to a known donor using standard fertility clinic strategies in New Zealand, thereby securing the right of donor conceived children to know their genetic origins.[11] Knowable donors, who are also referred to as open-identity donors, are donors whose identity is unknown to recipient couples or individuals at the time of donation, but who can potentially become known to them, and their children, in the future.[12]

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[8] The Treaty of Waitangi is a bicultural agreement signed in 1840 between the colonising British Crown and many of the indigenous Māori tribal leaders.

[9] The Māori term for a New Zealander of European descent.

[10] Whakapapa, or genealogy, is a fundamental principle intrinsic to Māori culture. It provides a basis for organising knowledge about the creation of all living things and establishing relationships between them (Barlow, 1994; Pihama, 1998). Strong connections exist between whakapapa, identity and belonging (Metge, 1995; Te Rito, 2007) with identity (and thus belonging) understood to be constructed through ancestry, rather than social construction (Callister, 2006). These connections are one of the reasons why whakapapa is a highly prized knowledge form. Accordingly, considerable effort is expended preserving it (Barlow, 1994).

[11] This right was secured two decades earlier in the field of adoption. Similarly influenced by whakapapa, the shift towards openness in adoption was an influential factor in later decisions about openness in donor insemination. The Adult Adoption Information Act 1985 enables birth parents and adoptive children to access identifying information about one another, once the children reach adulthood (MCART, 1994).

[12] Sullivan (2004) argues that the knowable donor, recipient and child relationship are latent first-order relationships. Both recipient and child are 'related' to the donor through the *potential* for future recognition of the donor-child biogenetic connection, which can occur at the point of

Where conception is facilitated by a fertility service provider using assisted reproductive procedures, those providers are required by the Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004 (HART Act) to maintain identifying and non-identifying information about donors of sperm, any resulting children, and the children's guardians (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).[13] Providers must pass on this information following the birth of children, to Births, Deaths and Marriages, in the Department of Internal Affairs, which is responsible for maintaining a register (the HART register). Any child can then access information from this register about their donor, with age restrictions determining the level of access to particular information (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).[14] Legge, Fitzgerald, and Frank (2006) suggest the HART Act 2004 potentially marks a shift in contemporary legal understandings of family in New Zealand society towards the more open, extended family structure evident in traditional Māori concepts of family formation.

Knowable donors are sometimes thought of or referred to as unknown donors, because that is the case when the donation is made. It can also remain the case, should donor-offspring not access the identifying information available to them on record.[15] The shift from being a *knowable* donor to becoming a *known* donor after accessing identifying information illustrates the instability of the knowable donor/known donor dichotomy. It is not a fixed position (Hanssen, 2015).

Degrees of knowing: Negotiated kinship

Lesbian couples who choose to use a known donor recruit from two possible pools: men with whom they have pre-existing relationships and men with whom they do not. The couples in this study most frequently recruited men with whom they had pre-existing relationships as close friends, casual acquaintances or

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identity release should a child take up this option. Until activation, the relationship nevertheless exists in the knowledge of the recipient and child.

[13] Identifying and non-identifying information about donors of eggs or embryos, any resulting children and the children's guardians must also be maintained (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).

[14] Donors can also access information about whether or not children have been born as a result of their donation and if so, the sex of those children.

[15] A knowable donor, who remains unknown, is different to an anonymous donor. Anonymous donors are donors whose identity will never be known to recipients and children. Since the HART Act 2004 came into law, fertility clinics no longer maintain a pool of anonymous donors.

relatives of the intending non-birth mother. Where the couples recruited previously unknown men, people in mutual social networks or online social networking sites facilitated introductions between the parties. Regardless of whether the couples already knew the men or met them as strangers who they subsequently came to know, once the men donated, they could never be unknowable to them as the genitors of their children. Such knowingness was important for the couples, but not straightforward. The meanings given to knowingness were complex and multilayered.

The lesbian couples actively extend the position and role of known donors and known donor partners beyond those customary for donors of heterosexual couples, who do not routinely position them as fathers or parents, much less negotiate roles for them. In assuming that a donor's biogenetic contribution to conception maps onto and creates viable donor-child social relationships from birth, the couples transform established medical and legal definitions of donors as people who can be unproblematically separated from the substance they produce.

When lesbians and heterosexual couples conceive using either a known donor or a knowable donor through a fertility clinic in New Zealand, the clinic advises parents to tell their children of the nature of their conception. However, there are no mechanisms to make sure that this happens. While clinic paperwork has to be in place in identity-release programmes for children to seek out their known or knowable donor in the future should they wish to, without any such mechanisms for disclosure of their donor status, the onus is on the children to initiate a search for information, not the parents. International studies indicate lesbian couples tend to disclose conception method to their children earlier than heterosexual couples (Beeson, Jennings, & Kramer, 2011; Jadva, Freeman, Kramer, & Golombok, 2009). Without a male partner, avoiding explaining how children came into their families becomes difficult (Nelson & Hertz, 2016; Nordqvist & Smart, 2014), particularly if they want their couple and parental relationships to be recognised (Almack, 2007).

While many heterosexual couples accept that disclosure of donor conception to their children is important in principle, practices of non-disclosure remain well embedded in the social fabric. Charged with the responsibility of meeting their children's perceived right to knowledge about donor conception, many heterosexual couples struggle to know when and how to tell. Some find a 'right time' and way to tell, but for others, this never comes (Infertility Treatment Authority, 2006; Lycett, Daniels, Curson, & Golombok, 2005; Nordqvist, 2014b).

Available evidence suggests many lesbian couples not only intend to tell children of their donor conception or have already done so, but also prefer that the donor is known (see for example, Almack, 2006; Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman, Wilkes, Halcomb, & Jackson, 2014; Luce, 2010; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2009; Surtees, 2011). This was the case for the lesbian couples in this study. The value they gave to ongoing donor-child relationships marks a departure from heterosexual couples where the donor is usually the 'stranger.'[16]

Activating social relationships

Strathern (1995, 2005) suggests that, while biogenetic information about origins automatically becomes knowledge for a person, whether or not that knowledge is activated as a social relationship is a matter of choice in Euro-American kinship thinking.[17] The lesbian couples in this study recruited known donors because they accepted that biogenetic information about paternal origins might be important for their future children and wished to activate particular kinds of known donor-child social relationships. *Degrees* of relatedness were negotiable; the couples made decisions about what *kinds* of social relationships were desirable (Strathern, 1992). Operating in an area that tended to be in their control, lesbian couples positioned known donors on a continuum of kinship

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[16] Contrarily, where heterosexual couples use egg donation there is a significant emphasis on a family member or friend donating, partly because eggs are in shorter supply than sperm (F. Price, 1999). Less is known about how parents introduce information about egg donation to children conceived in this way than information about sperm donation (Crawshaw & Montuschi, 2014).

[17] According to Strathern (2005), the term 'Euro-American kinship' derives from Northern Europe and North America. As she goes on to note, the reach of Euro-American kinship influence, while recognisable across these regions, is not restricted to them. I have adopted the use of this term in this thesis, because many New Zealanders recognise and share Euro-American kinship traditions (Fleming, 1999).

possibilities for social proximity spanning the socially close 'father' at one end to the more socially distant 'friend' at the other.[18] Where any one known donor was positioned on this continuum arguably reflected the extent to which his sperm was considered inalienable from his personhood by the couples.

Strathern (1992) maintains that kinship is understood to combine and connect natural and social domains; it is partly grounded in biogenetic 'facts of nature' and partly grounded in social relations, with the latter rooted in the former. According to Strathern (2005), people move between the natural and social domains—which she frames as conceptual relations and interpersonal relations respectively—as they interact with one another. The varied emphasis the lesbian couples in this study placed on these relations is illustrative. Following Strathern's work, I argue the couples utilised the relationship between the two concepts as a tool that helped them make sense of and negotiate the kin status and place of known donors in children's lives.

The couples who positioned known donors as socially close fathers tended to emphasise the relationship between conceptual relations *and* interpersonal relations. Known donors were important because of their ability to establish a social relationship with children as fathers that followed from biogenetic connections. For these couples, sperm was considered inalienable from a donor's personhood.

The couples who positioned known donors as more socially distant friends tended to emphasise the significance of conceptual relations first and foremost. Known donors were important because of the access they gave to biogenetic information about paternal origins. While the ability to establish a social relationship was also important—the conceptual relation would be developed over time into a social relation—it wasn't expected to be a fathering relationship. For these couples, sperm was considered alienable from a donor's personhood. The couples who positioned known donors at the mid point of the continuum were somewhere in between these two positions.

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[18] In some cases, the (male) partners of known donors were positioned alongside the known donors on this continuum.

Donor, father, parent, uncle, or friend?

Known donors occupy a potentially uneasy space. Understandings about the differences between being a known donor and being a father/parent are informed by old ideas underpinning donor insemination for heterosexual couples. In the current context, the boundaries between these roles have become much more fluid and contestable following the shift to openness in donor insemination. Nevertheless, the notion of paternity continues to be linked to fatherhood/parenthood (Moore, 2007). Nordqvist and Smart (2014) observe that where conception occurs through donor insemination, the "properties of kinship and relationality [that] are built into the donation" (p. 124) can produce an underlying tension in the donor-recipient relations. This tension, they suggest, is not present when conception occurs through heterosexual sex, where those same properties are unproblematically transferred to the resulting child.

In this study, the notion of paternity was linked to fatherhood/parenthood in two key ways. First, some lesbian couples constructed known donors as fathers or fathers/parents based on an understanding of sperm provision as the basis for an ongoing paternal or paternal/parental relationship, rather than a single or limited act of substance-sharing (Dempsey, 2004). Secondly, some lesbian couples constructed known donors as something *other* than fathers or fathers/parents based on a rejection of sperm provision as a relational basis for a paternal or paternal/parental relationship. Efforts to *not* know a known donor as a father or father/parent were necessary precisely *because* they recognised the presence of kin connections in the donation and valued this as a future source of biogenetic information for their children, but sought to guard family boundaries in the interim. Accordingly, they managed such kin connections by transfiguring them into hybrid relationships, creating roles for donors as uncles or friends. Despite these measures, there existed the constant potential for the donor to become knowable as a father or a father/parent, should his paternity be revealed before they were ready to share this information.

As the above discussion indicates, such decisions on kinship remain firmly in the domain of the lesbian couple. The picture emerging from the lesbian known donor familial stories suggests known donors and known donor partners remain

supplementary or subordinate to the couples, regardless of whether they were active in the matter of becoming fathers or were recruited as a necessary reproductive third party to the couple's plans. How their status is expressed is a central theme of the thesis because it is as yet unexplored in the New Zealand context. I argue that the ways this occurs demonstrates the power of neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility, freedom, agency and choice.

Trends in same-sex and heterosexual intimacies

Weston (1991) observes, "Lesbian and gay parenting is nothing new" (p. 167). Historically, previously married lesbians and gay men who conceived children in the context of heterosexual relationships before coming out and securing sole or shared custody of those children represented the most numerically significant genre of lesbian and gay parented families (Stacey, 1996). Marking a turning point in history, the international Western phenomenon of intentional lesbian and gay parenthood outside of a heterosexual union has become numerically significant in recent decades, as more and more lesbians and gay men conceive children in the context of their same-sex relationships.

In New Zealand, stories about this phenomenon are readily found in the mainstream media, as the headlines from a national news website and a national magazine opening this chapter attest. It is a phenomenon endorsed by progressive legislation that can, for example, secure a lesbian couple joint legal parenthood of their children through the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2.[19] These distinct pathways to lesbian and gay parenthood cannot be viewed in isolation from social transformations impacting trends in relational and family life in late modern society.[20] These trends are a significant part of the context within which the participating lesbian couples in this study negotiated the place of known donors in their families.

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[19] The details of this Act are covered in Chapter 2.
[20] In this thesis I use 'late modern society' or 'late modernity' to indicate that the contemporary modern era is one that is different to earlier modern eras. Modernity, as a sociological construction, has been debated at length hence the need to explain my particular usage.

Stacey (1996, 2006) depicts lesbian and gay parenthood as the vanguard of the diversification of relational and family patterns, which have led to a plethora of different family forms. She asserts that lesbian and gay parents, and the families they create, directly confront features of the late modern family condition, including improvisation, complexity, fluidity and ambiguity. Demographic patterns in New Zealand and many other Western countries suggest a range of diverse heterosexual parented family forms similarly confront these features, with separation, divorce, repartnering and the dispersal of parenting across two or more parents and households now common experiences. These situations draw attention to the increasingly mediated nature of family links. Relationships need no longer be accepted as inevitable, binding consequences of a previous union between couples but can be freely chosen (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Giddens, 1992). As a result, adults and children may have several sets of kin or potential kin with family boundaries drawn and contested as membership is accorded or withheld (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Smart, Neale, & Wade, 2001).

Separation, divorce and repartnering also draw attention to the emergent and negotiated parenting of children as reconstituted families come together and consolidate. Perhaps paradoxically, given Stacey's (1996, 2006) depiction of lesbian and gay parenthood as being at the vanguard, divorce discourse is a key narrative resource for some of the lesbian known donor familial configurations in this study. While their familial configurations resulted from deliberate ongoing planning before conception rather than from unplanned changes in circumstances, they nevertheless engaged in boundary definition as competing interests in belonging came to the fore. The changes that have occurred as a result of increasing separation, divorce and repartnering have ushered in a view of family that is based in a network of relationships encompassing diverse forms of intimacy and care (Silva & Smart, 1999; Smart et al., 2001). The lesbian known donor familial configurations provide an example of what this might look like as lived reality.

Figuring centrally in debates about new relational and family patterns, lesbian and gay family formations as radical harbingers of transformation are a significant theme in the research literature (see for example, Giddens, 1992;

Stacey, 1996, 2006; Stacey & Davenport, 2002; Weeks, Heaphy, & Donovan, 2001). According to Weeks et al. (2001) however, revolutionary stories about *alternatives to the family* circulating at the height of queer liberationist politics rapidly gave way to stories about *alternative families*. Queer liberationist politics was one of the approaches taken by the lesbian and gay social movements in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s (a second approach is introduced in the next section of this chapter). Seeking to dismantle the sexual hierarchy through the transformation of key social institutions, its momentum proved difficult to sustain (Richardson, 2005).

The accounts of two generationally distinct cohorts of lesbians and gay men illustrate stories about alternative families. The cohort documented by Weston (1991) in the United States in the mid 1980s fashioned distinctive kinship tenets and practices predicated on choice, rather than the conventional Euro-American kinship system that divides relationships into those based in blood and those based in marriage (Schneider, 1968/1980; Strathern, 1992). Within this system, heterosexual intercourse is a central symbol signifying unity with love (expressed through sex) understood as a natural act with natural consequences (conception and birth) (Schneider, 1968/1980). Conceptualised by Weston as 'families of choice', this emergent discourse challenged earlier constructions of lesbians and gay men as exiles from kinship in a context where 'coming out' risked alienation from family of origin. For Weston, the severing of family of origin ties raised questions about the presumed permanence of blood relatedness in Euro-American kinship through exposing a dimension of choice present in those ties.

A decade later in Britain, the cohort documented by Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) in 1995 and 1996 similarly interpreted their intimate relations as families of choice. Both cohorts viewed families of choice as supportive networks comprising a variety of different intimate relations including lovers and friends, with the latter particularly pivotal (Weeks et al., 2001; Weston, 1991). Depicted as relationally innovative, their 'life experiments' were assumed to have the potential to transcend oppressive social norms (Weeks et al., 2001).

In contrast, Heaphy, Smart and Einarsdottir (2013) observed that the younger cohorts of lesbians and gay men in Britain that they interviewed during 2009 and 2010 interpreted their intimate relations rather differently.[21] Instead of invoking families of choice, these cohorts emphasised couple relationships and family of origin ties as enduring sources of relational connectedness over friendships, which for them tended to represent transitional bonds. Refusing to describe themselves as relational innovators, they actively invested in, scripted and produced convention through practices of ordinariness evidenced in couple-centred lives, including sexual monogamy, the ceremonialising of commitments and the transition to parenthood. Attributing this departure from earlier patterns of families of choice to changed generational circumstances, Heaphy et al. note that these cohorts are less likely to be alienated from their families of origin, less likely to be experiencing marginalisation, and less likely to distinguish themselves from heterosexual couples and practices.

The need to form critical sexual cultures and communities in the ways pioneered by previous generations appears to have diminished. When I began this research, I expected to find relational innovation across the lesbian known donor familial configurations. Coming out in New Zealand during the period in which Weston (1991) conducted her fieldwork, families of choice were a popular narrative within the lesbian and gay community I found myself in, and made sense to me in my own life. Many of the participants in this study came out in a later era. Heaphy et al.'s (2013) reflection on the impact of changed generational circumstances on relational patterns may explain why this thesis does not document the degree of relational innovation I had anticipated. Despite this, I have been able to provide evidence of differences, complexities and nuances in participant openness to innovate and take risks in family-building activities.

Heaphy et al. (2013) conclude that the mainstreaming of same-sex intimate relations in some contexts is now more evident than ever before. One way to understand this mainstreaming is through analysis of homonormativity politics.

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[21] 'Younger cohorts' is used by Heaphy et al. (2013) to denote lesbians and gay men who were aged up to 35 years old when they entered a civil partnership, a selection criterion for participation in the study.

Homonormativity: Normalisation processes

Duggan's (2002, 2003) scholarship on homonormativity politics in the North American context is situated within the wider neoliberal landscape. The interrelationship between homonormativity politics and neoliberalism, how neoliberalism is interpreted in the literature, and the bearing these interpretations have on this study are addressed in Chapter 2. Exploring the processes of normalisation that are at the core of this particular social and political moment in the history of sexual politics, Duggan observes that the normalising strategies of these politics lend support to heteronormative relational ideologies at the expense of other affective arrangements.[22] These are a politics that potentially fragment queer culture and ways of life, a long-standing argument against a second approach taken by the lesbian and gay social movements in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s (see for example, Bell & Binnie, 2000; Richardson, 2005). Typically referred to as the assimilationist movement, this approach sought social integration of lesbians and gay men within the existing sexual hierarchy on the basis of sameness or continuity in same-sex and heterosexual intimacies and values (Richardson, 2004, 2005).

Duggan's (2002, 2003) theorising draws connections between homonormativity, sexual citizenship, the construction of the 'normal' lesbian and the construction of the 'normal' gay. Richardson (2015b) states, "Sexual citizenship is a multi-faceted concept, understood in a variety of different ways" (p. 3). She observes that one way this concept is used in the literature attending to both discourses of sexuality and discourses of citizenship, is to theorise access to citizenship rights conferred or withheld on the basis of sexuality. 'Good' sexual citizens were once

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[22] While earlier formulations of homonormativity infiltrated homosexual culture prior to neoliberal trends (Croce, 2015; Stryker, 2008), in the past 15 years attention to homonormativity has primarily focused on the relationship of lesbian and gay culture to processes of normalisation, with Duggan's (2002, 2003) work in this area associated with bringing the term into general currency (Stryker, 2008). Since Duggan's work, others have extended the political application of homonormativity in several directions. Most notably, Paur (2007, 2013) has applied homonormativity to homonormative nationalism, through her notion of 'homonationalism.' Homonationalism investigates the relationship between sexuality and the right for national sovereignty.

exclusively heterosexual (Bell & Binnie, 2000; Seidman, 2002).[23] Worthy of rights, these sexual citizens were also gender conventional in appearance and behaviour, accepted that sex belonged to the private or domestic sphere and bound sex to love, marriage-like relationships and family (Seidman, 2002). Heterosexuality as a condition for citizenship has however relaxed in some jurisdictions to include the normal lesbian or the normal gay (Richardson, 2015b; Seidman, 2009).

As a historically new social category, the normal lesbian or the normal gay is now "the psychological and moral equal of the heterosexual" (Seidman, 2002, p. 133). She or he performs good sexual citizenship through espousing and reinforcing norms formerly the preserve of heterosexuals (Richardson, 2004; Seidman, 2002). Recognition and acceptance of lesbians and gay men as good sexual citizens was the primary aim of the assimilationist movement (Seidman, 2002), an aim of continuing salience. Richardson (2004) acknowledges that while gains in rights have led to transformations in citizenship status for some lesbians and gay men in neoliberal states, understandings about citizenship frequently continue to be based in normative assumptions about sexuality. Such transformations can, therefore, be understood as processes of normalisation, which include some, but not others.

In this thesis, Duggan's (2002, 2003) work is introduced as a set of assertions that I apply in the New Zealand context to help make sense of the complex ways in which the participants were implicated in processes of normalisation that feed into the persistence of predominantly heterosexual understandings and practices in their familial configurations. I argue these processes explain their different familial scenarios and contribute to the ways in which known donors and known donor partners remain supplementary or subordinate to lesbian couples.

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[23] Heterosexuality per se does not guarantee good sexual citizenship. Richardson (2004) cites constructions of prostitutes, promiscuous women and single mothers as historical examples of 'bad' sexual citizenship.

Moving beyond the dichotomy

Recently, the body of scholarship in which my research is situated has documented the ways in which lesbian and gay family formations resist dominant heteronormative ideology and institutions, while simultaneously reinforcing them (see for example, Berkowitz, 2011; Erera & Segal-Engelchin, 2014; Goldberg, 2012). Such studies explore the concurrently liberating and challenging experience of parenting in lesbian and gay family formations without definitive models or scripts specific to their unconventional identity and role possibilities (see for example, Berkowitz, 2011; Hayman & Wilkes, 2016; Nordqvist, 2013; Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).

This study contributes to this knowledge about the conflicting reality of such parenting experiences, while also demonstrating the ways in which established heteronormative models linked to traditional family images are used by participants as legitimating reference points for their novel familial arrangements. As Ahmed (2014) stresses, "The absence of models that are appropriate does not mean an absence of models" (p. 154).

Applying Duncan's (2011) reasoning to my study, 'going along' with established heteronormative models of family arguably reduces the social energy that the negotiation of new circumstances—in this case lesbian known donor reproduction—demands of the participants, while simultaneously reinforcing tradition and convention. In practice however, participants also reformulated these models in some innovative ways. My research therefore seeks to extend the sometimes polarising innovative versus assimilationist debates, through an exploration of the 'both and', rather than the 'either or.' As I argue, in demonstrating innovation (in conformity and through constraint), the participant familial configurations move beyond the dichotomy of lesbian and gay family formations as bold new postmodern family forms or sites of social normalisation. The configurations move to a more complex, negotiated space presaged in the academic literature some time ago.

New contexts, new stories

Writing from the UK context two decades ago, Plummer (1995) conjectured that new stories about identities, sexualities, genders and intimate relationships could be expected to emerge in the future. In his recent volume, *Cosmopolitan Sexualities: Hope and the Humanist Imagination*, Plummer (2015) asserts this has indeed been the case. He notes that more such stories have emerged and, furthermore, are continuing to emerge. Nordqvist's (2013) recent documentation, in the same geographical context, of stories that give legitimacy to lesbian family formation from a lesbian perspective is consistent with Plummer's claims. As she observes, the telling of these stories, which could not have been told or heard in previous historical moments, alongside the telling of others like them, does important work. Their public rehearsal serves to forefront and defend family arrangements that remain socially and politically controversial. Theirs is a time that has come.

Similarly, the time for such stories from elsewhere in the West has come. The investigative and exploratory nature of this study contributes to sociological knowledge about intimate life. It does this through documenting new stories about lesbian known donor familial configurations *and* the ways in which these configurations are embedded within and constituted by a field of adult-adult and adult-child relationships and relationality *in the New Zealand context* from the perspectives of *lesbians*, *known donors*, and *known donor partners*. These areas have not been previously explored in this country. At this historical moment, the stories of these women and men can shed light on the unique cultural bricolage they use to build them (Plummer, 1995). The socio-cultural and legal contextual conditions necessary for the telling of their stories are set—conditions that include a new legislative framework responsive to rights claims shaped by the global reach of homonormativity against a background of a national (and international) history of invisibility, discrimination and exclusion. These stories, not yet evident in the literature here, are stories waiting to be told. This thesis begins to address that silence.

Matters of terminology

Before I move on to map out the thesis storylines, I explain some of the terminology I use in this thesis. These terms are foundational to the thesis, but problematic in their potential consequences. As Morgan (1999) states: "The terms that people use… become part of the social reality in which we live. If we cannot avoid using or hinting at these terms we can at least try to be alert to the possible consequences of such usages" (p. 11).

While a critique of sexual (and other) identity categories as stable and coherent is fundamental to queer theory (Butler, 1990; Seidman, 1993; Weeks, 1999), I use the terms 'lesbian', 'gay' and 'heterosexual' throughout the thesis, because these are the terms participants used to describe their sexual identities. The alternative of 'queer', which signals possibilities for fluid identities, was not used by any of the participants. Identifying as queer appears to be more common amongst same-sex attracted people under the age of 25 years old (Dempsey, Hillier, & Harrison, 2001). Most participants in this study were 25 years old or older.

The lesbian couples, known donors and known donor partners who participated in this study had formed a variety of social groups patterned on different combinations of relationships. These included intimate couple relationships and reproductive relationships, with the latter understood as a relationship created with someone of the other sex in order to have a baby (Dempsey, 2010). They also included adult-child relationships. When writing about these social groups throughout the thesis, I use the term 'lesbian known donor familial configurations' (or some derivative) to represent them, a term that slowly emerged over the course of this study as one that could capture the diverse interdependencies of the members of any one familial configuration. My use of this term is inclusive and expansive, rather than restrictive or homogenising. The term accounts for *both* family relationships *and* different forms of relatedness, however these might be understood, without presuming what forms particular familial configurations take or the nature of the domestic arrangements within them.

In settling on these terms, I drew loosely from the family configuration approach within relational sociology. In this approach, family configurations are understood as variable, fluid assemblages or sets of interdependent people sharing feelings of connectedness that are temporal and spatial in nature. Rather than focusing on key family dyads, the approach recognises the ways in which these dyads are embedded within larger social networks that can include non-family others (Jallinoja, 2008; Widmer, 2010; Widmer, Castrén, Jallinoja, & Ketokivi, 2008). This approach helped overcome the constraints that narrow definitions of families would have imposed on documenting my research findings. The approach also helped highlight the value of paying attention to the ways in which the familial configurations in this study configured, reconfigured and evolved in expected and unexpected ways, a theme communicated in many of the participant stories.

The lesbian couples in this study were either looking ahead to motherhood or were already mothers. I describe the partners in a couple as 'birth mother' or 'non-birth mother' throughout the thesis. It is not my intent to privilege biogenetic motherhood over social motherhood. Rather, I differentiate between the two terms in order to draw attention to the unique experiences associated with each category. For example, some non-birth mothers were anxious about the rights a non-biogenetic mother-child relationship might afford them, in comparison to the rights a biogenetic known donor-child relationship might afford known donors.

Specifically, I use 'birth mother' to refer to those participating women who anticipated becoming or were both genetic mother and gestational mother to children. With two exceptions, these mothers planned to or contributed the eggs and genes to their children's conception and carried and gave birth to them.[24] Partners of birth mothers are referred to as 'non-birth mothers'.[25] These

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[24] In the first exception, a birth mother underwent in vitro fertilisation (IVF) using a donated egg from a relative to conceive. In the second exception, a birth mother underwent IVF using her partner's egg and subsequently conceived, however at the time of this couple's interview, both women assumed the birth mother would conceive using her own egg.
[25] Except in the case of one partner, who did not consider herself a mother to the child she had supported the birth mother to conceive.

mothers expected to be or understood themselves as social mothers to their children. Both terms are highly problematic. For example, maternity can be dispersed into genetic and gestational components, as was the case in the footnoted exceptions. And, as I discuss in Chapter 6, a figurative genetic relationship can also be invoked between non-birth mothers and children. There is, however, no ideal solution to these problems of terminology, with alternative terms raising similar dilemmas.

I have already introduced 'known', 'knowable' and 'anonymous' donor terminology. In some cases, known donors and their male partners are positioned as the fathers or fathers/parents of their children. Where this is the case, I use the terms 'biogenetic father/parent' and 'social father/parent' to distinguish between them.

Additional terms used in this thesis and the ways I use them are explained in the context within which they appear, either in the main body of text or as footnotes. I turn now to the thesis storylines, the final section in this chapter.

Introducing the storylines

This chapter has introduced the thesis focus and established the research context. I provided a condensed account of key thesis arguments, introducing three key ideas. Firstly, I argued that different degrees of knowing are possible in lesbian known donor reproduction. Secondly, I asserted that there is a complex interplay between innovation and convention in lesbian known donor reproduction, and finally, I argued that homonormativity politics and processes of normalisation are instrumental in the mainstreaming of same-sex intimate relations.

A narrative or storying agenda drives Chapter 2. This chapter locates participant stories in sociological literature on narrative, storying, selves and identities. In the process it explores issues relating to lesbian family formation and the positioning of known donors and known donor partners. Neoliberal agendas, implicated in the positioning of known donors and known donor partners, are introduced. One such agenda is personal responsibility, which I link to

homonormativity narratives and notions of the self-regulating good sexual citizen.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the interdisciplinary conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this study, establishing the parameters within which lesbian known donor reproduction is explored in the analytical chapters. Two fields are canvassed from which insights have been derived. The first field includes anthropological perspectives on Euro-American kinship and assisted reproduction. I pay particular attention to anthropological concerns about the relationship between the natural and social domains of kinship and the ways in which kinship has been reformulated as relatedness. The second field includes sociological theorising about family practices, personal life and transformations in intimacies.

The methodological dimensions of this study are outlined in Chapter 4. In addition to addressing narrative as the key method of inquiry, I discuss some of the dilemmas I encountered and how I responded to them. I also provide an overview of the make up of the lesbian known donor familial configurations.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the substantive chapters. Each chapter is organised around three core family narratives totaling nine family narratives across them. In different ways, each chapter exemplifies neoliberal agendas of personal responsibility, freedom, agency and choice, as well as empowerment and constraint in family-building activities. Chapter 5 examines the stories of three sets of lesbian couples and the men they collaborated with to form families through donor insemination. Attention is drawn to how the couples' family and parental identities are constructed, shaped and claimed relative to the men who donated sperm. Constituted by the women as fathers through their biogenetic contribution to conception, sperm provision is understood as the basis for an ongoing paternal or paternal/parental relationship. The chapter explores the different forms of connectedness that become possible when a known donor is a present father.

Chapter 6 explores kin differentiation across the reproductive arrangements of a further three sets of lesbian couples, and the relatives and non-relatives who

agreed to or had already donated sperm for them. The focus is on the relatives/non-relatives' positioning on the continuum of kinship possibilities for social proximity introduced earlier. The chapter explores how the couples use given kin relationships, chosen kin relationships and non-kin relationships in their negotiations with donors by constructing them as uncles or friends. While the men are expected to be or are physically present in the couples' planned or actual children's lives, this construction renders them absent as fathers/parents. In attempting to explain particular relational choices in response to the novel forms of relating that their reproductive arrangements make possible, the couples draw on a range of available and sometimes contradictory discourses as resources that help frame complex ideas about kinship.

In Chapter 7, the focus shifts to the stories of three sets of gay couples who plan to be or are donors for lesbian couples and who expect to be or are fathers *and* parents. In this chapter I argue that the work of constructing fathering/parenting identities, and the parenting practices imagined or sustained, reconfigure notions of what it means to be a father/parent while simultaneously reinforcing traditional understandings of fatherhood/parenthood.

In the concluding chapter, I bring together core themes that cut across the analytic chapters, including the narrative construction of selves and identities and the relationship of this form of self and identity construction to the family narratives outlined in the findings chapters. I utilise the metaphor of bricolage to summarise insights arising from the thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint). This is followed by a discussion of what putting innovation and convention to work in lesbian known donor reproduction achieves in the context of the risks that are generated through this kinship practice for lesbian couples. I address the wider relational significance of assisted conception in both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies. I also address some of the contributions this research has made to sociological knowledge, particularly as relates to new familial forms. Finally, the challenges experienced in the course of the research and suggestions for directions going forward are outlined.

Chapter 2: Narrative agendas: "There's a story coming up"

Introduction

This thesis explores the new familial forms that are created through lesbian known donor reproduction in New Zealand. I began this research intending to produce stories about this phenomenon. The storied approach I use facilitates this aim. It takes as its primary focus a thematic analysis of the 'whats' of the telling—the participants' reports of their experiences of this phenomenon— rather than an analysis of the 'hows' of the telling (Riessman, 2008; Sparkes, 2005). Plummer (1995) asserts that stories can only be told at the point at which they can be heard, a point when social worlds are waiting to hear them. Audiences, he quips, need to be "ripened up and ready" (p. 35). Given the legislative context introduced in the first chapter, I considered that audiences in New Zealand were ready for these stories.

Eliciting stories about planned or actual lesbian family formation through known donor insemination involved little effort on my part during interviews. Spontaneous prefacing comments such as "there's a story coming up" were frequent.[26] This chapter locates these stories in two strands of the sociological literature. The first strand to be discussed is the literature on narrative, selves and identities. I draw on the work of Plummer (1995, 2003) (and others) to highlight the role of public narratives as key narrative resources for people that are intrinsically linked to their stories about themselves, other people and their individual and shared experiences. Because stories are produced within relationships, I also address the significance of a relational approach to the narrative construction of self and identity. This point—that stories are produced within relationships—is fundamental to such approaches. I outline two distinct positions on this subject.

The second strand of the literature to be discussed in this chapter is focused on neoliberal sexual politics. I understand narrative as a means for accomplishing

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[26] Timothy, a known donor participant, made the comment used in the title for this chapter as he prepared to share his story.

selves and identities *and* as a vehicle for the expression of these politics, including homonormativity and normalisation. I pay attention to the ways homonormativity and normalisation connects to neoliberalism and associated agendas of freedom, agency and choice linked to personal responsibility and contemporary modes of governance. The significance of self-regulation for the production of good sexual citizens as well as the domestication of sexual citizens through relational recognition are also elaborated.

Engaging with both strands of these academic narratives helped me conceptually position and make theoretical sense of the narratives encountered in this research. This was essential to my later exploration of the ways in which the lesbian couples, known donors and known donor partners in this study used narrative to construct themselves in particular ways relative to one another, without losing sight of the impact of normalising processes and neoliberal agendas on their self-construction. How the lesbian couples, as self-regulating subjects, actively narrated and produced themselves as normal lesbians, good sexual citizens and certain kinds of mothers/parents is a central theme of this thesis. It also helps explain how these couples positioned known donors and known donor partners. Immersing myself in the finer details of their narratives enabled me to see the ways they are innovative (in conformity and through constraint), a key thesis argument.

Old and new public narratives: Template stories

Plummer (2003) describes public narratives as stories that people tell about their lives, stories that are reproduced and reworked in public contexts. As he states, "The story can be grafted onto a telling public issue, usually one that highlights a moral/political tension that speaks to some wider issue of humanity" (p. 105). While those listening to any one story learn something of how the storyteller might handle a particular issue, debates about alternative possibilities will also elicit commentaries from others, as they offer their own interpretations of the issue.

Public narratives are resources for people's stories about self, other and experience (Loseke, 2007; Plummer, 2003), as are biographical particulars, and

cultural scripts (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Riessman, 2003, 2008; S. Smith & Watson, 2001). People assemble stories from the available narrative resources of actual places and times to make sense of themselves and others, structuring and coming to understand past and current experience through them (Brockmeier & Harré, 2001; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Jamieson, 1998; Loseke, 2007; Plummer, 1995; Riessman, 2003, 2008; B. Smith & Sparkes, 2008; S. Smith & Watson, 2001; Somers, 1994). The stories of the participants in this study didn't just "fall from the sky (or emerge from the innermost 'self')" (Riessman, 2008, p. 105). Like all stories, they were context-specific (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Riessman, 2008), formulated in the here and now on situational terrain, addressed to myself in that moment, but also to my (future) anticipated research audience. Speaking to experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction and practices of relatedness and boundary definition, the stories were tools with which the participants could come to understand these complex processes, processes that are not generally well understood.

Elliott (2005) suggests that public narratives become templates for people's stories about self, other and experience, even though each person can potentially produce their own creative, original stories. Conversely, Loseke (2007) maintains that stories about self, other and experience can also *inform* public narratives. As she surmises, before there were widely available public narratives, individual people told their own unique stories and at least some of these stories coalesced into or became exemplar stories for new public narratives. The 'direction' of influences her insight suggests—culture over person or person over culture—articulates my interest in this thesis in the tensions for participants between 'using the template' and 'making it up.'

Identifying the public narratives that served as templates in the crafting of participant stories in New Zealand in a time marked by neoliberal sexual politics is a central concern of the thesis. Such public narratives, whether participants used them consciously or not, include the 'normal lesbian' story, the 'normal gay' story and the 'good sexual citizen' story. They also include the 'longing for children' story, the 'children do best with parents who are in a committed relationship' story, the 'children will be confused with more than two parents'

story, the 'children will suffer irreparable damage if they don't know their father' story and the 'pain of an unknown father' story. These are public narratives that are readily encountered in everyday life, often in the media. As Plummer (2003) suggests, they evoke public issues, highlight moral and political tensions and speak to wider issues of humanity. In this respect, public narratives and the ceaseless flow of stories they generate accomplish work in the social order. They are anchored in wider social worlds and have a role to play in political processes, either maintaining or resisting dominant regimes and discourses (Plummer, 1995, 2003).

Considerable variety exists across the participant stories, despite the fact that those telling them draw from and live among the identified (and other) dominant heteronormative public narratives. What is interesting about the stories is that while adroitly crafted, they are not yet widely accessible as public narratives in this socio-cultural context. For this reason, these stories can be understood as being on the cusp of new public narratives. How the stories articulate, reproduce and resist particular public narratives *and* the ways they might come to shape new public narratives indicates how local culture holds participants to account, mediating who they think they are and who they think others are (Elliott, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Plummer, 1995; S. Smith & Watson, 2001; Somers, 1994). The tension between dominant and emergent public narratives reflects my attention to innovation (in conformity and through constraint) in the development of lesbian known donor familial configurations in this thesis. The thesis explores how participants' stories both facilitate the transformation of intimate life and work to maintain the dominant order.

While stories about self, other and experience draw from available public narratives and may eventually inform new public narratives, they are produced within relationships. Processes of relational becoming contribute to the narrative construction of selves and identities.

Self and identity narratives: Relational becoming

The narrative construction of selves and identities in lesbian known donor reproduction is a core component of this thesis. How the lesbian couples, known

donors and known donor partners in this study used narrative to accomplish particular selves and identities captured my attention. Their stories were tacitly persuasive, advocating a version of reality linked to what was at stake in the telling of them (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009).

Lesbian couples who participated in this research advocated a version of reality that normatively constructed lesbian intimacy, motherhood and parenting. This was a strategic construction that challenged accounts of lesbians as immoral and deviant (Nordqvist, 2013). The lesbian couples, known donors, and their partners entered into reproductive relationships with particular investments. These investments, which were related to possibilities for primary parenting responsibilities and ongoing known donor and partner sociality were at stake. I was curious about the ways the lesbian couples storied their coupled and parenting selves and identities—self as partner and self as parent identities—*relative* to their storying of social identity possibilities for known donors and known donor partners.

Tensions sometimes existed between the lesbian couples' storying of who known donors and partners could be in relation to the children they planned to or had helped conceive, and the stories told by known donors and partners about who they wanted to be or thought they were. Regardless of these tensions, many of their stories represented processes of relational becoming, a notion reflected in one strand of the ontologically informed, but theoretically diverse, literature on concepts of the self and identity. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) observe that, "The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and others organize our sense of who we are, who others are, and how we are to be related" (p. 10). Thinking of the participant stories in this way advanced the thesis agendas by drawing attention to relational approaches to the narrative construction of self and identity. What scholars contributing to this strand of the literature have to say about the narrative construction of selves and identities *in* and *through* relationships with people is therefore a key resource for this thesis. It is through discussion of this work that I attend to stories of this form of self and identity construction in Chapters 5 – 7.

Two distinct positions on the narrative construction of self and identity are explained in the literature. The first position emphasises the ways narrative practice—or storytelling—occurs in dialogue with others, a process said to *constitute* the self (De Fina, 2003; B. Smith & Sparkes, 2008). Preoccupied with questions such as 'when I am', 'where I am' and 'how I am' (Minh-ha, 1992; Riessman, 2008), this position is influenced by ontological debates locating the development of self and identity within social interactions (De Fina, 2003; B. Smith & Sparkes, 2008). In contrast, the second position explores how narrative practice *reflects* a pre-existing constant self. Absorbed with the question of 'who am I', this position draws on debates that locate the development of self and identity within the individual (De Fina, 2003; B. Smith & Sparkes, 2008). In this study, the sets of relations created through lesbian known donor reproduction reflect the 'when', 'where' and 'how' questions rather than the 'who' question. For this reason, arguments relating to how selves and identities are narratively constituted in relation to others were instrumental in my analytic orientation towards a relational framing.

Exactly *how* the narrative construction of self and identity within the two positions has been analytically investigated, however, illuminates a range of approaches within them. I found B. Smith and Sparkes' (2008) organisation of these approaches on a continuum useful as I sought to develop a more nuanced understanding of the first position. This continuum, which is neither hierarchical nor mutually exclusive, ranges between 'thin individual'/'thick social relational' approaches to stories, selves and identities at one end, and 'thick individual'/'thin social relational' approaches to stories, selves and identities at the other.

The cluster of approaches at the 'thin individual'/'thick social relational' point of the continuum spoke to the (then) emerging thesis arguments and ultimately drove them forward. The approaches resonated with my observation that participant stories were specific to the individual and couple biographies of particular participants and that they were accomplished within active relationships using shared resources. Their stories about the negotiation of adult-adult and adult-child social relationships and kinship boundary definition

were a means for constructing selves and identities for themselves and others, for making meaning in their lives, and for the expression of that meaning. My observations are consistent with the work of a range of scholars located at this point of the continuum (see for example, Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; Gubrium & Holstein, 1998; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Riessman, 1993; B. Smith & Sparkes, 2002; Somers, 1994). Following Somers (1994), the participant stories were not only a way to define who they are, but are, in turn, a precondition for knowing what to do—for action. People, as Somers states, "act, or do not act, in part according to how they understand their place in any number of given narratives" (p. 618). The participants' place in public narratives such as the 'normal lesbian' story, the 'normal gay' story and the 'good sexual citizen' story impacted their self and identity construction and provided direction about how to act.

Homonormative narratives: Neoliberal sexual politics

In Chapter 1, I introduced homonormativity politics, noting that these are a politics that convey processes of normalisation and which connect with good sexual citizenship and constructions of the normal lesbian and the normal gay. As Duggan (2003) asserts, homonormativity promises a depoliticised, demobilised, privatised lesbian and gay culture moored in domesticity and consumption. This is a culture that supports and preserves dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, rather than contesting them. "Homonormativity", de Oliveira, da Costa, and Carneiro (2014) explain, "can be conceived of as a system of norms adapted to non-heterosexuals and an integral part of heteronormativity" (p. 46).

Duggan (2002) links homonormativity politics and the processes of normalisation they signal to neoliberalism. Stating that neoliberalism is often presented "as a kind of nonpolitics—a way of being reasonable and of promoting universally desirable forms of economic expansion" (p. 177), she is referring here to its most common interpretation as a policy framework characterised by economic and trade policies associated with the operation of markets (see also, W. Brown, 2005; Larner, 2000a; Venugopal, 2015). Linked to a restructuring of previous welfare-orientated states and social policies focused on personal and

domestic life, a central goal is privatisation, or, the "'rolling back' of the state and the transfer of 'public' services and functions to private (for profit) interests" (Richardson, 2005, p. 516).[27] The academic literature identifies two additional theoretically divergent interpretations of neoliberalism that depict it as hegemonic ideology, following the influence of Marx, or as governmentality, following the influence of Foucault (see for example, Larner, 2000a; Springer, 2012; Ward & England, 2007). Both approaches enable a closer analysis of power relations associated with these interpretations.

Accounts of neoliberalism as hegemonic ideology highlight the ways powerful groups exercise political and cultural dominance producing and circulating particular ideas about the world, its problems, and how to solve them that come to be accepted by subordinate groups as natural or commonsense (Ward & England, 2007). Expanding on this point, Richardson (2015a) asserts neoliberalism, as a 'worldview', highlights its association with particular conceptual frameworks including, for example, individualism, freedom, agency and choice. These last three concepts underpin many of the lesbian known donor familial stories in this thesis. I discuss what the literature says about these concepts in this chapter because it frames later discussion about the social and political dimensions of participants' stories. My interest lies in what purposes these stories serve, what public narratives are drawn on or taken for granted in the storytelling process, and how specific storylines unsettle or reinforce particular narratives, including familiar cultural tales that link romantic love, the couple relationship, and parenthood. As already mentioned, stories perform work in the social order, are positioned within wider social worlds, and are instrumental in maintaining and resisting dominant regimes and discourses (Plummer, 1995, 2003).

Neoliberalism as governmentality implies the dispersion of government through the active and personally responsible neoliberal subject, whose self-regulation

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[27] New Zealand provides a clear example of such restructuring. The 'New Zealand experiment', or transition away from welfarism, has captured international attention because of the intense and rapid pace of reforms implemented by consecutive governments since 1984 (Larner, 2000a; Larner & Butler, 2005).

facilitates his or her own governance (Larner, 2000a; Larner & Butler, 2005; Richardson, 2015a; Springer, 2012). Returning to Richardson's (2015a) assertion that neoliberalism, as a worldview, is connected with certain conceptual frameworks, it is possible to see the interrelationship between the last two interpretations of neoliberalism. As she illustrates, processes of individualisation purportedly offer enhanced freedom, agency and choice for individual subjects *but* this does not mean that the individuals are not held personally responsible for how they use their freedom, agency and choice and the social risks that this might incur. I explore the interconnections between personal responsibility and self-regulation as a mode of governance because this approach enabled me to contextualise thesis arguments relevant to normalisation processes, a key technique in such modes of governance. Larner (2000a) aptly states, "While neoliberalism may mean less government, it does not follow that there is less governance" (p. 12).

As Ward and England (2007) acknowledge, neoliberalism has been used to refer to a myriad of things, processes and outcomes, to the point that its analytical purchase has arguably diminished (Venugopal, 2015). Certainly, the three interpretations of neoliberalism introduced here—as a policy framework, as hegemonic ideology and as governmentality—speak to its contested, complex and contradictory nature (Larner, 2000a; Larner & Butler, 2005; Springer, 2012; Venugopal, 2015; Ward & England, 2007). These interpretations have all been applied to analysis of 'the family'—family as an economic structure of ownership (see for example, Brecher, 2012); the contradiction between the emphasis in neoliberal ideology on the individual versus the expectation that the family take over the welfare of individuals from the state as a remedy for state dependency (see for example, Larner, 2000b); and, of particular salience to my thesis argument, neoliberal governance of the family and the parent/child relation (see for example, Crossley, 2016; C. Davies & Robinson, 2013; de Oliveira et al., 2014; Garwood, 2016). These interpretations do not exist in isolation; there are interconnections and overlaps between them (Larner, 2000a; Larner & Butler, 2005; Springer, 2012; Ward & England, 2007), as Richardson (2015a) has highlighted.

Springer (2012) proposes that neoliberalism as *discourse* bridges the hegemonic ideology/governmentality dichotomy without privileging either interpretation. This approach, he argues:

> Moves theorizations forward through an understanding that neoliberalism is neither built from the 'top-down', as in Marxian understandings of ideological hegemony, nor from the 'bottom-up', as in poststructuralist notions of governmentality. Rather, neoliberalism is instead recognized as a mutable, inconsistent, and variegated process that circulates through the discourses it constructs, justifies, and defends. (p. 135)

My interest lies in neoliberal discourse as a form of rhetoric and a system of meaning. Both the rhetoric enforcing heteronormative models of family and the meanings participants give to discourses of personal responsibility, freedom, agency and choice in their family-making practices are key to my analysis in Chapters 5 – 7.

Personal responsibility and the free, agentic, choosing subject

The family, according to Duggan (2003), is one of the key neoliberal arenas in which personal responsibility is exercised. Unable to become parents 'by accident', the lesbian couples in this study adopted a highly reflexive, well-researched approach to family formation exercising significant agency to conceive a child together, consistent with the findings of other studies (see for example, Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Hayman & Wilkes, 2016).[28] In this respect, the couples can be identified as classic neoliberal subjects. Their stories construct them as successful consumers of reproductive technologies with the freedom, agency and choice to create their own families *and* as personally responsible for their family-building choices.

Joseph (2013) maintains that personal responsibility is a cost of the neoliberal social production of freedom, agency and choice. Neoliberal freedom presupposes an autonomous, agentic and entrepreneurial individual, a subject

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[28] Similarly, the known donors in this study did not become known donors accidentally. They exercised agency in decisions about whether or not to donate and also contributed to decisions about social identity possibilities.

for him or herself (Gershon, 2011; Larner, 2000a). Neoliberal subjects, as purportedly unconstrained actors divorced from broader sociocultural and political contexts (Gill, 2007; Nairn, Higgins, & Sligo, 2012), can choose how they wish to live life (Hamann, 2009; Joseph, 2013; Richardson, 2004). Because they are unconstrained, actual structural limitations on the choices that are available to them are systemically overlooked (Gershon, 2011). Neoliberal subjects must therefore bear sole responsibility for the consequences of particular choices (W. Brown, 2005). As Hamann (2009) states, "Each individual's social condition is judged as nothing other than the effect of his or her own choices" (p. 43). If an individual subject fails to thrive, he or she has only himself or herself to blame (W. Brown, 2005; Hamann, 2009; Lemke, 2001).

Under these conditions, the 'right' choice, framed as personal responsibility (Nairn et al., 2012), becomes particularly significant. Weeks (2007) argues that personal responsibility forces individual subjects to make future-focused predictions or estimates about the impact of their choices (see also, W. Brown, 2005; Hamann, 2009; Lemke, 2001). This involves using a means-ends calculus to balance responsibility, choice and risk from within the context of alliances with others (Gershon, 2011). The stories of the lesbian couples in this study demonstrate some of the ways they orientated towards the future by calculating and rationally assessing the benefits and risks of their choice to use known donors. Perceptions about such benefits and risks are well documented in studies of lesbian choices apropos donor type (see for example, Hayman et al., 2014; Luce, 2010; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Suter, Daas, & Mason Bergen, 2008).

Contemporary modes of governance: The self-regulating subject

The imperative of personal responsibility requires self-regulation (Richardson, 2005). Ideas about self-regulation can be traced to Foucault's theorising about government. He focused on the *how* of government—or *how* power is exercised—in all its complexities. In Foucault's (1979/1991) governmentality lecture, he argued that the government of populations marked a transition from previously dominant structures of sovereignty or sovereign power, that is, absolute power over subjects, to disciplinary power, a regime ruled through

techniques of government acting directly and indirectly on the people without their full awareness. Foucault's lecture demonstrates how disciplinary power is invested in neoliberal modes of governance to utilise individuals to strengthen and reinforce the state. The lecture foreshadowed his increasing interest in self-regulation as his position on individual agency shifted over time, an interest further developed in relation to sexuality in his seminal three-volume study of sexuality in the West (Foucault, 1978/1990, 1985, 1986). In Foucault's early work, he rejected theories focused on individual agency and positioned the subject as a function of discourse without the causal agency attributed to it by culture (Dreyfus, 2004). In later work however, he positioned "the self in an active stance toward itself" (Hancock & Garner, 2009, p. 144).

Central to neoliberal modes of governance are normalisation processes. These processes identify, encourage and (re)produce acceptable forms of behaviour among the population with the goal of establishing personally responsible, self-regulating subjects who have internalised particular norms, removing the need for overt state direction (Richardson, 2004, 2005, 2015a). Exploring the relationship between personal responsibility and self-regulation deepened my understanding of normalisation processes. This became important for my analysis of the ways in which participants were implicated in these processes. I use these ideas in the substantive chapters of the thesis to make sense of the persistence of predominantly heterosexual understandings and practices conveyed in the lesbian known donor familial stories as well as the tensions between the sense of empowerment and the sense of curtailment in family-building activities across the stories. I also use them to think through the supplementary or subordinate status of known donors and known donor partners in relation to lesbian couples. These ideas helped to develop my argument that the participants in this study are innovative (in conformity and through constraint) and also contribute to an analysis of how homonormativity is performed.

Producing the good sexual citizen subject

Richardson (2005) points out that lesbians and gay men have a history of being self-regulating subjects, based in the condition of social oppression concomitant

with a fear of violence and shame. As she argues, the contemporary lesbian or gay subject has, however, internalised *new* norms for what it means to be a responsibilised good sexual citizen, based in a desire for normativity. In practice, lesbians and gay men can now achieve good sexual citizenship status by self-regulating through normative constructions associated with this status that are coded to a heteronormative lifestyle. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these constructions include gender conformity and sex as a private act linked to love, marital-like relationships and family. Producing the normal lesbian and the normal gay, she or he is expected to be devoted to coupledom, home, career and nation (Richardson, 2004; Seidman, 2002).

The shift from queer liberationist politics, which critiqued and challenged key social institutions, to the assimilationist movement's aim of social inclusion of lesbians and gay men, cemented an equal rights politics within lesbian and gay social movements that is credited with the notion that the normal lesbian, and the normal gay, as good sexual citizens, merit integration into mainstream society. Profoundly shaped by neoliberalism, this equal rights politics is now the dominant discourse of contemporary lesbian and gay social movements in New Zealand, Australia, Europe, the United States and Canada (Richardson, 2005, 2015a). In this study, heterosexual understandings and practices as the primary reference point or resource for lesbian couples' family formation align with this approach. Equal rights politics is credited with liberal gains in areas that were once reserved for the privileged domain of the heterosexual family such as domestic partnership recognition or legalisation of same-sex marriage, legal parenthood recognition and inheritance rights (D'Emilio, 2000; Richardson, 2004; Richardson & Seidman, 2002; Seidman, 2002). However, such a politics has problematic ideological effects and political ramifications, which contribute to the construction of the normal lesbian and the normal gay.

While the constructs of the normal lesbian and the normal gay can be a compelling way of representing lesbian and gay life, an equal rights politics premised on sameness is a politically reactionary strategy that fails to challenge heteronormative hegemony (Clarke, 2002; Ryan-Flood, 2009). Feminist scholars, queer scholars and activists have all critiqued such politics. Fundamental to their

criticisms are questions about the value of a model of sexual citizenship that reinscribes normative assumptions about gender and sexuality, and privileges committed intimate coupledom over alternative intimacies for lesbians and gay men as the foundation for entitlements to particular rights (Richardson, 2004). In particular, emphasising sameness assumes a universal lesbian and gay man with shared interests and needs to heterosexuals premised on white, middle-class assumptions (Bell & Binnie, 2000; Richardson, 2005; Riggs, 2007a, 2007b).

This emphasis on sameness obscures multiple forms of difference (Bell & Binnie, 2000; C. Davies & Robinson, 2013; Richardson, 2005; Vogler, 2015) and fails to challenge larger systems of power (Clarke, 2002; Duggan, 2011/2012; Murphy, Ruiz, & Serlin, 2008) or the ways in which systems of oppression are interlocked (McRuer, 2011/2012; A. Y. Price, 2010). As Richardson (2005) argues, it encourages and privileges a specific construction of lesbians and gay men—the normal lesbian and the normal gay.[29] Lesbians and gay men are measured against this construction, opening divisions between those who fit this category and those who don't, a process leading to new exclusions (de Oliveira et al., 2014; Duggan, 2003; Richardson, 2005; Riggs, 2012; Riggs & Due, 2013). With respect to lesbian and gay parents, Riggs (2007a) observes that those who are unwilling or unable to emulate heterosexual parents are depicted as deviant or deficient.

Clarke (2002) suggests normality claims can make it difficult to draw attention to the impact of oppression and can prevent lesbians and gay men from setting political agendas on their own terms. Further to this, Hicks (2005) notes normality claims can serve to deny the significance or relevance of lesbian and gay concerns. Finally, both Richardson (2004) and Seidman (2002) have mounted arguments against the assumption that full social integration of the normal lesbian and the normal gay will actually achieve equality. Some commentators go so far as to suggest it will only achieve virtual equality or the illusion of progress at the expense of addressing the ways in which all social inequalities are deeply rooted in social life (see for example, Vaid, 1995).

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[29] It also encourages and privileges a specific construction of heterosexuals.

A new sexual hierarchy?

Seidman (2009) claims that considerable evidence indicates only some lesbians and gays achieve good sexual citizenship status. These are the self-regulating normal lesbian and gay subjects who voluntarily choose stable, committed intimate relationships and share similar family values to heterosexuals. As Richardson (2015a) states, these subjects "make responsible choices in their lives in terms of how they think and behave, in ways that are considered normal and desirable for society and 'the common good'" (p. 264). They want full inclusion in core societal institutions and the same rights and responsibilities as heterosexuals (D'Emilio, 2000). In contrast, those refusing good sexual citizenship status, or whose circumstances prevent them from achieving it, are defined as the 'bad' lesbians and gays. These lesbians and gays choose unstable, transitory intimate relationships and engage in 'bad' sexual practices such as promiscuity (Richardson, 2004, 2005; Seidman, 2002, 2009).

As intimated in Chapter 1, the separation of the good sexual citizen from the bad sexual citizen is no longer as closely bound to the separation between the heterosexual and the homosexual. Historically, this separation has been sustained by compulsory heterosexuality. Seidman (2009) charts the development of compulsory heterosexuality, a social order based on essentialising perspectives on sex and gender. Organised around a heterosexual-homosexual sexual hierarchy, compulsory heterosexuality produces a gender binary that privileges heterosexuality. More specifically, it establishes standards for 'normative' or model heterosexuality (particular traits and behaviours defined against those associated with homosexuality). Seidman goes on to venture therefore, that in social settings where lesbians and gays are normalised, a moral boundary between good and bad sexual citizens is stabilised *regardless* of whether those citizens identify as heterosexual or homosexual. Accordingly, the sexual hierarchy shifts from the dominant heterosexual-homosexual division to a good-bad sexual citizen division. As he adds, in such contexts, the privileging of gender preference gives way to the privileging of heteronormative relational ideals. Richardson (2004) contends that a revision of what it means to 'be gay' could be one effect of this. If this becomes the case, a transition away from 'being

gay' as a sexual identity towards 'being gay' as a social identity will occur. As she notes, a residual tension remains however, because it is *sexual* coupledom that brings about the normalised lesbian or gay status.

These insights influenced my analysis in the substantive chapters of this thesis. Earlier in this chapter I suggested that lesbian couple stories constituted lesbian intimacy, motherhood and parenting as normal. The couples' commitment to coupledom, as the appropriate location for both intimacy and primary motherhood/parenthood, in conjunction with household organisation and use of a known donor willing to be positioned as a father (at most) or available as a future source of information about paternal origins (at least), draws attention to the legitimacy of their family arrangements. In this analysis, the couples' *same-sex relationship* is downplayed, while *committed coupledom* and heterosexual forms of parenting are upheld as benchmark standards.[30] Deserving of social inclusion, the couples are normal lesbians and good sexual citizens who conscientiously construct normative childhoods for their children.

Relational regulation: Domesticating sexual citizens

Heaphy et al. (2013) state that, "Assumptions about the naturalness of couple-centred relationships, families and kinship… shore up a couple-centred relational panorama" (p. 4). The enduring centrality of 'natural' coupledom to the relational imaginary is prominent in lesbian and gay equal rights politics, with public and institutional recognition of the normative lesbian or gay couple a key location for constructing good sexual citizenship (Richardson, 2004; Seidman, 2002). The international trend towards legal relationship recognition for same-sex couples appears to support this position by leaving intact core relational norms.[31] Critics of this trend consider civil registration schemes and same-sex marriage evidence of neoliberal sexual governance that arguably produces new normative subjects at the expense of others (Brandzel, 2005; Butler, 2004; Croce, 2015; Donovan, 2004; Duggan, 2002; Richardson, 2004; Weeks, 2007, 2015).

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[30] This being the case, I have limited my discussion on sex/gender and sexuality here. I return to the question of participant sexuality in Chapter 4.

[31] For an overview of international legal relationship recognition for same-sex couples, see: http://www.pewforum.org/2015/06/26/gay-marriage-around-the-world-2013/

Critics also caution against the reification of marital models and the possible loss of recognition of alternative relational possibilities to the coupled, nuclear family model inherent to marriage (Croce, 2015; Dempsey, 2015; Dietz & Wallbank, 2015; Duggan, 2011/2012; Heaphy, 2015; Heaphy et al., 2013; McRuer, 2011/2012; Santos, 2013).

The relatively new legislative framework in New Zealand relating to lesbian and gay relationships and parenting recognition is part of the context for this study. I introduce this legislation here, because of its connection to normalising processes and as an example of the ways participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint), a key thesis argument.[32] For example, some couples used the legislative resources at their disposal, innovating in the ways they brought known donors and known donor partners into children's lives, while retaining the core parenting relationship for themselves. By doing so, they simultaneously conformed to and were constrained by the assumption that parenthood should always reside in co-residential coupledom, as elaborated in Chapters 5 – 8.

In New Zealand, lesbian and gay couples are regulated as legitimate couples and good sexual citizens through a civil union or marriage. Civil unions came into force in April 2005 following the passing of the Civil Union Act 2004. Marriage became possible within the decade, following the passing of the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013. This Act removed the restrictions that previously prohibited same-sex couples from marrying, enabling couples to marry regardless of gender or sexual orientation.[33] While participants in this study who had entered a civil union were in the minority, and marriage was not an option during the period in which fieldwork was conducted, significant emphasis was given to marriage-like relationships as a basis for parenthood. Heaphy's (2015) observation in the mainland Britain context applies to New

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[32] Further legislative detail is developed in the context of the lesbian known donor familial stories in the findings chapters.

[33] Goodwin, Lyons, and Stephen (2014) outline aspects of the heated debate that marked the passage of both acts, noting this debate was informed by equal rights (and other) discourses that raised questions about the characteristics of New Zealand citizenship and the conferral of citizenship.

Zealand. While the 'battle' for same-sex relational recognition has been won, "Battles for recognition and support of radically diverse same-sex *and* heterosexual relational lives… seem to be lost for the immediate future at least" (p. 130, italics in original).

Garwood (2016) maintains that while much has been written about the connection between same-sex relational recognition and normalising processes, same-sex reproductive law, which has received scant attention, is also a vehicle for these processes. As she states, "The privileged position of marriage within same-sex reproductive law continues to serve a homonormative discourse of monogamous, committed relationships as the ideal within neoliberal society" (p. 11). Both Riggs (2012) and Wilson (2013) comment on the assumption in the literature that the appropriate context for lesbians and gay men to raise children is within the couple relationship, an assumption anchored in historical traditions that associate marriage with proper childrearing (Dietz & Wallbank, 2015).

In New Zealand, lesbian couples are recognised as legitimate parents through legislation that retains and reiterates norms of two-parent nuclear families. The status of children conceived through specified reproductive procedures involving donated gametes is determined under the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2, which came into force on 1 July 2005 (Gunn & Surtees, 2009; Kelly & Surtees, 2013; Surtees, 2011, 2012).[34] This Act stipulates that where donated gametes are utilised,[35] the deeming rules under Part 2 apply. These rules state that the woman who conceived with donor gametes and delivers a child, regardless of her genetic relationship to the child, and her partner, on the proviso that she or he consented to the method used, are the child's legal parents (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).[36] Utilising this provision therefore enables a lesbian couple that has conceived through donor insemination to secure joint legal parenthood of their children. In this study, the majority of the

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[34] The status of children conceived without the assistance of reproductive procedures is determined under the Status of Children Act 1969, according to the general rules of that Act.
[35] Whether sperm or egg.
[36] The position of known and knowable donors in relation to this legislation is explained in Chapter 5 on page 107.

birth mothers who conceived children after 1 July 2005 chose this option. Alongside their consenting partners, the birth mothers and partners were able to name themselves as parents when they registered their children's births,[37] enabling the partners (the children's non-birth mothers) to formalise their social relationships to the children.[38] [39]

Conclusion

Working within a narrative framing provided a language to talk about the construction of selves and identities. In this chapter, I depict narrative as a means for accomplishing selves and identities and a vehicle for neoliberal sexual politics, or homonormativity politics. I therefore approach participants in this study on the basis that they use storying both to accomplish particular selves and identities within the context of active relationships, and to understand their mutual experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction. Drawing from available public narratives as resources for their stories, they worked to manage tensions between 'using the template' and 'making it up' in family-building activities—or innovation (in conformity and through constraint)—a process significantly impacted by homonormativity.

Duggan (2003) stresses that homonormativity recodes key terms central to the history of lesbian and gay social movements. In her opinion, 'equality' becomes linked with narrow access to conservative neoliberal institutions. Equality claims, linked to normalisation processes, are interrelated with questions of sexual citizenship and have led to the construction of the normal lesbian and the

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[37] All births must be registered in New Zealand, as required by the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995. This process involves completion of a form, which both parents have to jointly sign. Following registration, and on payment of a fee, a birth certificate can be ordered. The form for requesting a birth certificate provides for the identification of both parents and they are then recorded on the birth certificate.

[38] Most prospective birth and non-birth mothers in the study also expected to utilise this provision.

[39] Similar provisions for lesbian couples to secure joint legal parenthood of children conceived through donor insemination have been made in other countries (for details of some of these provisions see, Dempsey, 2015; Dietz & Wallbank, 2015; Garwood, 2016; Hayman, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2013; NeJaime, 2016; Swennen & Croce, 2015). Studies across national and international contexts stress that this is important for lesbian couples and non-birth mothers in particular, a point I develop in the findings chapters (see for example, Cloughessy, 2010; Crawford, 2014; Hayman et al., 2013; N. Park, Kazyak, & Slauson-Blevins, 2015; Surtees, 2011; Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014; Zamperini, Testoni, Primo, Prandelli, & Monti, 2016).

normal gay. Based on heternormative ideals, including gender conformity and sex as a private act linked to love, marital-like relationships and family, these contested, narrow constructs establish divisions between those who conform to these ideals and those who do not. The governance of same-sex intimacies through these constructs, which highlight self-regulation and notions of personal responsibility, has ramifications for diversity in family forms. Failing to recognise alternative relational arrangements to those centred on heternormative ideals risks excluding or erasing forms of relatedness deviating from the norm. It also impacts both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies in a context where reproductive technologies increasingly contribute to non-normative relational interconnections and dependencies.

Debates about the politics of lesbian and gay normalisation that emphasise normative coupledom do not necessarily take into account connections between ideas about coupledom and anthropological and sociological thinking on kinship, particularly Euro-American kinship discourse within which heterosexual couple unity is key. For this reason, Chapter 3 addresses old and new kinship thinking in these fields, exploring their relevance to lesbian known donor reproduction. The revitalisation of kinship is addressed, including new relational approaches that represent a challenge to the solitary, isolated individual at the forefront of the individualisation thesis (Smart, 2011). If the self-contained, free, agentic, choosing individual within neoliberal discourse discussed in this chapter is an individual that is removed by that discourse from the very sets of relations instrumental in bringing him or her to subjecthood in the first place (de Oliveira et al., 2014), then relational approaches relocate the individual back within sets of relations. As I have stressed, the participant stories in this thesis represent narrative processes of relational becoming, but because they are also stories about agency and choice, exploring perspectives in the literature that account for these dimensions of narrative selves is critical to my analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Finally, the following discussion is contextualised with reference to sociological theorising accounting for transformations in intimacy and subsequent critiques of individualised intimacy.

Chapter 3: Changing kinship, family and relational narratives: "That's an interesting story"

Introduction

Narratives about change and transformation in kinship, families and relationships make for "an interesting story".[40] In this chapter, I introduce the interdisciplinary conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this study relevant to such change and transformation. I highlight how they frame my analysis of the kinds of stories that can result from lesbian known donor reproduction—stories about family relationships and different forms of relatedness. These stories locate this study in the first field to be discussed, kinship.

The study of kinship has been of continuing concern to anthropology since its inception as a discipline. Carsten's (2004) commentary on 'old' kinship thinking notes that early anthropologists took nature as the accepted grounding for the cultural in kinship and distinguished between biological and social kinship, considering this distinction crucial to an analysis of the field. Typically viewing the biological aspects of kinship as beyond their expertise, they concentrated on exploring and coming to understand those aspects of kinship associated with the social sphere. I outline some of the assumptions pivotal to Euro-American kinship discourse that underpinned much of this work, considering the ways in which the distinction between biological and social kinship came under scrutiny over time. Questions focusing on the degree to which kinship can be viewed as an unchangeable fact of nature increasingly emerged. Such questioning of the basis of kinship opens up academic discussion of social practice to new possibilities that underpin the subject of this thesis – of new negotiations of kinship.

Anthropology's questions about kinship eventually spilled over to sociology and arguments for the sociological significance of kinship across both disciplines began to mount. I chart the subsequent shifts in kinship theorising, which

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[40] An interview comment by Reese made to introduce the topic of her relationship with Simone.

culminated in 'new' kinship thinking. Contemporary kinship thinking has been attributed with reformulating kinship in the direction of relatedness and opening up exploration of kinship as a set of practices, both of which have proved invaluable to my analyses. I explore some of the catalysts for this thinking. These include Schneider's (1968/1980, 1984) culturalist critique of kinship, Weston's (1991) study of lesbian and gay kinship, and developments in reproductive technologies that cast doubt on the extent to which kinship can be viewed as a pre-given fact of nature. The ongoing emphasis given to the transmission of biogenetic substance for understandings about self-knowledge, ontological security and biogenetic relatedness and unrelatedness and some of the ways this plays out in studies of lesbian family formation are also explored.

The second field to be discussed in this chapter focuses on the point that lesbian known donor familial configurations depart from traditional family ideals. The discussion therefore includes sociological theorising that seeks to account for transformations in intimacy, family and relational life, within which the familial configurations are situated. Such transformations have been linked to processes of individualisation, however contemporary kinship thinking challenges the individualisation thesis through a focus on relatedness. Finally, I explore Morgan's (1996) work on family practices and Smart's (2007) emphasis on personal life as examples of new directions in the field of relevance to the relatedness stories that are central to this thesis.

'Natural' kinship?: Biology versus culture

Genealogical or biological relations of reproduction as *the* source of kinship have been prevalent in the anthropology of kinship. Sahlins (2013) points out that 'real kinship', or relationships established by birth predicated on heterosexual intercourse and reflected in concepts of 'blood' kin, were distinguished from 'fictive kinship' relationships, or those without a biogenetic connection.[41] According to Franklin and Ragoné (1998), late 19th century and early 20th

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[41] Weston (1991) suggests the notion of fictive kinship lost plausabilty following the emergence of symbolic anthropology. An understanding "that all kinship is in some sense fictional—that is, meaningfully constituted rather than 'out there' in a positivist sense" (p. 105) subsequently developed.

century analyses of reproduction were, therefore, narrowly cast. Reproductive foundational models, relegated to the domain of nature and positioned within the marginalised private, domestic sphere associated with women and maternity, focused on factual cognition of physical paternity. This limited the ways in which reproduction could be studied. As they suggest, the biologistic assumptions underpinning these foundational models have proved difficult to dislodge and remain pervasive in popular culture. The challenges to these assumptions that Schneider (1968/1980, 1984), Weston (1991) and others offer have been largely confined to the discipline.

Destabilising natural kinship: The culturalist critique

In the United States context, the pioneering work of Schneider (1968/1980, 1984) offered the first significant culturalist critique of kinship. He was highly critical of the ethnocentric premises underpinning the study of kinship. Specifically, he challenged the axiom that heterosexual intercourse could be cross-culturally understood as pivotal to bringing persons into being and establishing relationships between them. Or, in other words, he critiqued assumptions about the universal primacy of ties originating from heterosexual procreation.

Characterising kinship as a culturally specific system, Schneider's interest lay in the ways in which symbols and meanings were produced. The themes of his key works, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account* (1968/1980) and *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* (1984) were centered on the relationship between two major cultural orders: nature, or the biological aspect of kinship, and culture, or the social aspect of kinship. His theorising distinguished between kin established by the 'order of nature' (biology or substance) and kin established by the 'order of law' (marriage or code for conduct). In his analysis, kin could derive from either of these orders or a combination of both. While the former was important conceptually, he argued that kinship could no longer be primarily construed in terms of relationships established by birth. In reframing kinship as an empirical question to be investigated, rather than a universal set of natural facts, Schneider's (1968/1980, 1984) critique marked a turning point in anthropology.

Kinship lost ground through the 1970s and 1980s, before undergoing a revival from the late 1980s (Carsten, 2000, 2004; Franklin & Ragoné, 1998).

Families of choice: Lesbian and gay kinship

Feminist scholarship in the domains of the family and gender as well as studies of lesbian and gay kinship contributed to the renaissance in kinship within anthropology (Carsten, 2004). Weston's (1991) pioneering study was particularly influential. Drawing on Schneider's (1968/1980, 1984) critique of kinship, her families of choice thesis effectively challenged the anthropological assumption that kinship unfailingly emerges from procreation:

> What gay kinship ideologies challenge is not the concept of procreation that informs kinship in the United States, but the belief that procreation *alone* constitutes kinship and that 'non-biological' ties must be patterned after a biological model (like adoption) or forfeit any claim to kinship status. (p. 34, italics in original)

Rather than following a biological model, Weston argued lesbian and gay kinship was modeled on choice. She claimed that the lesbians and gay men in her study chose their own families *and* that their experiences revealed a dimension of choice in their family of origin ties following the severing of these ties after coming out. These ideas were lent further weight by the later findings of Weeks et al. (2001). As indicated in Chapter 1, alienation from family of origin challenged the supposed permanence of family of origin ties in Euro-American kinship.

Weston's (1991) study was conducted at a time when lesbians were increasingly self-inseminating in order to conceive children within lesbian relationships or as single parents. Conceding that this practice reintroduced biology into lesbian parented families, Weston accounted for this contradiction in her families of choice thesis by pointing out that when asked, most participating lesbians:

> Did not consider a sperm donor to be intrinsically a parent, much less a partner, in relationship to a child conceived through alternative insemination;[42] unless the donor shared parenting responsibilities, his

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[42] She notes this occurred rarely.

semen tended to be spoken of simply as a catalyst that facilitates conception. Biological relatedness appeared to be a subsidiary option ranged alongside adoption, coparenting, and so on, *within* the dominant framework of choice that constituted families we create. At the same time, the distinction many gay people made between biological and nonbiological parents perpetuated the salience of biology as a (though not *the*) categorical referent for kinship relations. (p. 189, italics in original)

In her view, the framework of choice therefore held, with the option of accepting biological relatedness as a basis for social relationships being but one of several possible options. Similarly, Weeks et al. (2001) found that, while lesbians who conceived through insemination usually acknowledged the men who donated for them as the fathers of their children, neither they, nor the men, assumed that parenting work necessarily correlated with a biological adult-child relationship. Nonetheless, it remains the case that participants across both studies did invoke notions of a stable, permanent biological kinship discourse in respect to conceiving and parenting children in the context of their families of choice. The findings of numerous studies since indicate that biology as a symbol of lesbian kinship has been embraced, dispersed and/or reinscribed with non-traditional meanings in a variety of ways (see for example, Almack, 2005; Hayden, 1995; Jones, 2005; Lewin, 1993; Nelson & Hertz, 2016; Nordqvist, 2012b). So while the notion of biology was challenged, it has still remained within academic and popular discourses and was also mobilised by some lesbians in this study. The presence of biology is also evident in consideration of reproductive technologies.

Making strange the familiar: Reproductive technologies and kinship

Reproductive technologies that assist conception include several distinct forms of donor insemination, traditional or gestational surrogacy,[43] IVF and the routine cryopreservation of sperm, oocytes and embryos to aid or make possible these procedures.[44] Carsten (2000) observes that such developments in reproductive

[43] In traditional surrogacy, the surrogate is inseminated with sperm from the intending father. The surrogate herself provides the ova for conception and is therefore genetically related to any child she conceives. In gestational surrogacy, the surrogate is implanted with an embryo created through IVF using ova from the intending mother, or donated ova, and sperm from the intending father, or donated sperm.

[44] More controversially, procedures such as mitochondrial DNA transfer, a process combining three different sets of DNA to create an embryo, have garnered recent media attention because of

technologies proved another contributing factor to the renaissance in kinship by further sharpening concern with issues about nature in Euro-American cultures. These technological developments made strange the familiar as they exposed and made explicit assumptions about kinship in ways not previously explored (Franklin & McKinnon, 2001; Franklin & Ragoné, 1998). In response to the challenges posed by the technological developments, the combined energies of anthropologists, sociologists and socio-legal scholars were brought to bear on a social analysis of reproduction (Carsten, 2004; Franklin & Ragoné, 1998). Strathern's work on the cultural implications of the use of assisted conception proved particularly significant (but see also, J. Edwards, Franklin, Hirsch, Price, & Strathern, 1999; Franklin, 1997, 2001; Franklin & McKinnon, 2001; Franklin & Ragoné, 1998; Ginsburg & Rapp, 1995). I discuss several aspects of Strathern's work in this section of the chapter, for the ways in which it provoked my thinking about the implications of assisted conception for kinship. These include the notion that in Euro-American kinship, procreation produces kinship, and the notion that assisted conception separates kinship from family. I also discuss the significance of the transmission of biogenetic substance from parents to child and what this means in this context.

Strathern (1995) argues that in Euro-American kinship, procreation—the process of conceiving—is accepted as a natural process. It produces a kinship that is based in biogenetic relationships—thus while parents are not born kin to one another, the child they conceive and bear is born kin to them. Because the child creates closeness, both between the parents and between the parents and child, this closeness comes to represent the ways in which kinship and familial relations fold into one another, contained within the family. According to Strathern (1992), this is a kinship that combines *and* connects natural and social domains. These domains are grounded in biogenetic 'natural facts' and social relations and framed as conceptual relations and interpersonal relations respectively, as briefly introduced in Chapter 1. Elaborating, she argues that

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fears they will lead to widespread genetic engineering (see for example: http://www.bbc.com/news/health-31069173; http://www.bbc.com/news/health-27678464).

natural facts—or the 'facts of nature'—are socially constructed and that while they have been considered natural processes, assisted conception highlights that they can no longer be taken for granted. In this radical departure from previous assumptions, social relations do not follow 'after nature.' This is an important point when assisted conception is considered.

In assisted conception then, kinship and familial relations do not fold into one another in the same way. Kinship, Strathern (1995) argues, is dispersed beyond the family. As she puts it, "There thus exists a field of procreators whose relationship to one another and to the product of conception is contained in the act of conception itself and not in the family as such" (p. 352). Notwithstanding this argument, she points out it remains generally accepted that being a party to assisted conception establishes a relationship. Extending on her example, this means that if a known donor (or, for that matter, a knowable or anonymous donor) is understood as the 'biogenetic father' of the child whose conception he helps make possible for an infertile heterosexual couple, a lesbian couple, or a single woman as the child's intending parent/s, then procreation will continue to be understood as producing kinship such that, "What was once a symbol for closeness in familial relations may now bring in persons distant from one another" (p. 352). Strathern goes on to surmise that whatever the role of particular parties to assisted conception, dispersed kinship may introduce new models for relations, including those "that can take on a kinship character even where they cannot take on a family one" (p. 353).

Strathern's (1992, 1995) arguments contributed to my understanding of the interrelationship between the natural and social domains—or conceptual and interpersonal relations—specifically her suggestion that people move between the two domains in interaction. As mentioned in Chapter 1, participating lesbian couples differently emphasised the natural and social domains, positioning known donors on a continuum of kinship possibilities for social proximity, as explored in Chapters 5 to 7. Put another way, the couples mapped biogenetic relationships on to social relationships, but the actual activation of social relationships looked different across different familial configurations. Some couples considered that procreation produced kinship, constructing known

donors as fathers. These known donors took on a 'kinship character', but not necessarily a 'family one', typically remaining outside of (supplementary or subordinate to) the immediate lesbian-couple family. On the other hand, some lesbian couples did not accept that procreation produced kinship, constructing known donors as non-kin (supplementary or subordinate to) their coupled family. For other couples, the distinction between whether a known donor was kin or non-kin was less clear. While the couples combined and connected the natural and social domains in their negotiation of lesbian known donor reproduction, they also disconnected them. As Strathern acknowledges, assisted conception destabilises assumptions that take for granted a simple division between the domains, offering new ways of thinking about kinship and relatedness.

Strathern (1995) demonstrates that while procreation produces kinship, it does not necessarily produce reproduction, which is commonly understood as the process by which individuals create new and similar individuals. This process symbolises reproductive continuity—the transmission of biogenetic substance from parents to child is correlated with the transmission of dimensions of each parent with a relationship inhering in the continuity of both parents' identities. The bodily expression of relatedness through the transmission of biogenetic substance (and parental dimensions) is understood to manifest itself in resemblance (Becker, 2000; Richards, 2006). Strathern points out that this process, which requires knowledge about each parent, is not available in the case of anonymous gamete donation. She observes that, in the context of known gamete donation, the identity of the parties to assisted conception may be considered the key to duplicating the intending parents' identity. This observation informs aspects of my analysis in Chapter 6 about issues of resemblance and physical likeness as a resource for family unity.

Although Strathern (1995) indicates that personal choice may determine the relevance of biogenetic connections and whether or not social relationships are therefore activated, the notion that the transmission of biogenetic substance from parents to child constitutes relatedness remains a fundamental Western belief (Carsten, 2001; Thompson, 2001). Understood to have significance for self-

knowledge and ontological security, the perceived right of a child to know his or her biogenetic origins is increasingly justified (Strathern, 1999, 2005). Linked to the so-called geneticisation of society, or the idea that everything about human life and behaviour can be explained by genetics, the now routine focus on genes has come to represent both inherited identity and destiny (ten Have, 2001). In both this context, and a context where increasing attention is paid in New Zealand (and internationally) to the father-right debates and father-right movements mentioned at the start of this thesis, prospective lesbian parents are reflexively engaged in ongoing discussion about how known donors will feature in or impact on the families they intend to create. Unsurprisingly, the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins is socially influential.

Self-knowledge, ontological security and kinship

Ryan-Flood's (2005) investigation into how culture and social policy shapes lesbian known donor reproduction is illustrative of the compelling power of the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins. Her cross-national comparative study of lesbian parenting in Sweden and Ireland made a substantive contribution to knowledge about lesbian known donor decision-making by revealing the ways in which the choice to use a known donor is influenced by national context, culture, social policy and particular discourses of fatherhood. She found that most of the Swedish lesbian parents in her study chose known donors who were willing to take an active role with children, because of the value they gave to fathering/male parenting participation. In contrast, the Irish lesbian parents tended to choose known donors who would be known to them, but not to the children who they helped conceive unless those children expressed curiosity in the future. These known donors remained uninvolved in all respects. For both sets of parents, access to knowledge about paternity was considered important for children and was the prime motivator for the choice to use a known donor. The desire to secure this access for children reflected cultural ideologies about the significance of 'blood' ties for self-knowledge, ontological security and kinship. The marked cultural differences evident in attitudes towards father's roles and

responsibilities between the two countries, as well as cultural differences in family policy and gender and sexual equality, was significant in explaining the different approaches the parents took to their donors' involvement or non-involvement.

Both the compelling power of the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins and Ryan-Flood's (2005) substantive contribution that lesbian known donor decision-making can only be understood in relation to the contexts in which it occurs are highly relevant for this study. This study furthers Ryan-Flood's contribution, and that of subsequent international studies. It does this by extending the current knowledge about cross-cultural differences in the kinds of lesbian-known donor relationships, and known donor-child relationships that lesbians would like to develop, from the perspective of New Zealand's unique cultural context. As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is the first study to do this in this country; the relationships between lesbians, known donors and their children, and the status of known donors and known donor partners, are issues that have not previously been explored here. As such, it stands to make a positive contribution to existing knowledge, particularly in respect of the influence of whakapapa for both Māori and Pākeha in donor conception.

Broadly speaking, the findings of international studies suggest two trends, both of which were also evident in studies prior to Ryan-Flood's (2005) research. The first trend is for lesbian couples to choose known donors who are willing to either assume the title of 'father' or the role of father. This trend is reflected in this research and is a specific focus in Chapter 5, where the impact of whakapapa on this choice is discussed in some detail. The second trend is for lesbian couples to choose known donors who are open to contact with their children at some point or who in some way secure the right for them to access information about their paternal origins in the future. Chapter 6 explores this trend.

In many cases, both trends are evident in any one of these international studies. Nordqvist's (2012b) research into lesbian reproduction, in the UK context, is a case in point. Like the lesbian couples in this study, the lesbian couples in her

study that chose a known donor believed a father or information about paternal origins could be important for children. For these couples, kinship values, including the centrality of the couple relationship as the basis for parenthood, were balanced with couple intimacy, responsibility and knowledge about paternity. Luce's (2010) study, conducted in Canada, drew attention to the meanings that participating lesbian couples who chose known donors gave to contractual and biogenetic relations; 'practices of knowing' donors were to the fore with many couples placing importance on the donor's willingness to be contacted at a future point in their children's lives or otherwise securing children the option to know about their paternal origins.

Similarly, lesbian couples in Australian and New Zealand studies chose known donors to either secure children an identifiable father and opportunities for his subsequent involvement, or to secure knowledge about paternity (see for example, Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman et al., 2014; McNair, Dempsey, Wise, & Perlesz, 2002; Ripper, 2009; Surtees, 2011). Across both trends, choices are frequently made through appeals to notions of children's best interests. Such appeals are closely tied to Strathern's (1999, 2005) point about rights claims, referred to earlier.

These and other studies have focused on lesbian known donor reproduction from the perspectives of lesbians. Riggs' (2008a, 2008b) research has made an important substantive contribution to knowledge about this form of reproduction from the perspective of gay known donors in the Australian context. To date there has been little research into what these gay known donors have to say about their experiences of reproducing in this way or of how they feel about their relationships with the children they help to conceive (but see also, Ripper, 2008). Riggs' research draws attention to the context in which these donors donate, including particular variables such as motivations for donating. It also draws attention to the ways in which these donors understand the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins and related questions of children's best interests. He shows how their understandings of both this discourse, and children's best interests, which he situates within the context of father-right debates and father-right

movements, are brought to bear on the negotiation of their status and place in children's family lives. His research is therefore highly relevant to this study's concern with this kind of negotiation.

Genes, biogenetic relatedness, unrelatedness and kinship

Another area in which researchers have made substantive contributions to knowledge about lesbian known donor reproduction has focused on the meanings given to genes, biogenetic relatedness, unrelatedness and kinship. Returning to the point that genes are depicted as the key to inherited identity and destiny, Nordqvist and Smart (2014) note considerable slippage in the use of the word 'genes.' They suggest that while genes may have taken over from 'blood' as the new shorthand for representing kinship, much confusion about what genes really mean beyond the gene's capacity to be highly significant remains in everyday discourse. Their study, which explored the meanings invested in the concept of genes in the context of lesbian and heterosexual known (and unknown) donor reproduction, illustrated how family members continually negotiated biogenetic relatedness, unrelatedness and kinship. As they argue, these families are "at the forefront of a modern debate about the conflicting significance of nature versus nurture" (p. 150). Even where parents experienced equilibrium in respect of this debate, the balance could easily tip in response to mundane remarks and the frequent airing of the alleged consequences of genetic inheritance in the media. Nordqvist's (2012b) previously mentioned study is also instructive. The lesbian couples in her study navigated biogenetic relatedness, unrelatedness and kinship in complex patterns as they worked to negotiate their parental identities.

Like Riggs (2008a, 2008b), Dempsey (2012a, 2012b) gives voice to the perspectives of gay known donors in the Australian context. She hones in on how the donors in her study understand being a 'donor', versus how they understand being a 'father' (for discussion on the separation of a 'father' from a 'parent', see Dempsey, 2004, 2006). In her view, discourses of heterosexual paternal involvement offer a context for such understandings. She also hones in on how these donors conceptualised, negotiated and enacted paternal biogenetic relatedness and participation in lesbian parented families. The donors in her

study often conveyed a strong sense of connectedness to children based on conventional understandings of paternal biogenetic relatedness, but without any sense of parental entitlement typically complicit with patriarchal discourses of fatherhood.

In combination, these studies were useful for the contemporary perspective they offer on how biogenetic relatedness and unrelatedness is understood in the context of lesbian known donor reproduction. In particular, they contextualise the revitalisation of kinship as an ongoing agenda for lesbian parents, with that revitalisation informing analysis of how the participating lesbian couples in this study negotiated kinship.

Post nature: Reformulating kinship

As kinship revitalised, new concepts came to the fore; these concepts served to reformulate kinship as relatedness. According to Carsten (2000), recasting kinship in this way challenges the taken for granted division between the nature/culture dichotomy by avoiding the analytic opposition between them. It has also facilitated a focus on kinship practices in the field.

Relationality: A context for everyday life

Central to relatedness is a concern with relationality (or relationism). Relationality conjures up images of people located within complex webs or deliberate networks of social relations that can be actively created and maintained or left to atrophy (Smart, 2007, 2011). The lesbian couples, known donors and known donor partners in this study are caught up in such webs. Their familial configurations are interpreted as deliberate networks, formed for the express purpose of conceiving children together. These networks are themselves located within wider intersecting family and kinship networks. Social relations within and across these networks, particularly in respect of known donor/partner-child relationships, are understood to be flexible and flexibly maintained. They shift and change in anticipated and unanticipated ways, as Chapters 5 to 7 demonstrate.

In Chapter 2 I introduced relationality as a precursor to the narrative construction of selves and identities. Multiple selves and identities emerge through interactional processes as relationships are formed, sustained and dissolved (Finch & Mason, 2000; Sanger, 2013; Smart, 2007, 2011). Taking this idea in a different direction here, such conceptualisations of the self and identity are frequently obscured in Western thought through a stress on the bounded individual. This is an individual who might seek out relationships but who could equally well live independently of others, someone who exercises free agency and is solely responsible for his or her own choices (Smart, 2007). Mason (2004) contends that the purchase of individualisation theses, persuasive in sociological explanations of social change in the West, is at odds with such conceptualisations. They can (and should) be countered by empirical analyses that foreground the role of social connectivity in self and identity construction across diverse contexts and scenarios. Rather than simply dismiss the relevance of individualistic discourses and practices to self and identity construction, she advocates attention to whether and how such discourses and practices are intertwined *with* relational discourses and practices. This study contributes to both these aims. While traces of individualistic tendencies are evident in some of the lesbian known donor familial stories, they remain profoundly relational narratives about relational connections and disconnections that include relational content and descriptions of relational practices.

Finch and Mason (2000), Mason (2004) and Smart (2007) broadened my thinking about agency and choice beyond the neoliberal readings of these concepts in the last chapter. For these scholars, relationality is the context for everyday life. An individual's agency is situated within sets of relations, implying the existence of others who must be taken into account and responded to. Similarly, choices are made with regard for the needs and feelings of others (Duncan, 2011; Smart, 2007; Smart & Shipman, 2004). This approach opens up the exploration of the impacts of constructions of relatedness on practices, a key thesis agenda. It contributed to my analysis of the differences among participants in the status accorded to known donors, who began as similarly positioned, but become very differently defined as fathers, parents, uncles or

friends. As the context for everyday life, this dynamic, elastic and inclusive conceptualisation of kinship expands ways of understanding relationships between people who consider themselves related, regardless of whether or not they have biogenetic or legal ties. Its ability to include new and changing ideas about relatedness without privileging some connections over others lends it a robust real life resonance (Mason, 2008).

Kinship as practice

Understandings about kinship as a set of practices, something people actively negotiate and do, are central to the conceptual basis of this thesis. I illustrate a range of ways participants engage in kinning practices with respect to one another and current or future children and the kinds of relationships subsequently established in this process. Howell (2003), writing in the context of transnational adoption, maintains that kinning practices are ones that bring previously unconnected people or an unborn or new-born child into significant, permanent relationships with each other, with these relationships subsequently expressed as kin idioms. I apply this idea to the context of lesbian known donor reproduction where lesbians choose known donors with whom they have previously been unconnected on the basis that they would subsequently be brought into significant and permanent kin or kin-like relationships with them and any children conceived. This was the case for a number of the lesbian couples in this study. I extend the idea further by suggesting that these are also practices that can bring previously *connected* people into *new* forms of significant, permanent relatedness with each other. Some lesbian couples chose a known donor who was already a friend or acquaintance of the couple, or a relative of the non-birth mother, and altered kin or kin-like expectations for relationality followed. In either case, shared creation of the lesbian known donor familial configuration can be understood as a kin-constituting factor. Through kinning, they fix themselves in relation to one another thus ensuring overlapping kinned trajectories (Howell, 2003).

Recently Sahlin (2013) has contributed to the ongoing reformulation of kinship proposing a new definition, 'mutuality of being.' Focused on practices of participation, kinsfolk are those whose interdependent participation in one

another's lives intrinsically joins their lives together. As he argues, this conceptualisation accounts for the culturally relative ways that kinship is constituted by procreation *or* social construction—where kinship is performative or 'made'—as well as a combination of both. It is presumed then that in this study, practices of participating in a child's family life in some capacity—as mother, father, parent, uncle or friend—arguably binds the members of particular familial configurations together in one another's existence in some way, shape or form.

The reformulations of kinship addressed in this discussion are important conceptual tools in this study. Markedly more flexible than 'family' in accounting for people's perceptions of their connectedness within complex social networks, these concepts refuse to assume particular connections take a particular (singular) social form. Each also assumes the active nature of relating, through a focus on practice. For these reasons, they have been useful to my understanding of the lesbian known donor familial configurations investigated in the study.

Transformations in intimacies

The diversification of relational and family patterns introduced in Chapter 1, including the increase in separation, divorce and reconstituted families, is a continuing focus of debate that has been further fueled by a conservative concern with the 'demise' of the family (see for example, Blankenhorn, 1995; Popenoe, 1996). This is a debate that social theorists have sought to explain in relation to processes of individualisation (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002; Giddens, 1991, 1992). Transformations in intimacies in late modernity are largely associated with Giddens' (1992) influential book, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. In this book, Giddens adopts an optimistic perspective on the restructuring of relational life in post-traditional Western societies (Heaphy, 2007; Jamieson, 1999). Focusing primarily on sexual relationships between men and women, his work is situated within debates about changing sexual mores and gender orders. It suggests that relationships are becoming more democratic and equal as women assert a desire for sexual pleasure. The connotations of this for existing gendered relations are intrinsic to the transformation of intimacy

(Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). I outline Gidden's understanding of these changes in more detail, because his theorisation of intimacy, while limited, opens up this important aspect of the thesis for discussion.

Giddens (1992) associates widespread changes to relational priorities with the ideal of 'confluent love', which he claims is replacing the ideal of 'romantic love.' Romantic love presumes that an enduring tie can be established through the coming together of opposite gendered and 'incomplete' individuals, with each individual subsequently 'completed' by the other. This is a view of love that provides a narrative with which to make sense of the life trajectory through projecting a happily married future, centred around hearth and home. In contrast, confluent love presumes a model of the 'pure relationship', a free-floating relationship unmoored from social or economic conditions. Emerging in both heterosexual and homosexual contexts, the pure relationship is connected to 'plastic sexuality', a sexuality freed from the exigencies of reproduction through the disconnection of sex and reproduction.

In Giddens' (1992) conceptualisation, the pure relationship is focused on the achievement of intimacy and is contingent on reciprocal, egalitarian forms of relating involving mutual disclosure (the basis for intimacy) between parties; a balance must be struck between what each party brings and derives from the relationship. The pure relationship is only entered into on the basis of what it might offer to the parties concerned. Therefore, both must accept that the individual benefits gained are sufficient to the relationship's continuation in the moment and, that should one or other of the parties no longer experience satisfaction at a particular point, it will be terminated. Commitments and responsibilities are chosen, negotiated and contingent, rather than based on generational and gendered hierarchies and the traditional obligations of marriage. Separation and divorce are said to be an effect of the shift towards such relationships.

In Giddens' (1991) view, the pure relationship is a means to self identity in an era where cultural developments towards individual fulfillment and liberty are ubiquitous. Inherent to the pure relationship are questions of self and other

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examination. These kinds of questions—'am I okay?'; 'are you okay?'; 'are we okay?'—closely connect to a concern with how best to live, the central agenda of the reflexive project of the self. As Giddens stresses, how best to live must be self-consciously answered day by day as decisions are made on many different facets of daily life.

Giddens' (1991, 1992) interest in the individual's search for the best way to live is shared by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) in *The Normal Chaos of Love* and subsequent publications. Individuals are said to have increased autonomy, agency and choice about how to live, with the decline of previous social forms supposedly liberating them from traditional frames of reference and external control even while new demands and constraints are imposed on them (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that individualisation compels individuals to construct and manage their own lives and the lives of those around them. The normal biography becomes a 'do-it-yourself biography.' Responsible for the unexpected or personal misfortune, what they insist is required is a "staging of everyday life" (p. 90), because without constant forward planning, negotiation and coordination, biographies can pull apart and break down. Elaborating, Beck-Gernsheim (2002) states the watchwords are: "Plan! Bring the future under control! Protect yourself from accidents – steer and direct them!" (p. 43). Applying these ideas to parenthood as a planning project, Beck-Gernsheim suggests responsible parenthood produces "new women" and sometimes "new men", "who – with many ideas from psychology, childrearing manuals and self-help literature – want to do everything consciously and conscientiously" (p. 53).

These ideas resonate with the neoliberal discourse of personal responsibility introduced in Chapter 2, where I claimed the stories of the participating lesbian couples in this study constructed them as personally responsible for their family-building choices. Some of the known donors who were constructed as fathers were similarly responsible. Arguably, they were 'new men' whose willingness to embrace discourses of the 'new father' extended to learning how to mother. New father discourses are introduced in Chapter 5. The relationship of these

discourses to notions of men mothering and relevant research is explored in Chapter 7.

While Giddens (1991, 1992), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002), Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and other theorists such as Castells (1997) and Bauman (2000) link changes in intimate life to individualisation, others suggest this link is overstated (see for example, Duncan, 2011; Gross, 2005; Jamieson, 1998, 1999). Critiques of individualised intimacy include that it constructs the couple as the singular form of intimacy (Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004), it romanticises same-sex intimacy or ignores it altogether (Bell & Binnie, 2000) and it fails to sufficiently account for family complexity (May, 2012) or how family and kin connectedness interacts with identity, agency and choice (Mason, 2004; Smart, 2007; Smart & Shipman, 2004). Critiques also suggest individualised intimacy ignores gender inequalities (Jamieson, 1999) and is ethnically biased (Smart & Shipman, 2004). In short, Smart (2007) contends individualisation has been the subject of many challenges:

> In the main because there is such a lack of congruence between the depiction of contemporary family life in the work of individualization theorists and the kinds of lives being represented in local and more closely specified studies of families, kinship and friendship networks. (p. 17)

Smart's observation can be applied to this research as one example of a closely specified study. Representations of family life across the stories I elicited from the participants diverge markedly from those that individualisation theorists might typically foreground. While I suggested earlier that signs of individualistic tendencies are discernable in some of the participants' stories, they remain first and foremost profoundly relational stories, as will become apparent in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Beyond individualised intimacy: New directions

Smart (2011) outlines a number of new directions in the sociology of family life that reflect a struggle to capture and represent the everyday realities of people's multi-dimensional lives. Influential in broadening sociological understandings about families and relationships, these new directions were precipitated by the

changes in intimate life and the analysis of these changes by individualisation theorists that my discussion has highlighted. With reference to this analysis Smart (2007) states, "Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim have certainly caused a stir" (p. 190). However, as she elaborates, "What is really needed is an approach that goes beyond their limitations to offer both empirical grounding and a new theoretical orientation" (p. 190). Her 'connectedness thesis', which appears to stand in direct opposition to the individualisation thesis, is an approach that she hopes might achieve this ambition. Connectedness, in her view, has the potential to direct the sociological imagination on a new trajectory that explores the continuing possibility and desirability of association in all its manifestations.

Smart (2007, 2011) credits Morgan's (1996) work on family as a set of practices with being at the forefront of the new directions in the field. Importantly, his work enabled more expansive ways of thinking and speaking about family and family life to emerge at a time when the pitfalls of writing about *the* family were well recognised, as was the continuing salience of family to everyday life, however family was understood (Morgan, 1996, 2004, 2011a, 2011b). Smart's conceptualisation of personal life is also an example of expansion in the field, one that became possible because of the contributions that preceded it. In this section of the chapter, I focus on Morgan's (1996) notion of family practices, and Smart's attention to personal life, as both, in combination, inform the analysis undertaken in this thesis. While Smart (2007, 2011) and Morgan (2011b) attend to several other directions in the sociology of family life, these are not considered here, because in the main, combining the family practices and personal life approaches provided me with sufficient analytical purchase for this study.

Family practices

Morgan's (1996) assertion that the family is neither "a thing" nor "something thing-like and concrete" (p. 189) is developed through his theorising of family as sets of practices, with the term 'family' a lens for exploring and describing particular social activities. This significant sociological insight, first advanced in his influential book, *Family Connections: An Introduction to Family Studies* and revisited in later publications (Morgan, 1999, 2004, 2011a, 2011b), requires attention to what families do, both in terms of family relationships and family

activities. A sense of action is conveyed through this theorisation. In contrast with traditional, passive understandings of family as a timeless, fixed unit or structure, the flux and fluidity of family living is to the fore.

According to Morgan (1996), "Family practices are not just any old practices" (p. 192). Unlike any old practices, family practices are orientated towards and designate family members; they "define who counts as a family member" (Morgan, 2011b, p. 10). In other words, the group of people involved in any one particular family practice can be distinguished as *a* family as distinct from other groups of people who are not included in *that* family. In terms of this thesis, attention was paid to how the family practices of some of the lesbian couples in this study served to designate family members. The couples were implicated in family boundary work through processes of kin differentiation, connection and disconnection. Open or closed boundaries positioned known donors and their partners inside, or outside, the immediate family.

Family practices are also practices that are meaningful to the persons concerned and that have the appearance of being natural and inevitable, because they occur at the level of the everyday. Arguing against the everyday as trivial, Morgan (1996) suggests that paying attention to the "little fragments of daily life which are part of the normal taken-for-granted existence of the practitioners" (pp. 189-190) is useful as, through this, wider concerns may be understood. Another reason that family practices appear natural and inevitable is because they link self and society, and biography and history, through their location in biographical, social-cultural and historical contexts. Particular practices gain meaning and shape through particular discourses, which in turn limit, constrain and legitimate some practices over others (Morgan, 1996, 2011b). The participants' family practices reflect their individual biographies and the prevailing normative discourses at this socio-cultural, historical juncture. These norms become resources in their familial stories and highlight attempts to align or reconcile their practices with available expectations for families.

A family practices approach is now in fairly wide use in family sociology. Morgan (2011b) observes that the focus on doing family afforded by this approach

appears to have been the most influential aspect of it across disparate studies in the field. He provides brief commentary on a number of studies distinguishing between those that use the term 'family practices' and those that use both this term and the underlying concepts. The former usage, he suggests, potentially attests to how the idea of family practices has gained currency, such that when used without elaboration, it simply points to a broad area of enquiry and appears to require little or no explanation. Amongst the studies that utilise the term and underlying concepts, he cites Finch's (2007, 2008) work. Her 2007 study considers the ways in which families engage in display work in order to render their family practices effective (for others on display work, see also Almack, 2008; Dermott & Seymour, 2011). The 2008 study focuses on naming practices. I mention both here for their applicability to my study. The first has relevance to those lesbian and gay participants who worked hard to become intelligible to themselves and others in a context where marginalisation is a common experience. The second is relevant to those who engaged in naming practices to the same end as she describes—that is, to map family connections.

To name or not name a known donor as a father was a key consideration for participants that had significant implications for family connections. My own reading of the literature has highlighted numerous studies that draw on the family practices of lesbian parents. Broadly, these practices consolidate parental identities and connect parents and children symbolically or materially (see for example, Almack, 2005 ; Bergen, Suter, & Daas, 2006; Donovan, 2000; Gabb, 2005; Nordqvist & Smart, 2014; Perlesz et al., 2006). Nordqvist (2012a) refers to these kinds of practices as family connecting practices, commenting on the ways they symbolise lesbian couple unity or foreground lesbian core parenting couples. This insight was useful to me in my exploration of the supplementary or subordinate status of known donors and their partners.

While the intent of the family practices approach was to go beyond any one family form or model of family living, Morgan (2011a, 2011b) acknowledges that in placing the family at the centre of analysis, this approach may perpetuate particular heteronormative understandings of family, a criticism made by some commentators (see for example, Roseneil, 2005). In this study, I deliberately

read and apply the 'family', in 'family practices', as broadly inclusive, aligned with the definition of 'familial' I employ when writing about familial configurations as described in Chapter 1. While a logical conclusion may have been to pair 'familial' with 'practices'—'familial practices'—ultimately I chose to use 'family practices' where it appeared relevant, because at least some of the participants engaged in the kinds of family practices that ostensibly reflect Morgan's (1996, 2011b) definition of these. As he (2011b) states, family practices "focus upon families as conventionally understood (relations between spouses, parents and children and between kin) with relatively little reference to other kinds of relationships" (p. 64). When brought to bear on this study, many participants understood their families in conventional ways, linking them to heteronormative two-parent models of family. While this approach was used as a general orientation to the research, it did not prevent me from considering alternative intimate arrangements and practices where necessary.

I turn now to a discussion of the concept of personal life. Smart (2007) intended for this concept to build on Morgan's (1996) understanding of family practices. While Morgan (2011b) notes points of departure (namely, that family practices have a narrower focus on the range of relationships under consideration), he came to concur with her perspective that the continuity and overlap between the two approaches were more significant than the ruptures.

Personal life

According to Smart (2010, 2011), the concept of personal life developed out of two concerns in the sociology of families and relationships. First, the previously mentioned struggle in respect of portraying people's multi-dimensional lives. Secondly, and related to this, a concern that stories about these lives should neither be one-dimensional nor impoverished. As such, personal life reaches beyond established boundaries in family studies, a direction not without criticism in relation to theorising about family (see for example, R. Edwards & Gillies, 2012 ; Gilding, 2010). In addition to embracing the sociology of the family, it also therefore embraces the sociology of kinship and more recent fields of

study including same-sex intimacies, cross residential relationships, friendship and acquaintanceship (Smart, 2007).[45]

In Smart's (2007) schema, personal life denotes an area of life which is particularly meaningful to people, concerned as it is with connectedness with others. Personal life is neutral; family is important, but not the only or inevitable reference point for relationships. Room for wide-ranging forms of relatedness, and the ways these shift and move over places and spaces are made, with no one form, place or space privileged over another (Smart, 2007). In terms of this study, personal life proved useful for opening conceptual spaces suited to exploring the divergent relational narratives of the lesbian known donor familial configurations. As indicated in Chapter 1, it became apparent early on that I would need to account for *both* family relationships *and* different forms of relatedness, including kin-like relationships and non-kin relationships. Moreover, I would need to do this without presuming what forms the familial configurations had taken or might take, or how they were or might come to be distributed across households. Personal life afforded a flexible approach to this end.

In focusing on the interiority of relationships, an area previously largely unacknowledged in sociology, personal life draws on a toolbox of five interrelated conceptual fields, chosen because they complement and build on Morgan's (1996) focus on family practices. These fields open new ways of seeing that bring depth of meaning to relational understandings and offer possibilities for telling stories differently, something of significance for this study (Smart, 2007, 2011). Relationality is the first of the five concepts and one that I have already discussed. As Smart (2011) observes, relating to others in the present involves the past, which is captured by and draws on memories. Thus the second concept is memory. Memory—always unreliable and fluid—feeds biography—or

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[45] Somewhat ironically then, Morgan's (1996) family practices approach is sometimes criticised for not departing far enough from the focus on family relationships expected within family sociology, while personal life is sometimes criticised for departing too far from such relationships.

rather, biography is reliant on memory (Smart, 2007, 2011). Biography then, is the third concept.

Attention to memory and biography has particular salience for understanding family and kin relationships. Early memories are frequently forged in connection with family and kin and may be attached to intense emotions, while biography can capture and differentiate between the differing experiences recollected by individuals within family and kin groupings (Smart, 2007, 2011). For instance, many of the participants in this study recalled and storied powerful memories of their experiences of early family life presumably distinct from the experiences of others within their immediate networks. They draw on these as resources to inform decision-making in respect to their familial form, the kin status and place of known donors and known donor partners in children's social networks, and residential and care practices. They reworked the past—or their memories of the past—in their planning for and practising of both the present and the imagined future.

The final two concepts are embeddedness and imaginary. Embeddedness acknowledges the webs of relationships individuals are located within. It pays attention to the persistence or 'stickiness' of bonds and links between families and kin across generations (Smart, 2007). Imaginary acknowledges the ways in which relationships are partially sustained through imagination—relationships 'have a life' in the imagination. What people think and feel about relationships is shaped by the particular social, cultural and historical contexts they are located within. This connects with social mores and has social consequences including the reproduction of particular relational ideals (Smart, 2007). Paying attention to narratives of embeddedness enabled me to be attuned to what participants thought and felt about the kinds of relationships they had established or imagined establishing with one another and children. This was a key theme in their stories that largely reproduced normative intimate couple, two-parent relational ideals.

In this section of the chapter I have discussed family practices and personal life as two examples of several new directions in the sociology of family life, which

have particular relevance to this study. The concepts of relatedness and relationality—first advanced by Finch and Mason (1993, 2000) and later located within personal life by Smart (2007), but equally understood as part of the reformulation of kinship (Carsten, 2004)—are also examples of such new directions. Taken together, these new directions retain a focus on the individual within sets of relations therefore avoiding "the conceptual slide into individualization" (Smart, 2007, p. 188). They were utilised in this thesis as the most logical approach to effectively examine the new familial forms created by participants in the study.

Conclusion

I opened this chapter by stating that narratives about change and transformation in kinship, families and relationships make for "an interesting story." In this chapter, I have highlighted such change and transformation by focusing on particular conceptual and theoretical frameworks consistent with what engaged me in the interview material and supported my analytical work in later chapters. I drew on anthropological and sociological perspectives on kinship, paying attention to concerns about the relationship between the natural and social domains of kinship. Destabilising the relationship between nature as the basis for the cultural in Euro-American kinship, provided theoretical groundwork for and gave momentum to investigations into the problematic relationship between the two. In particular, studies of lesbian and gay kinship and studies of assisted conception have cast doubt on the extent to which kinship can be understood as a fixed fact of nature. In combination, these investigations led to newer formulations of kinship that share a broader exploration of kin connections and ideas about relatedness between people than previously accounted for. The insights from these fields of research provided me with important conceptual tools to approach the findings chapters. In the next chapter, I turn my attention to the methods I used to gather, record and make sense of the interview material.

Chapter 4: Research processes and paradoxes: "But you've got two contradictory stories!"

> Qualitative research is more like the flight of a butterfly than a bee: its path is meandering and indeterminate. (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 64)

> The world is full of stories not just waiting to be told, but also to be written, retold, read and reread. (Tamboukou & Livholts, 2015, p. 37)

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I introduced narrative as a means for accomplishing selves and identities. In this chapter I focus on the use of narrative in qualitative research. I juxtapose big picture stories about narrative with pragmatic, detail-orientated stories about why and how I used it in this study. In conjunction with the stories shared by participants about their experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, these diverse stories create a complex multivocal text. Referring to the historically-produced theoretical bricolage underpinning narrative approaches, Squire, Andrews, and Tamboukou (2008) observe this mode of inquiry offers no definitive rules about methods of investigation, appropriate materials, where to look for stories or at what level to study and analyse them. While this can make research design challenging, the big picture stories about narrative suggest it is a popular, recurring theme within qualitative research (Elliott, 2005).

With no definitive rules, I was not always clear about the direction in which I should proceed. The detail-orientated stories about my research process capture my ongoing decision-making. In storying this process, I make explicit important decisions about research design and how I went about collecting, analysing and narrating storied material in order that the reader can assess the trustworthiness and validity of my data and interpretations. Paraphrasing from Riessman (2008), I aim to bring the reader along with me as I uncover the path I followed. I also make explicit ethics issues and decisions, weaving these across relevant chapter sections, while acknowledging the particular challenges that conducting research with lesbians and gay men can present.

Drawing from Elliott (2005), rather than simply providing a 'confessional account' of what I did, I locate myself as a researcher at various points in this chapter, continuing the process of disclosure I began in the prologue opening this thesis. Ongoing attention to my insider researcher position and my biographical particulars and biases is an important aspect of this process. Following Chavez (2008) I understand myself as a 'total insider', a researcher who has in common multiple identities or profound experiences with the social group under study. I share multiple identities with many of the participants: as a woman, a partnered lesbian, a (once) social parent to my adult niece, and a (once) intending birth mother. I also share the profound experience of lesbian known donor reproduction, through which I had hoped to realise birth motherhood. Pillow (2003) defines reflexivity as a method for questioning research practices and representations influenced by a researcher's subjectivities. How researchers know themselves and whether or not it is truly possible to know another becomes of particular salience when representing others in the construction of text. "Whose story is it", Pillow asks, "the researcher or the researched?" (p. 176).

I encountered a range of dilemmas at the intersection of the big picture stories, my research process stories, and the participant stories besides those related to story ownership. The paradox of trying to research emerging kinship formations that are just coming into being and of negotiating the complexities of profound change that these formations signal underlie these dilemmas. The problem of finding people to talk to who are forming new kinds of relationships when there is no obvious list of people to sample from, of talking to people who are forming these relationships when there is no adequate language to describe or write about them, and of figuring out how to make sense of and represent competing stories are just some of the dilemmas I discuss in this chapter. I turn now to the problem of finding people to participate in this research.

Identifying and selecting participants

In designing this research I sought out a range of lesbians and gay men in particular life circumstances, setting up a narrative for them as potential participants. This was a narrative about lesbian and gay collaboration and

innovation in family formation. It was also a narrative about lesbian and gay multi-parenting, an area I knew was under researched. The scarcity of studies focused on lesbian and gay multi-parent models of family suggests such projects are not particularly well recognised. Finally, it was a narrative about gay men as fathers in a context where planned gay fatherhood is a relatively new trend. With this narrative in mind, I decided to focus on two distinct sets of lesbian and gay participants whose dreams about, plans for, or practising of family fitted this narrative. I anticipated this focus would respond to the research questions and aims of this study by generating 'snapshots' of different stages of the family forming process, producing a picture of both future orientated possibilities for imagining and planning for family and retrospective understandings about the actual practising of family.

The participant sets

Lesbians and gay men constitute a hard-to-reach population because they belong to a socially stigmatised group. Developing a sample for this population is challenging, because there is no existing sampling frame to recruit from and much remains unknown about the population, including size and demographics (Matthews & Cramer, 2008; Weeks et al., 2001). In New Zealand, statistics on sexual orientation are not collected in the Census or other Statistics New Zealand surveys (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). While my insider researcher position facilitated finding and accessing this population, the dilemma of finding the 'right' kinds of lesbians and gay men to talk to who were forming the 'right' kinds of relationships—those I was interested in—was nevertheless not straight forward, particularly considering those conceiving and parenting children are, in some respects, a hidden sub-group within the wider population.

In theoretical sampling approaches, samples are chosen on the grounds of the likelihood that they will generate data of immediate relevance to the research question and aims by, for example, facilitating an understanding of particular phenomenon—in this case lesbian known donor reproduction. Sample size is not easily quantifiable and requires establishing inclusion criteria carefully (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Schwandt, 2007). As I designed this research, I gave this considerable thought.

Initially, I chose to conceptualise the prospective and existing family groups as prospective family constellations and existing family constellations. I considered the descriptor 'family constellation' an effective means of grouping together coupled or single lesbians and coupled or single gay men with procreative partners—other coupled or single lesbians or gay men—with whom they planned to enter into, or had entered into reproductive relationships for the purpose of conceiving children. As the study progressed, the descriptor 'familial configuration' emerged as my preferred term, as already addressed in Chapter 1.[46]

I expected that each prospective family constellation would be inclusive of self-identified lesbians and gay men who were projecting ahead to imagine creating a family and becoming parents together, or who were actively planning for this. Existing family constellations, on the other hand, were to be inclusive of self-identified lesbians and gay men who had already created family together, identified as parents, and were sharing parenting within or across households.

A focus on *self-identified* lesbians and gay men seemed necessary, because it can be difficult to establish exactly who might belong to the lesbian and gay population (Meezen & Martin, 2003). For example, should members of the population be determined on the basis of sexual identity or some other dimension of sexuality such as sexual behaviour? Although sexuality per se was not a specific focus of inquiry, I was mindful that sampling on the basis of lesbian or gay identity is problematic, because of the queer theory critique of identity categories as stable and coherent (Butler, 1990; Seidman, 1993; Weeks, 1999), a point made in Chapter 1. For this reason I specifically stated I was seeking 'self-identified' lesbians and gay men in material promoting the study. This left the onus on potential participants to claim (or not claim) these identities.[47] In any

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[46] In contrast with the other chapters in this thesis, I use the descriptors 'prospective family constellation' and 'existing family constellation' in this chapter, because these were the terms I was using when I designed this study and during fieldwork.

[47] This was likely a factor shaping the terms the potential participants used for themselves when enquiring about the research. Queer identified people, as opposed to lesbian and gay identified people, may not have responded to promotional material but could have provided additional

event, I considered that self-identification as lesbian or gay and the planned or actual conception and parenting of children in the context of same-sex intimate and reproductive relationships would have more relevance than any other dimension of sexuality. This would be most likely to yield insights into the research questions given their specific focus on relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction.

Participant invitations

Once I had obtained ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1) recruitment began. Using my insider knowledge, I initially promoted the study through lesbian and gay-targeted national organisations that were familiar to me, including *Rainbow Families New Zealand*, an organisation that supports gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) parents, prospective parents, and their children. I also used the *Pink Pages New Zealand*, a queer directory, to locate a range of regional community organisations and social groups throughout the country. I anticipated this approach would allow me to access many different kinds of communities and social groups, as a strategy for maximising possibilities for finding the specific, partially hidden sub-group in which I was interested.

Most of these organisations and social groups had communication networks that included websites, magazines and online or print newspapers and newsletters. Most accepted descriptive pieces I wrote about the study. I tailored these pieces to their particular method of networking, based on a template advertisement (see Appendix 2) that invited people interested in learning more about the project to contact me. For example, I supplied such pieces to *GayNZ.com*, a national GLBT website covering news and events throughout the country; *Gay Express*, a national GLBT magazine; *Otago Gaily Times*, a Dunedin based GLBT newspaper; *Tamaki Makaurau Lesbian Newsletter*, an Auckland based lesbian newsletter and so on. I also provided a piece to be read on *Lesbian Access Radio*, a

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insights into the kinds of new relationships that are arising out of reproductive relationships in assisted conception.

Wellington radio show, and I was interviewed on *The Good Fairy Radio Show*, a Christchurch radio show.

Promotion of the study rapidly gained traction. Henrickson, Neville, Donaghey and Jordan (2007) claim that lesbian and gay communities in New Zealand are effectively linked both personally and electronically. I quickly found many of those wanting to know more about the study were part of interconnected networks that I was able to capitalise on through snowball sampling. Used to identify and select people who are part of such networks, snowball sampling is a particularly useful strategy for accessing hard-to-reach populations, as once the researcher has identified potential participants they can be used as informants to recommend others (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015; Patton, 2015). Amongst those recommended to me were several administrators of extensive group email lists. Tapping into these lists culminated in the forwarding of material about the study to approximately 1000 individual email addresses of lesbians and gay men, primarily in the North Island. For example, material was forwarded to around 400 email addresses of lesbians who were part of the Wellington and wider region lesbian email network. This generated a large number of responses to my request for contact. As Patton (2015) identifies however, this is a method of sampling that can be liable to bias, because potential participants tend to associate with others who fit the study inclusion criteria. This can generate a homogenised sample, a criticism of some studies conducted with GLBT populations (Matthews & Cramer, 2008).

Use of the internet for recruitment in these and other ways can be highly successful (Matthews & Cramer, 2008), but it can compound the problem of sample homogeneity. Social class can affect access to the internet, while geographical location can influence access to the internet. New Zealand data suggests both factors influence usage (Statistics New Zealand, 2012) with both therefore potentially contributing to bias in samples.

Theoretical sampling is associated with theoretical saturation. Bertaux and Bertauz-Wiame (1981) developed the notion of saturation, the point at which no new insights are forthcoming from encounters with new participants (Bloor &

Wood, 2006; Patton, 2015). In keeping with the emergent nature of qualitative research (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Fraenkel et al., 2015; Patton, 2015), I did not pre-determine a fixed sample size when designing this study but continued recruitment until saturation was reached. Saturation assumes recruitment, data collection and analysis always occur side by side (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Patton, 2015). I built this process into the study design, such that data collection and preliminary analysis proceeded iteratively during recruitment. This was facilitated by spreading data collection trips to geographically distant regions of New Zealand across a period of six months, allowing time to explore the data in between each trip.

Initially, I focused recruitment on planned or actual collaborative *parenting* between *lesbians* and *gay men* based on the narrative I set up for them—a narrative about lesbian and gay collaboration and innovation in family formation, lesbian and gay multi-parenting, and gay men as fathers. However, my first encounters with potential participants pushed me to re-think whether or not the participants' sexuality mattered. The inclusion criteria I had established for the participants seemed overly simplistic and reductionist when facing the complex, messy realities of their subjectivities and arrangements. I had specified this inclusion criterion in the promotional material about the study and this contributed to the dilemma I found myself facing—how to find people who are forming new kinds of relationships when there is no adequate language to describe or write about them. The language I had used signaled how I defined the population I was trying to reach, but potentially failed to reach others who may have been engaging in the kinds of relationships I was interested in. The dilemma of what language to use, when there are no words to describe particular relationships, persisted throughout the duration of the research. This is a theme I return to later in this chapter.

Following my first encounters with potential participants, I decided to broaden the inclusion criteria to family constellations inclusive of lesbians or gay men *and* heterosexual men and their partners. I came to see that it was not the participants' sexuality that mattered per se. The lesbians' concerns lay with their identities as intending or established parents who happened to be without

sperm and needed it because they were in a relationship with another woman, rather than their identities as lesbians. Similarly, the gay and heterosexual men's concerns lay with their place in the social networks of the children they expected to or had helped to conceive, rather than their sexual identities. Their lesbian/gay/heterosexual sexuality was assumed and did not become a specific focus of inquiry. What really mattered, was the participants' potential to provide insight into a wider range of social identity possibilities and roles for gay or heterosexual men as known donors for lesbians, and those of their partners, vis-à-vis the family lives of children, given they have no obvious place within kinship systems. These men were fulfilling a number of parenting *or* non-parenting relationships and roles, which were operationalised by them in traditional and non-traditional ways.

As I increasingly sought to recruit participants for their potential to provide insight into these relationships and roles, email exchange about this prior to confirming study participation became more important. I stopped recruiting once the same themes about these relationships and roles were repeatedly emerging in my analysis, at which point I was also satisfied the data that had been generated was sufficiently rich in detail to meet the aims of the study. Patton (2015) cautions one limit of saturation is that it can be reached prematurely if it does not furnish such detail.

Broadening the inclusion criteria provided space for exploring the fluid, contradictory and contested nature of known donor relationships and roles and the bearing these can have on assumptions and beliefs about kin, kin-like and non-kin relatedness. In a context where increasing numbers of lesbians choose a known donor in order to secure children's assumed right to and need for a father and/or information about their paternal origins yet prefer to organise family life around coupledom, this is significant (see for example, the couples who chose known donors in Dempsey, 2012a; Donovan, 2000; Luce, 2010; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2009; Sullivan, 2004). Consistent with the study aims, this change also served to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of possibilities for family narratives for others, besides those identifying as lesbian

or gay. It is not *only* lesbians and gay men who have something to say about these possibilities, as I had originally tended to assume.

As people volunteered to participate in the research, I checked whether they met the original or broadened inclusion criteria. On confirming they had, I asked if they had discussed participation with other members of their individual family constellations. Many had, but where this wasn't the case I provided them with material promoting the study to pass on, along with my contact details. As each person's participation was confirmed, I entered their name and relevant information on a spreadsheet set up for this purpose, linked their name to the family constellation they were part of, and coded the family constellation as either a prospective family constellation or an existing family constellation. Both these groups received follow up information, including information sheets and consent forms that reflected their planned or actual family circumstances (see Appendix 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Consistent with the Human Ethics Committee requirements, I had submitted the information sheets and consent forms developed prior to beginning recruitment to the Committee for their approval.[48] The information sheets were based on and reflected accepted ethical principles necessary for the protection of all parties in research that involves human participants. They gave clear information about the purpose, aims and nature of the research for participants to be able to make an informed decision about whether to consent to participate or not. They stated that participation in the research was voluntary and that participants could withdraw information or data at any time up until the final draft findings stage. They also explained the conditions of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were promised that their identities and the information they provided would be kept confidential. They were assured that their real names or other identifying information would not be used in the study or related publications and presentations and that all data gathered for the study would be securely stored in a locked office and password protected computer.

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[48] The minor variations I later made to these were sent to the Committee for their records.

A number of people came forward but were not selected for the research because they diverged too far from the original or broadened inclusion criteria. For example, some lesbian couples conceived their children prior to the Hart Act 2004 when fertility service providers were still maintaining a pool of anonymous donors[49] and some had conceived children in the context of previous heterosexual relationships. Because I had limited resources for travel, I also chose not to include people who lived a significant distance away from others in the study.

The challenges in sampling and method of recruitment discussed here mean that the participants in this study are unlikely to be a representative cross-section of the population of lesbians and gay men in New Zealand who are planning to or have already formed families together and/or with heterosexual women and men. I was focused on documenting a range of lesbian known donor reproduction models, not the representativeness of these models. This study cannot therefore provide information about the distribution or relative uptake of the different family relationships and forms of relatedness it documents.

While generalisability is not typically a goal of qualitative studies, this does not mean the findings of some studies do not have broader relevance beyond a particular situation or case (Patton, 2015). With respect to this study, the insights derived from the data offer in depth understanding about kin, kin-like and non-kin relatedness in the context of known donation that could be expected to resonate with the experiences of other population groups using known donor gametes. The insights also provide examples of new possibilities for family relationships and practices of relevance for these other groups, consistent with the study aim.

Family constellation and participant overview

I recruited for diversity in family constellations, with a particular focus on a range of social identity possibilities and roles for known donors and their partners. Sixty, of a possible 81 adults, participated in this study, across 21

[49] The details of this Act are described in Chapter 1.

different family constellations.[50] Nine of the 21 family constellations were categorised as prospective family constellations. Twenty-three of the 32 adult members of these family constellations, aged 25 – 39 years, agreed to participate. Twelve of the 21 family constellations were categorised as existing family constellations. Thirty-seven of the 49 adult members of these family constellations, aged 29 – 66 years, participated.

Across the nine prospective family constellations,[51] there were two that were inclusive of a lesbian couple and a gay couple and two that were inclusive of a lesbian couple and a heterosexual couple. A further two included a lesbian couple and a single gay man and another a lesbian couple and a single heterosexual man. One included a single lesbian and a gay couple and the final family constellation in this category included a gay couple and a heterosexual couple.[52]

Across the 12 existing family constellations,[53] there were five that were inclusive of a lesbian couple and a gay couple and one that was inclusive of a lesbian couple and a heterosexual couple. Two were inclusive of a lesbian couple and a single gay man and one included a lesbian couple and a single heterosexual man. One was inclusive of a lesbian couple, a gay couple and a single heterosexual man. One was inclusive of a lesbian couple and their new partners following their separation (another lesbian and a heterosexual man) and a single gay man. The adult members of the remaining family constellation in this category numbered six and were inclusive of a lesbian couple and their new partners following their separation (both lesbians), a single gay man and a single heterosexual man.[54]

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[50] I was unable to gain access to or interview some members of family constellations. There were a variety of reasons for this, as detailed on the family constellation charts (see Appendix 7 and 8).
[51] At the time of interviewing and inclusive of adult members of family constellations that participated in the study as well as those that did not.
[52] For ease of reference, this information is duplicated on the family constellation charts (see Appendix 7 and 8.
[53] See footnote 51.
[54] See footnote 52.

Across the existing family constellations there were a total of 20 children conceived within the context of their family constellations.[55] These children ranged in age from newborn to 19 years old. The majority were aged five years old or under. Two of the 12 family constellations encompassed a further six children—either dependent teenagers or young adults from previous heterosexual relationships. One of these also encompassed a young adult relative.

This study was not designed to compare experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction between participants of different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds or by geographic location. The participants were (disproportionately) Pākehā or of European descent. In conjunction with their relative socio-economic privilege and urban habits, this suggests that the study does not sufficiently reflect the experience of lesbian known donor reproduction among Māori, other ethnic and cultural minorities in New Zealand or those in lower income brackets or rural areas. This is a limitation. Other studies that explore planned parenthood in the lesbian and gay population note similar participant characteristics (see for example, Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Goldberg, Downing, & Moyer, 2012; Goldberg & Scheib, 2015b; Hayman & Wilkes, 2016; McNair et al., 2002; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999; Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014). Further attention to sampling and recruitment biases would appear to be warranted in future studies of lesbian known donor family constellations.

Full participant biographies for the women and men making up each of the 21 family constellations are included as Appendix 9 and 10.

Collecting storied material

Accepted wisdom suggests everyone has a story to tell. The lesbians, known donors and known donor partners in this study were no exception. Participants connected their experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction and practices of relatedness and boundary definition significant to them into spontaneous

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[55] At the time of interviewing and inclusive of an infant who was born one week after his parents' interview.

stories about particular happenings or actions they had taken or planned to take, and for the meanings they intended to convey. I collected these stories through interviews, conducting 26 interviews in total.

Narrative interviews

In designing this research, I decided to use the narrative interview, with a semi-structured format. The narrative interview is a useful research method for collecting stories about people's lives. In opening up topics and accommodating long accounts, it provides the conditions necessary for storytelling (Bold, 2012; Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008). Consistent with contemporary understandings about qualitative interview methods, the narrative interview is both a method for collecting data and a site for producing data (Elliott, 2005). These understandings are indebted to Mishler (1986). In his book, *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*, Mishler argued that interview discourse is a joint construction between interviewer and interviewee. In this view, interviewer questions *and* interviewee responses are developed and shaped through mutual interaction, with stories co-produced as they are told. Mischler's arguments were further developed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995). These authors have focused on the interviewer's active role; he or she "should not presume a story's inevitable emergence" but must instead "activate narrative production" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, p. 45). Some of the ways I activated 'narrative production' are described shortly.

Because participants' selves, identities and understanding of experiences are bound up in the stories that they share, they are likely to be highly invested in them. For this reason, narrative interviewing also raises some specific ethical issues. While the method allows participants increased opportunities to influence the direction of an interview, predicting the impact of sharing personal stories is difficult. While I did not anticipate participants would become distressed during interviews, I included the contact details of an organisation that supports prospective lesbian and gay parents, and those who already have children, on all of the study information sheets.

In sum, I believed this method would best meet my research aims, by providing me with the kinds of rich, detailed storied data I considered necessary to an exploration of relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction.

Conducting interviews

Given that lesbian known donor reproduction involves multiple parties who must negotiate conception, relationships and roles *together*, I planned to conduct an initial round of interviews with these parties in their family constellation grouping. I was influenced by Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) claim that, "Group interviews are well suited for exploratory studies in a new domain, since the lively collective interaction may bring forth more spontaneous expressive and emotional views than in individual, often more cognitive interviews" (p. 150) (see also, Bion et al., 2000; Bloor & Wood, 2006). Lesbian known donor reproduction is, of course, one such new domain. In Gubrium and Holstein's (2012) opinion, the group interview "can be a veritable swirl of subject positions and opinion construction, as participants share and make use of story material from a broader range of narrative resources than a single interview might muster on its own" (p. 21). While an advantage, this 'veritable swirl' means group interviews require skills in managing group dynamics (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). I was confident my position as a teacher educator, a role that involves me regularly facilitating animated group discussions, had provided me with such skills.

As a new domain, I considered it important to gain different versions of stories about lesbian known donor reproduction. Group interviews, I thought, would accommodate this. I found that in a group interview situation with four adults, it was not unusual to hear the group's shared co-constructed story about their collective experience of lesbian known donor reproduction, two separate co-constructed couple stories about their experiences of this phenomenon, and four individually constructed stories about their experiences of this. While stories are not exact records of any one experience, because each person who shares the experience will recount their own version of it according to what captured their attention and how they made sense of it (Bold, 2012), they are nevertheless developed within ongoing interaction and invite negotiation of meaning with

others. As Gubrium and Holstein (2012), state, "It is not in the nature of narratives to simply flow forth, but instead, they are formulated and shaped in collaboration between the respondent[s] and the interviewer" (p. 12).

While I hoped that all adult members of each prospective or existing family constellation would participate in these interviews, I left decisions about who would be included to those concerned to avoid pre-determining family make-up.[56] I considered this particularly important where families were distributed across more than one household. As Stacey (1990) states, "'Family,' as anthropologists have taken pains to demonstrate, is a locus not of residence but of meaning and relationships" (p. 6).

I conducted 10 group interviews with from three to five members of particular family constellations in configurations of their choice. While these interviews generated the kind of lively and spontaneous interaction I had hoped for following my reading of the literature, this also made interview transcripts rather chaotic, a shortfall which Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) specifically recognise.

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[56] In the case of interviews with existing family constellations, I hoped that some of the children belonging to them would also participate, because there is currently scant attention in the literature to the perspectives of children conceived through lesbian known donor reproduction. In line with the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee requirements, any children who chose to participate were expected to remain under the care and guidance of their parents/guardians at all times. I therefore prepared information sheets and consent forms for the children and their parents/guardians that specifically invited them to contribute to the interviews held with their parents/guardians and other adult members of their families (see Appendix 11, 12 and 13). The information sheets and consent forms also invited the children to draw pictures and diagrams about their family for me. I made art resources available for this purpose, which were left with the children regardless of whether or not they used them in the ways intended. In practice, while children were often present during the interviews with the adults who made up their families, none specifically consented or chose to join in the conversations, even with the consent and encouragement of these adults. Seven-year-old Giles was the exception: his thoughts about life across multiple homes features in a footnote in Chapter 7. Only one child, eight-year-old Elodie, drew a picture of her family for me. In hindsight, given most of the children were under five years of age at the time interviews were conducted and I did not have pre-existing relationships with them, difficulties gaining their consent could have been predicted.

Although my research design did not include couple interviews, I quickly found these were necessary, either because it was impractical to bring together two sets of couples belonging to the same family constellation in the same place at the same time, or because of a lack of access to particular procreative partners. I conducted 11 couple interviews (seven with lesbian couples and four with gay couples). Together, these shed light on relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction from the perspective of the couple. They also drew attention to how couples interacted together, deepening my understanding of their coupled worlds. Bjørnholt and Farstad (2014) suggest such interviews provide insight into intra-couple dynamics and the complexities of relational lives (see also, Braybrook, Mróz, Robertson, White, & Milnes, 2016; Doucet, 2001).

Couple interviews proved particularly valuable given one of the partners in each couple expected to have or did have a biogenetic relationship with a child and the other did not. In particular, how lesbian couples managed this difference in status provided insights into their construction of coupledom as the location for parenthood, which hinged on their construction of known donors and known donor partners as supplementary or subordinate to them. Such insights were not always as readily derived from group interviews, where, for example, lesbian couples appeared to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of known donors and known donor partners. In these interviews, it is possible that lesbian couples felt inhibited by the presence of known donors and known donor partners and refrained from making comments that might have a negative effect on their relationships with them. This could explain why largely positive stories were recorded.

In a few of the couple interviews, one partner dominated the interview, thus limiting my insight into the other partner's perspectives, a drawback documented in the literature (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2014; Eisikovits & Koren, 2010; Morris, 2001; Polak & Green, 2015). Radcliffe, Lowton, and Morgan (2013) suggest that couples may also present a united front, hiding secrets or differences of opinion. Contrary to this, several sets of couples aired their differences of opinion freely and this provided particularly rich and interesting data.

During couple interviews, several couples also aired the conflict or tension they jointly experienced in their relationships with procreative partners. In these cases, this conflict or tension was generated through divergent expectations about donor-child relationships and roles. As Dempsey (2004, 2005a, 2012a), Riggs (2008a, 2008b) and Scholz and Riggs (2013) have found, such disparities are not uncommon. In every case however, I was requested not to use the relevant data, because of the potential to create further difficulties between the members of these family constellations. Those concerned understood that preserving confidentiality between them in analysis and presentation of data would be difficult or impossible given they all belonged to the same family constellation, a point Bjørnholt and Farstad (2014) comment on. Because maintaining ethical integrity was paramount, I had no option but to respect these requests. Despite issues of conflict and confidentiality, overall I noted more advantages to couple interviews than disadvantages.

In my original research design, I planned that the initial round of group interviews would be followed by a series of individual interviews with those who had participated in the group interviews. I chose this strategy on the assumption that what any one member of a family constellation shared during group interviews could be quite different from what they were willing to share when alone with me (Taylor et al., 2016). Potentially, perspectives that might be lost in a group interview could be elucidated. In any event, follow up individual interviews did not eventuate, because the volume and richness of data generated in the first round of interviews was more than sufficient to address the research questions and aims. Five individual interviews were, however, held, but this was for the same reasons as the couple interviews—that is, they were not follow up interviews. These interviews often supported accounts already shared in the group or couple interviews, but divergent stories sometimes came forward too. Declan's comment—"you've got two contradictory stories"—which features in the title to this chapter is illustrative.[57]

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[57] Declan made this comment at the completion of his interview, before going on to ask jokingly, "Which story is accurate?" The "two contradictory stories" he refers to were his own, and that of

Typically, I liaised with one member of each family constellation to organise interview dates, times and places with that person acting as a go between for me with other members of his or her family constellation. He or she also helped ensure the return of signed consent forms prior to interviewing. While receipt of these forms indicated that participants understood the conditions of the study, I verbally re-stated these, prior to proceeding with each interview. I also pointed out that I could not control what participants who were interviewed with other members of their family constellation chose to share with people outside of their group.

Most interviews were conducted in the North Island in either Auckland or Wellington. Some interviews were also conducted in the Hawkes Bay and Manawatu-Wanganui regions of the North Island. A few interviews were conducted in the South Island, in Christchurch. Interviews were generally conducted in participants' homes, but several were also conducted in workspaces. Interviewing in participants' homes, as a 'natural setting', had advantages over interviewing in workspaces. As private, familiar spaces, participants appeared most relaxed in this environment (or the home of another member of their family constellation, with which they were also familiar) and interviews tended to last longer. In general, interviews lasted from one to three hours with most about two hours in length. All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder.

As part of fostering reciprocal and respectful relationships, after each interview I wrote to participants to thank them for their contribution to the research. I kept them informed of research progress by emailing them six monthly or annual letters describing the project's status. Many participants responded to my letters with stories continuing to emerge as a result of our ongoing contact. Part of the data set, these stories, briefly captured in the postscript to the thesis, spoke to the next stage of forming or practising family. Invariably however, and over time,

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the lesbian couple for whom he provided sperm. He was interviewed separately from the women, because he lived in a geographically different region to them.

responses dwindled or stopped altogether. Contact with some participants was therefore lost.

Creating a storytelling climate

Riessman (2008) states that "narrative interviewing is not a set of 'techniques' [and] nor is it necessarily 'natural'" (p. 26). However, as she explains, interviewers can create a storytelling climate that fosters the telling and hearing of stories. I found a direct invitation to tell a story useful for establishing such a climate. Considered the simplest way to elicit stories (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), I typically opened interviews with statements such as the one made to Nate and Guy, "I'm interested in your stories about family." Participants frequently responded with a prefacing statement. Following Holstein and Gubrium (2000), these statements alerted me and other listeners to an upcoming story. Examples from Freida, Timothy and Reese have already been introduced as part of the previous chapter titles. Or, participants actively claimed a space to tell a story as Pascal did, when he asked, "Can I tell you a little story?"

In keeping with the focus in narrative interviewing on opening up topics for storying, I had an interview guide that included an outline of topics I wanted to cover developed during the initial study design phase. I used this to help me maintain the storytelling climate, checking it from time to time. Consistent with the kinds of interview guides recommended for semi-structured interviews, it also included a list of suggested questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Wengraf, 2001) (see Appendix 14 and 15). When I used questions, I made sure they encouraged an extended account of a particular event or experience, strategies Riessman (2008) suggests. These were successful strategies that prompted participants to give long accounts that had logic and sequence, with these dimensions of stories considered a defining feature of narrative (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Elliott, 2005). I responded to these accounts by encouraging temporal and spatial structuring. As Riessman (2008) states, such structuring fits with "a Western listener's preoccupation with forward marching time" (p. 7). For example, when Genevieve moved from describing asking a gay couple to jointly act as known donors, to a first conception attempt, I said, "Now don't jump ahead!" While I showed interest in and sometimes prompted particular story

directions through questioning, I also allowed space for stories to emerge without undue interruption. Some long extracts of data in Chapters 5 – 7 are illustrative.

Stories, of course, drew to an end. Their endings were invariably signaled. As our individual interview came to a close, Sonia said, "That's pretty much my story", a not atypical remark. On my part, I showed appreciation for the stories that were shared, saying to Renee and Stella, "Thank you for sharing that story."

Holstein and Gubrium (2000) state: "Both storyteller and recipient then, constantly monitor the emerging story and keep each other apprised of their attentions and intentions. Their interactional partnership never ceases" (p. 142). The short extracts from the data shared here illustrate this partnership.

Analysing the stories

Frequently considered messy, qualitative analysis merges intuition, insight and intimate knowledge of the data (Taylor et al., 2016). While in the field, I wrote short stories about each family constellation. These stories included the biographical particulars of family constellation members and succinctly captured their plans for or practising of family. At the same time, I wrote detailed field notes structured around the interview topics, topics that emerged during interviewing, and my thoughts, insights and interpretations. I also transcribed interviews and returned these to participants to check for accuracy. This form of member checking was another way of fostering reciprocal and respectful relationships.[58] These related tasks, completed shortly after each interview, began the ongoing inductive process of data analysis, a process that rarely follows a linear path (Taylor et al., 2016).

There are numerous possibilities for narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008; Sparkes, 2005). As indicated in Chapter 2, I adopted a storied approach focused on a thematic analysis of what participants had to say about their experiences of

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[58] Where participants considered corrections or clarifying points necessary, these were made. In total, eight transcripts were modified as a result of this process.

lesbian known donor reproduction rather than an analysis of how they went about the telling of these experiences (Riessman, 2008; Sparkes, 2005). That is to say, I primarily attended to the content of what was said, not the form with which it was said, or the actual structures of speech or social processes that were used to say it.

My approach was twofold. Firstly, I focused on the content of participant stories by theme—the whats of the telling. While the whats of the telling are arguably a primary concern of all narrative inquiry, in thematic analysis, content is typically (but not always) the exclusive focus (Riessman, 2008). Sparkes (2005) points out such analysis is useful for the ways in which it enables investigation of the similarities and differences between stories collected from different storytellers. He states "The strength of this form of analysis lies in it's capacity to develop general knowledge about the core themes that make up the content of the stories collected in an interview context" (pp. 206-207).

Thematic analysis required me to dissect the stories I had gathered in order to categorise participant experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction thematically. To facilitate this, I imported interview transcripts into Nvivo (QSR NUD*IST Vivo [nVivo], 2008), a qualitative data analysis software package. This was a useful mechanical tool that enabled me to differentiate between data within and across transcripts. As I systematically read and reread transcripts, I highlighted and coded passages of text using a descriptive label. As later transcripts introduced new codes, I returned to transcripts I had already coded and applied the new codes to them. I then imported all coded text across all transcripts to their relevant nodes, which I saved electronically and printed in hard copy. In total, this process generated 39 nodes. A careful examination of each node provided insights into how participants understood their experiences of lesbian known donor reproduction. For example, text coded to 'biogenetic relatedness', in conjunction with text coded to 'social relatedness', revealed patterns in the meanings participants gave to these aspects of this form of reproduction.

This approach has been criticised, because it can lead to an over-determination of themes impacting on story integrity and/or recognition of variation across stories (Sparkes, 2005). For this reason, as I reassembled the previously dissected stories for inclusion in the findings chapters, I deliberately preserved long text sequences to help maintain their integrity. I also deliberately sought out divergent stories, or, in Riessman's (2008) words, "coexistent realities" (p. 191). This, she notes, is a means to strengthen validity.

Stories presuppose an audience (Elliott, 2005). They have performative dimensions (see also, Plummer, 1995; Riessman, 2003, 2008; Sparkes, 2005). Following this line of thinking, the participants in this study not only construct selves and identities through their stories as argued in Chapter 2, but they also use storying to actively perform these selves and identities for the audience of myself, my (future) research audience, and other members of their family constellations. My second approach to analysis therefore focused on this performative aspect. Drawing on the work of Holstein and Gubrium (2000), and Riessman (2003), I asked the following kinds of questions of the data: How do the storytellers locate themselves and other characters in relation to one another? What claims about the self are made? How do they make preferred identity claims? What selves and identities are projected and performed? How do they position themselves in relation to the audience? I also questioned what narrative resources participants were drawing on in their stories, as Riessman (2008) advises.

Throughout these processes, I wrote analytical memos—that is, I used writing to explore emerging abstract, conceptual and theoretical ideas making extensive links to my thematic agendas, examples from the data and literature. At this point I also assigned pseudonyms to participants to help preserve their anonymity, thereafter only ever using these names in my writing and any other documentation.[59]

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[59] Because participants who had children frequently talked about them in interviews, they were also given pseudonyms. Where it seemed necessary, the age and gender of these children was altered.

While describing the data analysis processes I followed might imply these were straightforward, this was by no means the case. Narrative data can be overwhelming and prone to unlimited analysis (Bold, 2012; Squire et al., 2008). In practice, I found myself caught up in endless interpretation. Knowing the data could tell different stories, I engaged in an ongoing struggle around which stories I *should* tell. Smart (2010) states, "There is an inescapable sense that the data holds onto many more stories than one ever manages to bring forth into a written narrative" (p. 4).

Story readings

Following Riessman (2008), the stories I bring forth in this thesis are overlapping stories. My stories are stories about stories—interpretive accounts of the participants' stories (themselves interpretive). The stories that readers construct as a result of reading my stories, will reflect yet another narrative level. Which stories, and which interpretations, as Andrews (2008) asks, are "the most true, the most authentic?" (p. 5).

Stories are not unproblematic accounts of 'real' selves, identities and experiences—they do not reveal an essential, fixed truth. Stories are tools for accomplishing particular selves and identities and for coming to understand past and current experience, but they are also retrospective *reconstructions* of happenings (Riessman, 2003; Squire, 2008). As reconstructions, competing versions of the same story are always possible. This 'crisis of representation' can be managed through reflexive practice (Elliott, 2005).

A researcher's positioning within the research—bound to the vantage point from which the researcher sees the world—impacts story interpretation and should be addressed (Andrews, 2008; Bold, 2012; Riessman, 2003). Rather than seeking to establish certainty, I acknowledge the influence of my positioning on my storying of participant stories. Returning to the narrative I set up for potential participants—a narrative about lesbian and gay collaboration and innovation in family formation, lesbian and gay multi-parenting, and gay men as fathers— traces of my selves and biases are readily detected.

Coming out when I did, a collective political project of social change and the solidarities of a families of choice framing became my reference points. I saw collaboration with other lesbians and gay men as necessary for social change and assumed innovation in the families we were creating. I believed in the old adage that it takes a village to raise a child (I still do). Multi-parenting, from this perspective, is an obvious conclusion. I lived this adage, sharing part-time parenting of my niece from her toddlerhood to her mid-teens with my sister and our respective partners. Children, I thought, needed *a minimum* of two adults of *any* gender or sexual orientation in their lives who loved them unconditionally and who were fully committed to their well-being. Influenced by the cultural context of New Zealand, I accepted however, that for some children, being fathered by a man, or at least having access to information about paternal origins, could be important.

As I encountered participants, listened to their stories, and filtered these through the lenses I brought to bear on the data, I came to realise that I would need to look beyond the reference points of my own biographical history. I needed to ask questions of the data that would generate insights relevant to participant perspectives, particularly where these perspectives were not my own. The current neoliberal, homonormative emphasis on personal negotiation and normalisation in family formation invites different kinds of collaboration, innovation and forms of parenting or social involvement in children's lives than I could at first see. Coming to this realisation marked a turning point for me and allowed new layers of meaning to emerge.

Relational idioms: Paradoxes and dilemmas

One of the aims of this study was to document and make accessible new possibilities for family relationships of relevance to many different people, regardless of how they might identify. Finding the words to write about these new possibilities without adequate language to do so was a significant dilemma for me. The participants in this study had formed varied social groups patterned on particular combinations of relationships. I had no recourse but to categorise these groups in order to write about them, as discussed in Chapter 1. But, I also had to find ways of labeling the novel relationships within them. Paradoxically,

given the aforementioned aim, the labels I have used are a constraining factor in efforts to conceptualise new relational possibilities. While notions of relationality, or kinship and family as sets of practices, provided me with ways of conceptualising these possibilities, this did not resolve the difficulties of *writing*—or actually composing text—about them. I offer two examples to illustrate this.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, labeling the partners in a lesbian couple as 'birth mother' and 'non-birth mother' was not intended to privilege biogenetic motherhood over social motherhood, but in positioning both mothers in a relationship to biology this is what I have done.[60] Yet I could not simply ignore the distinction between the two categories, because the unique experiences attached to each, including the ways in which partners are differently positioned in negotiations with known donors, informs aspects of my analysis. But why place 'birth mother' before 'non-birth mother' in sentences where both labels are necessary? This was a practical device, employed to help me remember which of the partners was the birth mother and which was the non-birth mother. Notwithstanding this, it is one that I can see in hindsight serves to highlight the impact of prevailing biogenetic discourses on my thinking and writing *despite* my own experience of social parenting. Arguably, this device contributes to diminishing the status of non-birth mothers in a context where the available language frequently renders them invisible as parents (R. Brown & Perlesz, 2008; Hayman et al., 2013; Swainson & Tasker, 2005).

I adopted the label 'known donor' relatively unthinkingly early in the study and found this label—or 'donor'—was frequently used by study participants. Daniels (1998) charts the history of donor insemination, noting that it was some 100 years after the first reported birth of a child following this technique that the donor "as a person with feelings, thoughts and actions, rather than a 'non-person'" (p. 79) began to garner passing mention in the literature. As I engaged with this literature, I began to realise how reductive the label is. Chapter 7

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[60] Similarly, where known donors and their male partners are understood as the fathers and/or parents of their children, I position them in a relationship to biology.

therefore attempts to bring known donors (and their partners) as people—with feelings, thoughts and actions—to the fore.

The known donors in this study are often multiply related. This was particularly evident where they had pre-existing relationships with the lesbians they expected to or had donated for. The spectrum between being a known donor who intends to be or is an active father to his children and being a known donor who is not is wide. Consistent with Van Reyk's (1995, 2007) personal experience of being a known donor for both lesbian and heterosexual couples, the known donors in this study are located across different relational and role categories and/or inhabit more than one category at a time. While the label 'known donor' does not capture this, there are no suitable alternatives.

The inadequacies of existing language apropos the multifaceted and flexible relationships amongst lesbians and gay men and the children they are connected to is now well documented (see for example, Bergen et al., 2006; Dempsey, 2012b; Padavic & Butterfield, 2011; Swainson & Tasker, 2005; Swennen & Croce, 2015). I have found no real resolutions to the labeling dilemmas I have described here. Following R. Brown and Perlesz (2008), the problem throughout this thesis is that I am forever using language I do not really want to be using "because it is not doing its job well enough" (p. 271).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how I went about collecting, interpreting and narrating storied material in order to explore relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction. As an insider researcher, I brought particular knowledge and understanding to bear on these processes. I knew about the challenges of lesbian known donor reproduction from first hand experience, including the challenge of finding a donor and establishing expected relationships going forward. I could appreciate the participants' family-building activities, with some participants acknowledging they welcomed the opportunity to talk with me for this reason. While this lent itself to establishing trust and rapport, I was conscious that participants expected that I would portray their stories positively because of my insider status. Realising the extent to which selves, identities and

experiences are caught up in stories, helped me to fully appreciate how keenly wronged participants could feel if I misconstrued or misrepresented these. Smart (2010) reminds researchers of their responsibility to listen carefully to participant' stories *and* to work carefully with these stories. I took this responsibility seriously, as this chapter has highlighted. It is to the participant stories that I now turn.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present these stories. Chapters 5 and 6 each focus on three core family narratives of three sets of lesbian couples. Chapter 7 focuses on a further three core narratives, but in foregrounding three sets of gay couples, rather than lesbian couples, this chapter deliberately positions known donors and their partners centre stage. Collectively, these nine narratives introduce members of nine of the 21 different family constellations. Decisions about which narratives to feature across these chapters were linked to the decision I made during recruitment to broaden the study inclusion criteria. As described in this chapter, I increasingly sought out participants for their ability to illuminate a variety of social identity possibilities and roles for gay or heterosexual men as known donors for lesbians, and those of their partners, because of their uncertain location within the kinship structures put around the children subsequently conceived. I therefore chose these narratives because they could illustrate this range. They were also ones that stood out; they were particularly lucid and conveyed the complexities of relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction in rich detail. Further comment on why these narratives were chosen is provided in each of the findings chapters.

The nine core family narratives across the findings chapters are contextualised in two key ways. Firstly, the narratives are contextualised through attention to relevant literature. Secondly, they are contextualised by using footnotes to include interview material drawn from the stories of participants who are members of the remaining 12 family constellations. Members of these 12 family constellations are introduced in the participant biographies in Appendix 9 and 10. Drawing attention to particular aspects of their stories is useful because it allows for the addition of other examples pertinent to the arguments being made, without detracting from the core narratives. This approach means that

interview material from all 21 of the family constellations in this research has been drawn on in this thesis.

Chapter 5: Storying fathers: "He's not a donor, he's a father"

Introduction

This chapter presents the family narratives of three sets of lesbian couples at different stages of imagining, planning for and practising family and is followed by a discussion of the relationship between these family stories and core thesis arguments.[61] Positioned centre stage, the couples look back on what they planned for and what has come to pass over time, using stories to share what was important to them at key moments. Some of the known donors with whom the couples collaborated add their perspectives to these stories. A partner of a known donor also adds her perspective.

The chapter focuses on the way these lesbian couples construct known donors as fathers consistent with the first trend suggested by the research discussed in Chapter 3. To reiterate, this trend draws attention to the preference of many lesbian couples for a known donor who is prepared to be a father in some capacity (see for example, the lesbian couples who chose known donors for this reason in Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman et al., 2014; Luce, 2010; McNair et al., 2002; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Surtees, 2011). The chapter does this through stories about the importance of father-child relationships. These stories are implicated within two discourses; firstly, the dominant discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins and secondly, fathers' rights discourse. Located in assumptions about identity transmission and belonging, the stories draw on public narratives that can be linked to father-right debates and father-right movements, including the 'children are damaged without a father' story and the 'hurt of a missing father' story. The influence of whakapapa in New Zealand for both Māori and Pākehā means these kinds of public narratives are particularly

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[61] The family narratives of these couples were chosen to illustrate the different ways in which lesbian couples participating in the research positioned known donors as fathers. The stories selected indicate the extent to which donors were not only recognised as 'fathers' but were also constructed as active 'parents' in some cases. Inclusion of those planning children as well as those with children enables consideration of differences between aspirations and practices.

relevant to this unique cultural context.[62] Whether or not whakapapa is more important than fathers' rights discourse in this context was not ascertained—both carry weight. Ryan-Flood's (2005) insight that lesbian known donor decision-making must be understood in the context in which it occurs is a salient one for this study. As her research illustrates, cross-cultural differences—whakapapa, in the case of this study—help explain the divergent choices lesbians make about known donor relationships and roles across countries, points introduced in Chapter 3.

Public narratives such as the 'children are damaged without a father' story and the 'hurt of a missing father' story are prevalent in the media. But they are also supported by an international literature that invokes fathers' rights discourse. Specifically, the fatherlessness literature and the children's right to know their biogenetic origins literature. Broadly, the fatherlessness literature in the 1990s emphasised the reportedly dangerous and harmful effects of uncommitted fathers or absent fathers on children and their development (see for example, Ancona, 1999; Blankenhorn, 1995; Dennis & Erdos, 1993; Popenoe, 1996). This literature continued to be built on over the following decade. For example, Perrin, Baker, Romelus, Jones, and Heesacker (2009) describe the development of The Father Hunger Scale, an empirically based measure of 'father hunger', or the longing for a distant father. These authors claim the scale, "holds promise in advancing research on the role of fathers throughout child and adult development, as well as on the causes, correlates, and sequelae of unrequited father hunger" (p. 314). The children's right to know their biogenetic origins literature has been largely informed by work in the field of adoption, particularly the groundbreaking work of McWhinnie (1967, undated) and Triseliotis (1973). This right has more recently been appealed to in respect of children conceived via gamete donation (see for example, McWhinnie, 2001). Strathern (1999, 2005) indicates this perceived right is increasingly justified, as noted in Chapter 3.

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[62] See Chapter 1, footnote 10, for an explanation of whakapapa.

The thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint) is illustrated in the chapter through an exploration of some of the ways the couples simultaneously resist and reinforce dominant heteronormative models of family as they plan for and create positions for known donors in their children's lives. In this process, most couples see themselves as generating innovative family scripts of their own design. At the same time, their recourse to established heterosexual kinship conventions, including old ideas about families and fathers delimits possibilities for new scripts. Following Strathern (1992), new procreative possibilities give form to new possibilities for kinship thinking but it is inevitable that these "possibilities are imagined through ideas already in existence and already part of a cultural repertoire" (p. vii).

From their place within the sorts of public narratives mentioned above, the couples purposely chose particular kinds of known donors, taking their personal responsibility to provide fathers for their children seriously. While this chapter considers the relevance of neoliberal agendas of choice and personal responsibility, these agendas are developed more fully in Chapter 6. Although the couples whose stories are the focus of this chapter located donors at the same end of the continuum of kinship possibilities for social proximity,[63] not all of the couples mapped 'father' on to 'parent.' The ordering of each family narrative within the chapter reflects this. The couples that position donors most closely (fathers *and* parents) are introduced first, followed by the couple that positions their two donors slightly more distantly (*just* fathers).

The first family narrative introduced in this chapter is very much about a couple and their relationship to their known donor. The couple met their donor socially, became friends, and, within a year of their first meeting, had asked him to donate for them. At the time of their interview, the couple had a pregnancy well established. They had chosen to involve the donor in the pregnancy process on the basis that he was not 'a' donor, but their unborn child's father—someone they imagined as a key kin connection for the child. Projecting ahead to the child's birth, the couple anticipated that parenting responsibilities would be

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[63] See Chapter 1, pages 9 and 10.

spread between them and the donor. The couple's emphasis on a multi-parenting project draws attention to the value they give to a third parent, in comparison to traditional parenting projects which allow for two parents only. Nevertheless, the ideal of an additional parent underlying the couple's plans, is inconsistent with their aspiration for couple-based, primary parenthood reflective of conventional heteronormative models of family. The parenting arrangements they had actually planned for reflected this aspiration. Put another way, while the couple rejected locating parenthood exclusively in their couple relationship, this was in tension with actual planned arrangements. These arrangements conform to expected norms by prioritising coupledom as the key location of parenthood.

The second family narrative is much more about relationships between sets of people and households—specifically, relationships between the lesbian couple, a heterosexual couple, and these couples' respective homes. A partner from the lesbian couple and the male partner from the heterosexual couple were first time parents to an infant conceived by the woman with the man's sperm through insemination. The core biogenetic relatedness of these first time parents and their infant is a significant relationship in this narrative. In particular, the narrative establishes the importance of father-child relationships by drawing on two key cultural resources—whakapapa and whānau. Typically translated as an extended family group, traditional meanings of whānau are multi-layered, complex and reflect intergenerational relationships based on whakapapa (C. Smith, 2012; Walker, 2006).[64]

The lesbian couple and the heterosexual couple make up a whānau based family group. Care of the infant is understood as a shared responsibility, although neither of the partners of the first time parents, who were already parents of adult children, considered themselves additional mothers to the infant. While both couples reject coupledom as the only basis for parenthood, in practice, at the time of interviewing, the responsibility for parenting rested primarily with the lesbian couple.

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[64] This Māori term is further elaborated in the body of this family narrative.

The family narrative of the last lesbian couple is about the relationships between the sets of people making up this couple's familial configuration and their households. This includes the whānau informed recombinant family groups revolving around the couple's two children following the couple's separation when the children (who were in middle childhood at the time of interviewing) were young. Prior to separating, the couple framed their parenting as couple-centric. While they de-emphasised paternal parental-child relationships, they considered father-child relationships significant and welcomed the fathering involvement of the children's donors, and the kin involvement of the donors' extended families in the children's lives. Post their separation, these pre-existing open family boundaries were further reinforced as new couple relationships and homes emerged and consolidated.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the family narratives across this chapter, and the next two chapters, are contextualised with reference to relevant literature and through the use of footnotes, which include interview material drawn from the stories of other participants.[65] The thesis argument about innovation (in conformity and through constraint) is explored through discussion of these narratives.

I open with Polly and Esther's family narrative. The couple's perception that their multi-parenting plans are non-conventional raises issues about the tension between what is planned for and what might actually be possible.

Polly, Esther and Keane

According to Polly, when she and Esther first met, future motherhood "was pretty much non-negotiable for both of us." She joked that their 'how we met' story was "the typical lesbian cliché" because, "by date two, we said we wanted to have a family!" Polly and Esther had agreed Polly would conceive their first child through home-based insemination and Esther, a second child later, by the same method. This necessitated a donor; the couple uses their family narrative to convey a sense of what matters to them in relation to donor type. Polly

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[65] See the participant biographies in Appendix 9 and 10 for details of these other participants.

recalled that they had speculated about whether or not they would have used an anonymous donor, had that option, which was perceived of as 'easier' than a knowable or known donor, been available to them. Summing up, she said, "Our drive to have children might have pushed us to have an anonymous donor" but they came to realise "that was about us and not the child." Esther added, "We don't see that in a child's best interests."

As personally responsible parents to be, Polly and Esther were committed to meeting a child's best interests; they wanted a known donor who could be an involved father, because they believed this would secure these interests. In reaching this conclusion, they accessed the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins, an influential discourse for many lesbian parents.[66] Knowing paternity is understood to provide 'biogenetic capital' for children. As Donovan (2006) explains this kind of capital suggests, "Particular relationships provide privileged connections between individuals that locate them in their social life ... [and] the knowledge itself provides a resource that individuals can draw on to construct a sense of self and identity that gives ontological security" (p. 504).[67] The significance of this privileged connection is also demonstrated in reverse whereby not knowing paternity is understood as an intolerable deficit.

Keane,[68] a single gay man, came to the fore as a possible known donor in the months following their introduction at a social event. Despite learning that Keane was in New Zealand on a 12-month work visa and would return to Europe when it expired, the couple sensed he was, as Esther said, "the right person." Put another way, he was someone that they liked and thought they could trust and this meant they could imagine developing an ongoing relationship with him focused around mutual children. Equally importantly, he was also someone who they could imagine would make a good daddy.

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[66] See Chapter 3.
[67] In point of fact Donovan (2006) actually uses the term 'genetic capital.' My use of 'biogenetic capital' in this thesis is a deliberate expansion on her term because it explicitly acknowledges both biology and genetics.
[68] Keane was not interviewed, because he was out of the country during the period interviews were conducted.

After several months, Polly and Esther decided to broach their plans for a family with Keane, to gauge his response. Like other lesbian partners, they drew on the dominant heteronormative model available to them in their consideration of how Keane might enter the parenting project—that is, their cohabiting couple relationship was to be privileged as the location of primary parenthood (Dempsey, 2012a; Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Nordqvist, 2012b). This model shaped the couple's stories about the negotiation of Keane's potential place in the family and his relationship to their child. If their plans for an involved father were to be realised, however, Keane would need to forgo both life in the same country as his family of origin, and his well-established prestigious career there, for the uncertainties of a permanent relocation to New Zealand.

In due course, Keane agreed to Polly and Esther's plans, including the possibility that he continue as donor for, and involved father of, their second child. However, to their collective disappointment, Keane was unable to secure ongoing employment beyond the expiry of his work visa, which cast doubt on whether or not they should proceed as planned. Eventually, Keane accepted a position in Australia on a significantly reduced income as an interim step to acquiring permanent residency in New Zealand and on this basis inseminations began. Six weeks before Keane's departure, Polly conceived.[69] In those six weeks excitement was high. The three adults attended an initial maternity care appointment together and Esther said they "talked for hours about this kid and what it means." Establishing each of their positions with respect to *this kid* and one another were ongoing topics of conversation during which Polly reported they "forced the language … all the time." This was evident in an exchange with Esther:

> Polly: There are three of us. We don't talk about a donor dad. We talk about this is the child's father and we are the mothers. We don't use the term donor dad at all.
>
> Esther: No, no. We don't like it … He's not a donor, he's a father.

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[69] Polly was five months pregnant when she and Esther were interviewed.

Through their family narrative, Polly and Esther actively construct themselves as mothers and parents relative to Keane. Polly's biogenetic contribution to conception was a kinship resource they accessed to confer motherhood/parenthood on her, and her relationship, as Esther's partner, was a resource accessed in the conferring of motherhood/parenthood on Esther. This conferral of motherhood/parenthood mirrors heterosexual conventions in traditional Euro-American kinship thinking. While a mother's identity is created *by* her child in the process of giving birth, a father's identity relies on his relationship to the mother—if he has a recognised relationship to her, he must also have a relationship to her child (Strathern, 1992, 2005).

A formal agreement acknowledging both women's motherhood/parenthood was also an important resource for conferring motherhood/parenthood. Described by Esther as an "insurance policy", the formal agreement was negotiated through the women and Keane's lawyers, before conception. It confirmed the women would be their child's legal parents, and defined Keane's expected position and relationship to the child.[70] Legal parenthood was the most significant resource at the women's disposal, particularly for Esther. Ongoing changes to the complex statutory arrangements within which parenting is negotiated means legal parenthood for non-birth mothers is available as a resource for some, but not others, under particular regulatory regimes. Esther was relieved this resource was available to her. As Polly's partner, and in line with the deeming rules under Part 2 of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004 described in Chapter 2, she expected to name herself as a parent, alongside Polly as the birth mother, when they registered the child's birth. This option—mirroring heterosexual conventions in traditional Euro-American kinship thinking—would enable her to formalise her social relationship to the child. Esther was aware that her only 'right' to their child as a non-birth mother/parent rested on legal parenthood.

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[70] Resonating with Luce's (2010) notion of 'contracting kinship', formal agreements between the legal parents of a donor conceived child and the donor about his involvement with the child are recognised under Section 41 of the Care of Children Act 2004. While such agreements cannot be enforced, parties to the agreement can request the Family Court to formalise any aspect of it through a court order. Where the court order relates to contact with the child, it can be enforced under the Act (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).

Achieving this status was a strategy that would rectify a perceived 'imbalance' between her and Polly's positions. Speaking from within a historical context that had only recently recognised this right, Esther said: "I don't have any other right to the child. It just makes me very nervous." Completing the birth registration process for the child by identifying and naming herself as a parent in the absence of a biogenetic tie could become a significant kinship act for her (Dempsey, 2013).

Keane was to occupy the same adult-child relational space in the parenting project as the women, because his biogenetic contribution to conception—like that of Polly's—allowed him to be constituted by the women as father and parent. As Polly pointed out, regardless of legalities, he would always have a biogenetic tie to the child, which could never be taken away. A DNA paternity test will be a resource Keane can access at any future point should he wish to conclusively prove he is the child's biogenetic father, something Polly and Esther were likely to be well aware of given widespread understandings about such testing (Luce, 2010). Regardless of proof of Keane's biogenetic relationship to the child, he will not be a legal parent to him or her. This is because the parental status of known and knowable donors is extinguished under the deeming rules of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2 (Gunn & Surtees, 2009).[71] In effect, these rules will prevent Keane from becoming a legal parent (there are some exceptions to this rule, but they do not apply in his case), unless he can persuade Polly and Esther to allow him to be named a parent through the birth registration and birth certificate processes in place of Esther. This was not an option the women wanted. Without legal parenthood, Keane—and other donors in his position—have no rights, responsibilities or liabilities in respect of their donor conceived children and these children lose those that would otherwise stem from them (Gunn & Surtees, 2009). The interests of heterosexual couples utilising donated gametes predominantly shape the protection of the donor from rights, responsibilities or liabilities. This is particularly significant for Keane

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[71] The parental status of known and knowable egg donors is also extinguished under these rules.

because his loss of rights, responsibilities or liabilities will be the case irrespective of the three adults' plans to be jointly acknowledged as parents.

Polly and Esther described the relational dynamics associated with their parenting project:

> Polly: We call it a tri-parenting alliance.
>
> Esther: It's almost like a—what's the word for a three way relationship, but non-sexual?
>
> Polly: Well, it's platonic—it's not polyamorous.
>
> Esther: It is almost like a relationship, the three of us.
>
> Polly: Yeah.
>
> Esther: It is like that.
>
> Polly: There is a specific dynamic—Keane and Esther have a specific relationship, Keane and I have a specific relationship, then the three of us together. He'd—I mean, the intimacy for us, that relationship is respected…. Our couple relationship.
>
> Esther: It's hard to define.

The couple's family narrative constructs their tri-parenting alliance as non-conventional. Polly elaborated:

> I think a lot of it is the ability to manage the complexities and ambiguities of different relationships. To step outside the traditional stereotypes: that parenting does not necessarily need to imply sexual intimacy, that the parenting alliance can look completely different.

Such parenting alliances and other forms of multi-parent models between lesbians and gay men are not common. As mentioned in the last chapter, the scarcity of studies in this area indicate multi-parent models are not well recognised. Power, Perlesz, Brown, et al. (2010) large longitudinal study, *Work, Love and Play in Diverse Family Life in Australia and New Zealand*, which investigates family life for same-sex parents, concludes dominant social, cultural and institutional traditions that assume a child will have two (and only two) parents and a possible reluctance to engage with the practical, logistical and legal aspects that result when more than two parents are contributing to a child's upbringing may be contributing factors for this.

The potential for Polly, Esther and Keane's parenting alliance to *look completely different* stems from Polly's resistance to locating parenting exclusively in an intimate couple relationship. While her resistance disrupts Euro-American kinship discourse that singularly links coupledom and parenthood, Polly and Esther's stories about their planned parenting arrangements reflect a conventional approach to mothering, fathering and parenting practices. They expected to provide day-to-day care of the child in their home following his or her birth as well as being his or her legal parents and guardians.[72] Until such time as the baby was actually born, Keane would return to New Zealand for short visits to share in the pregnancy, one of which was timed to coincide with an ultrasound scan. He would also return for a longer visit to coincide with the baby's arrival and early weeks. Thereafter, he would visit for three to four days each month until he was free to relocate to New Zealand.[73]

Once relocated, Keane was to enact non-residential fathering/parenting in ways prescribed through their formal agreement, which was to be formalised through his appointment as an additional guardian.[74] Keane's contribution was to encompass 'cash and care' (Hearn, 2002). Esther said he would provide financial support[75] and could expect "reasonable access" and opportunities to share in the child's upbringing "across the board."

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[72] In the majority of circumstances, legal parenthood automatically confers guardianship. Parenthood and guardianship involve different rights, responsibilities and duties in relation to a child's upbringing, even when a parent and a guardian are one and the same person. Ordinarily, both parents of a child are guardians with the birth mother considered a natural guardian (Law Commission, 2005).

[73] Polly and Esther thought this would be when the baby was about 10 months old.

[74] Other people, including donors, can become additional guardians to children by applying to the Family Court to become a court-appointed guardian. Guardianship is governed by the Care of Children Act 2004, which replaced the Guardianship Act 1968. Keane was not the only donor in this study who planned to, or had already become a guardian, under whichever act was available to them at the time of application to the court. Guardianship, while not conferring full parental status, does give legal authority over decision-making and day-to-day care of a child. Unlike legal parentage, which establishes a permanent parent-child relationship that endures for the course of a child's life, guardianship does not endure beyond a child's 18th birthday (or until such time as the child marries or enters a civil union or de facto relationship) (Surtees, 2011).

[75] In comparison to fathers in conventional heterosexual relationships where a degree of care may be valuable but notions of financial support are high, notions of such support for many of the known donors who were constituted as fathers in this study were relatively absent as a criterion for fatherhood. The majority of lesbian couples negotiated the men's place in the family and

Dempsey (2012a) suggests that discourses of heterosexual paternal involvement provide a context for shaping gay men's expectations for their role as fathers and/or parents as donors for lesbian couples, a point made in Chapter 3. These discourses range from a discourse of paternal choice to a discourse of active paternal engagement. Polly and Esther's family narrative is implicated in both these competing discourses. Extending on Dempsey's suggestion, this indicates that such discourses also provide a context for lesbian couple expectations for known donors. Polly and Esther draw on these discourses as resources in their stories about their positions as mothers/parents and the negotiation of Keane's fathering/parenting involvement.

The first discourse, undergirded by the broader neoliberal choice ethos introduced in Chapter 2, positions paternal involvement as an optional choice. Within this discourse, fathers are portrayed as relatively free from the responsibilities and sacrifices expected of mothers, with the paternal parental relationship understood to be more negotiable than the maternal parental relationship and/or less important (Wall & Arnold, 2007). Fathers are typically assumed to be secondary parents, relative to mothers (Cosson & Graham, 2012). This assumption can be self-reinforcing. A more disembodied relationship, coupled with breadwinner obligations, produces a chain reaction with fathers becoming ever more secondary to mothers as opportunities to acquire and practice caregiving alongside mothers are limited (Miller, 2010).

While Polly and Esther storied Keane's expected relationship with their mutual child as a paternal parental relationship based on 'cash and care', it was distinguished from—and secondary to—the parental relationships they would take up—his position would be supplementary or subordinate to theirs. Framed in law as legal parents and through their intended practices as residential primary parents, the women would have greater opportunities to acquire and practice caregiving as well as less freedom from responsibilities and sacrifices.

relationship to children from a position of financial independence from them, an advantage that has not always been readily available to heterosexual women.

Keane can come and go, positioning himself in ways that suit his working and living arrangements.

A discourse of paternal choice also depicts fathers as 'helping' with parenting work (Cosson & Graham, 2012; Wall & Arnold, 2007), a position that is made possible only when a mother (or someone else) assumes the primary responsibility for this work (Miller, 2010). Keane's status as a non-resident parent makes it likely he will 'help' Polly and Esther with 'their' work when visiting in their home, rather than take full responsibility for the organisation and management of their mutual child's routines or daily care. While over time he might provide some care in his own home—perhaps akin to that provided by divorced or separated fathers[76]—this had not been planned for in any detail. Presumably, such care will depend on his other commitments, including paid work, the age of the child, and the child's articulation of what he or she wants.

Polly and Esther's framing of their parenting alliance with Keane and expectation that he establish himself in New Zealand regardless of the sacrifices this demands invokes the second discourse of active paternal engagement. Instead of simply 'helping', the 'new father' shares the responsibility for children equally with mothers. He is emotionally engaged with his children and fully competent in care routines (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Such a father is much more than a secondary parent; he cannot come and go or opt out of daily care in the ways that Keane conceivably might. In this sense, this discourse arguably reflects the ideals associated with their parenting alliance, rather than the conventional arrangements they actually anticipated.

Polly and Esther's family narrative emphasises the importance they place on active fatherhood and the value of a third parent. At the same time, it highlights their aspiration, as a couple, for couple-based, primary residential parenthood in line with conventional heteronormative models of family.

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[76] Or fathers in 'commuter partnerships', men who live near their work some of the time, rather than residing only in the family home (van der Klis, 2008).

The next family narrative relates to Deena and Mere, who formed a reproduction relationship with Manny and his partner Barbara. This couple's narrative also emphasises the significance of active fatherhood. In addition, it contributes insight into social identity possibilities for the partners of lesbian birth mothers, and the partners of heterosexual known donors, where neither wishes to be constituted as mothers or parents.

Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara

Deena had wanted a child for some time. Like Polly and Esther, she drew on the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins as a resource in her narrative about planning for conception using a known donor. In New Zealand, this discourse is reinforced by whakapapa (Daniels & Lewis, 1996b; MCART, 1994). For Deena, whakapapa is central to her sense of identity and belonging. Her father was Māori but because he was unknown to her, his whakapapa—and therefore her own—was not available to her as she grew up. His absence in her life had an impact on her identity and sense of belonging, leaving her bereft of knowledge of her Māori ancestry. However, as Pihama (1995) states:

> Not having access to that knowledge does not negate whakapapa as a means of cultural identity. All Māori people have a whakapapa. It is a cultural notion that both precedes and postdates the individual. Not having knowledge about whakapapa may render it invisible; however, it does not remove its existence. (pp. 23-24)

While whakapapa as an ideal for Māori was not realised by Deena, it became another resource shaping her stories about planning for conception.[77] A crucial aspect of her experience of being parented and her own reformulation of becoming a parent, Deena's decision to provide a particular kind of father for her

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[77] As indicated in Chapter 1, the reach of whakapapa, as an ideal for Māori, has also had a broader impact, including on non-Māori. For example, Nina and Ellen, who identified as Pākehā, were clear about wanting a known donor so that their children would have access to whakapapa. Their friend Sean, an involved single gay father to the two children he subsequently helped them conceive, also identified as Pākehā. As Nina said: "To me, and to Ellen, an anonymous donor was never an option. I wouldn't have had children…. I think it's really important for you to know where you come from. For whakapapa, and so even if mum and dad is some down and dirty dog, at least you know that."

planned child can be understood as a means of repairing her past by giving to that child what was missing in her own—paternal ancestral knowledge and a present father. As she said:

> I specifically wanted a Māori father as I feel like a cultural orphan … I don't know my biological father who is/was Māori…. I wanted someone who was going to be present for her. I wanted a present father because I don't know who my biological father is. It's really important to me to have a person who is present … so that she knows her identity and who her father is.

Deena's narrative illustrates her movement between a lack of ontological security as a *cultural orphan* who does not know her whakapapa to someone who did not have a father present in her life and who is, in this sense, an emotional orphan. She wants to have a child who is protected from her hurts or challenges and she sees herself as personally responsible for managing this; securing that child's whakapapa—as a culturally meaningful form of biogenetic capital and a kinship and identity resource—is a means to this end. Deena's decision-making about possible paths to parenthood and a known donor's relationship to and role with a child appeared therefore, to be predicated on her restorying of the past.

Mere, Deena's partner, identified as Māori. She was supportive of Deena's plans, particularly in relation to ensuring any child conceived by Deena knew her whakapapa. Building on Deena's narrative, she said: "Deena didn't want—she grew up never knowing her real father. Whoever she was having a baby with she wanted the baby to be shared with the dad. I agree with that." Mere had adult children and two grandchildren and understood what it meant to want a baby. This was an influential factor in her support. She commented: "Deena talked to me about wanting a baby. I didn't want to deny her that. It's not my right … Let her be a mum. Let her experience that." Mere helped Deena in the search for a Māori donor willing to be a *present father*. The women eventually chose Manny, who met these criteria.

Manny, who was also Māori, had been considering his own path to parenthood. Like Deena, he had a supportive partner—Barbara. Barbara, who identified as

Pākeha, was a mother; she had an adult child from a previous relationship. Unable to carry a pregnancy to term with Manny, she encouraged him to form a reproductive relationship with someone who could. Drawing on her own experience of parenthood and public narratives that assume having children is synonymous with self-fulfillment, she explained: "I knew he wanted a child. You know? He was okay not having one but I knew it would make his life complete if he did." Barbara's encouragement proved crucial to Manny's pursuit of this suggestion. As he said: "If Barbara wasn't okay with this I wouldn't have pursued it. I'm very, very glad I've got a lady that is so flexible."[78]

Deena and Manny subsequently met; their introduction was facilitated through a mutual friend. Wanting to be parents, and with partners who were already parents, they agreed to proceed with home-based inseminations on the basis that should they have a child, he or she would live with Deena and Mere. This would not however, preclude possibilities for the provision of care across homes in the future. As Manny said, "We came to a pretty good agreement, that that's how we were going to do it: part time care on my part, just being involved, having my family involved." Shortly thereafter, Hine was born out of this arrangement.

In the first family narrative discussed in this chapter, biogenetic contribution to conception was an important kinship resource accessed by Polly and Esther to confer particular adult-child relationships. Similarly, Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara all actively constructed Deena's motherhood/parenthood and Manny's fatherhood/parenthood through their respective biogenetic contributions to 10-week-old Hine's conception. However, while Polly and Esther's couple

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[78] Barbara's flexibility is unusual. While Manny's fatherhood fulfillment would potentially benefit her, not all heterosexual women willingly share their partner's sperm. For example, Lydia and Roslyn, introduced in the next chapter, describe the reaction of Leanne, Roslyn's sister in law, who is married to Roslyn's older brother, to the news that Roslyn's younger brother intended to donate sperm for them. Leanne was adamant that she would not have allowed her own husband to donate for them, reportedly saying, "His sperm is mine!" Luce (2010) draws attention to similar objections by other heterosexual women—substance-sharing outside of the couple relationship is inappropriately intimate. In cases where this occurs without the women's involvement in the decision, reproductive relationships have sometimes deteriorated (Adair & Purdie, 1996).

relationship was another important resource for them that they accessed to confer social motherhood/parenthood on Esther, these four adults' couple relationships—Deena's to Mere and Manny's to Barbara—were not utilised to confer social motherhood/parenthood on Mere and Barbara. Parenthood resided exclusively in the biogenetic adult-child relationship—Deena's to Hine and Manny's to Hine. Euro-American kinship discourse underpinned their shared stories about the location of parenthood. These stories reinforce the assumption that parents and children are united through biogenetic substance. But because Deena and Manny's parental dyad is not an intimate couple relationship, these stories also challenge the assumption that such relationships are the foundation for parental relationships.[79]

Significantly, while the location of parenthood in the biogenetic adult/child relationship was assumed, this did not exclude opportunities for social parenthood. Deena felt no compulsion to limit numbers of parents to two, something reproductive law and fertility clinic norms and practices govern (Surtees, 2011). She knew Mere had no particular need to be constituted as a social mother/parent given she already had children, but was prepared to extend this status to both her and Barbara, thus embracing the possibility of three mothers for Hine. In her first meeting with Manny, Deena reported that she said, "If Barbara wants to be the other mother I'm absolutely fine with that." Barbara did want to be involved but not as a mother. As she said: "I wanted to be involved. Don't get me wrong. But I've had my child, you know?"[80] Conceivably however, as Hine begins to spend time with Manny and Barbara in their home without Deena, Barbara will take up the mothering activities Deena (and Mere)

[79] Close friends Sonia (a single lesbian) and Bryson (a partnered gay man) also challenge such assumptions. Planning a future child together, they had agreed Sonia would inseminate using sperm donated by Bryson. Sonia recollected when this possibility was first raised: "We were talking about him being gay … and he was saying: 'I really want to have kids. I still really want to have kids and I'm gay. One of the biggest things that upsets me about it is I can't have kids.' Well [I said]: 'Let's have kids!' I kind of mooted the idea … It's always kind of been there … I call him 'Baby Daddy'."
[80] Sperm sharing outside the couple relationship can carry with it commitments of time and other resources that might already be accounted for within the previously established couple relationship. While Barbara's wish to be involved suggests she did not have an issue with such commitments, other women in her position might have some concerns about what they might entail.

would otherwise perform, even though she does not wish to be positioned as a mother.

Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara's stories spoke to the centrality of whānau as a key cultural resource enabling them to privilege both adult-child biogenetic relatedness and adult-child social relatedness in the construction of Hine's family. As previously mentioned, whānau usually translates as an extended family group, with traditional meanings reflecting intergenerational relationships based on whakapapa (C. Smith, 2012; Walker, 2006).[81] Hine's biogenetic ties to Deena and Manny were important; to know herself, she would need to know her whakapapa (Walker, 2006). But her social ties to Mere and Barbara were also important, as Manny indicates:

> Hine is going to be involved with a lot of extended family. I just hope she gets to know everyone on both sides. A bit of history of course, yeah—and gets the feeling she is loved by quite a few people. Accepted by everyone in the whānau…. What we've got—I really love what we've got and how we're working at the moment. She's kind of got two families: well, she has. She's got two families and the great thing is she's going to get to know them both.

This is echoed in Deena's reflections on whānau:

> That whole whānau thing. So I see that whānau is family—friends and family…. It takes a community to raise children…. We're all responsible … To me, family doesn't have to be blood ties. It's those that are around and loving the child.

Deena's comments invoke traditional Māori worldviews on ownership of children. Metge (1995) states:

> Children belong, not to their parents exclusively, but to each of the whānau to which they have access through their parents. Belonging in

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[81] Whānau was an influential cultural resource for others in this study, including non-Māori. Noah identified as Pākehā. He was an involved single heterosexual father to the two children his sperm donation enabled Tessa and Felicity to conceive. In reflecting on how to describe their familial configuration, he said, "The concept of whānau is better than the concept of a family." And Logan, also Pākehā, and an active gay father to the son he helped Fern and Emma conceive said, "I think the word whānau is quite a helpful word."

this context is a matter of identity, not possession. It derives in the first place from whakapapa but should be confirmed and strengthened by regular social interaction. (p. 140)

Mere and Barbara, as partners to Deena and Manny, were part of Hine's whānau. Accessed through her parents, they contributed to her sense of belonging and identity. Because the care of children is a collective responsibility that rests with the adults making up the whānau (Metge, 1995; Pihama, 1998; C. Smith, 2012), Mere and Barbara could legitimately share in Hine's care. As Mere said: "I'm really glad that baby is with daddy and Barbara and me and Deena … It's just a lucky baby. A loved baby. You know? An extended whānau."

Deena and Mere provided Hine's day-to-day care. While Mere was not constituted as a parent, she did participate in daily parenting practices consistent with Pihama's (1998) claim that all adults in a whānau have opportunities to take on a 'parenting' role. In particular, she emphasises that Māori lesbian women have "an undeniable role as whaea and koka that is not dependent on being the birth-mother" (p. 182).[82] In his rationale for this arrangement, Manny invokes the same discourse of paternal choice to story Deena and Mere's positions as Hine's residential primary caregivers over his as secondary caregiver, as Polly and Esther did to prioritise their motherhood/parenthood over Keane's fatherhood/parenthood. As suggested in Keane's case, Manny's involvement as a non-residential parent is likely to carry fewer responsibilities and will potentially position him as 'helping' with parenting work rather than taking full responsibility for Hine, apart from those times he provides care for Hine in his home without Deena or Mere. Unlike Keane, he is however, a legal parent. This is because Deena and Manny deliberately chose to identify Manny as Hine's father and second parent through the birth registration process. This decision circumvented the deeming rules of

[82] Both 'whaea' and 'koka' can mean 'mother' or 'aunt.'

Part 2 of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, such that his status as a donor did not extinguish his parental status.[83]

Manny also accessed divorce discourse. This discourse was a resource framing his storying of arrangements with Deena. It both informed and was resisted by him, as he and Deena used it to articulate their relationship to one another as parents, their relationship to Hine, and his fathering of her. The following exchange with Deena highlights this:

> Manny: I knew that the way this had to work was if it was going to work, obviously it was going to be shared custody. That was all I really wanted—I wanted to be part of this little one's life. But I also realised that—this is my view—that she really needed one solid home. I sort of realised that I would play probably more of a part time role in her life and Deena and Mere would be the primary caregivers. I'd play—I don't want to put it like this: the weekend dad. Very much like how—I don't want to say this either: the way separated couples work. You know? The dad has bubba on the weekends….
>
> Deena: We decided that due to breastfeeding, especially right from the beginning, she was going to be with me. But when she's seven and says: "I want to go to my dad on Wednesday", then, if it works out with both of them [Manny and Barbara], then that's how it is going to be. Cause it's about her.
>
> Manny: So it's not necessarily weekly—when it suits. It might be a couple of days during the week—whatever fits in with the routine. The thing is for me, I thought I'd heard of and seen how people kind of pull their kids for a week here and a week there and for me, that didn't kind of work right. I think they need a place to call a base. I just thought it would be too much a tug of war, coming back and forth.

Further, Manny used divorce discourse to articulate what he didn't want to see happen—*a tug of war*.[84]

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[83] Identification of fatherhood/parenthood carries material implications. Deena could make claims for financial support from Manny. Legally, Manny could then be required to become more financially responsible than he might otherwise have been.

[84] Other known donors in this study used divorce discourse in a similar way. For example, Granger, an involved single gay father to twins, who lived primarily with their mothers Freida and Norma, recalled observing a heterosexual couple's relationship breakdown: "Watching the completely hideous tug of war over that child. It convinced me I never want to be part of anything like that. Cause I mean both of them were trying to score points off each other and the kid just totally suffered." This experience subsequently informed the care arrangements for the twins that he and the women set in place.

In the post divorce or separation context fatherhood is often exposed as a passive status, rather than an active relationship (Smart & Neale, 1999). This could be said of Manny's fatherhood. He is a physically distanced legal father/parent who is available for limited care subject to what Hine might want at some future date and existing parenting routines. His reluctance to compare himself to the divorced or separated *weekend dad* suggests that he considers this a less than ideal way to enact his fatherhood/parenthood. Yet he is neither divorced nor separated from the mother of his child, nor coupled with or co-residing with her. Like some fathers who are divorced or separated, he preserves his involvement in parenting across homes to the degree agreed by Hine's mother and her partner.[85] But unlike such fathers, he does this as a result of a deliberate dispersal of parenthood across two sets of couple relationships and more than one household, thus disrupting expected norms about the basis for parental relationships (Dempsey, 2013). Simultaneously, the expectation of joint residence for parents and children with both assumed to originate from such residences is confounded (Donovan, 2000).[86]

Deena's utilisation of divorce discourse extended beyond framing Manny's parental responsibilities to include an emphasis on the success of their arrangements:

> I say to people: "We're really lucky because we were never an item." So it's not like when you see parents—some parents, some parents manage it very well. They have a relationship and it falls apart and it doesn't work for them and it affects the children. They're fighting. We were never together but it was always about Hine. So we had that communication as well. I think that is what works.

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[85] Others in this study specifically drew on this post divorce or separation model of fatherhood to explain their arrangements to people who asked or made assumptions about these. For example, Myra and Sally, who had an infant and a toddler, positioned their known donor Declan as the children's father, but he lived in a different city to them. Sally said: "I might say 'Myra is the birth mum, but his dad [Declan] is in Wellington.' I figure that people get married and the father leaves, often. They're separated and the dad might be somewhere else. So, he's still their father and in their life but not exactly in the home. We've already jumped to that stage." Logan reflected on this too: "If I ever find it annoying to explain I think, well actually, there'll be a lot of separated parents who have to do the same kind of explaining. If you don't straight away say 'my wife', then they already start to wonder."

[86] Sole mother households, where fathers are never present, also confound this expectation.

Deena deliberately rejects coupledom as the preferred basis for parenthood. The version of parenthood she stories prioritises the relationship between people as parents rather than as couples or ex-couples. Consistent with Donovan's (2000) argument, where central parenting relationships are not transposed on to an intimate couple relationship, the doing of parenting is not 'complicated' by that relationship and alternative possibilities for parenting can emerge (see, also Dunne, 2000; Rubin, 2009).[87]

Divorce discourse also informed the meanings Deena gave to open family boundaries (Smart et al., 2001), meanings which Manny and Barbara shared:

> Deena: I just think that she has got a much bigger family…. She's got a really wide family automatically than if I'd just had a baby—for years I used to think: "I'm just going to have a baby and keep it to myself." Now I think: "What am I doing?" That was about me, not the baby, you know? I just think that whole cultural enrichment…. Just that whole enrichment from different people. Having that social thing. So I think that—as I said before, that cliché: it takes a community to raise a child. That's exactly that. It's just expanding that. Whereas children that have a very small … you know, that nuclear family. There's just so much less you're exposed to. So for me it's about exposing her and enriching her life. To me it is enrichment: love, enrichment and belonging.
>
> Manny: And pretty much the same for me. She gets to enjoy a whole lot of different angles in life…. There's just a whole number of things…. She's going to get a taste of all sorts and that's nice, as well as she's got the security of having so many of us.
>
> Barbara: Well, we're four people straight off that really wanted her. You know? Rather than a couple that then divorce—a father and a mum. Four people straight away.

Such open family boundaries allow for the inclusion of new kin and a diversity of relationships and practices following divorce or separation. Closed boundaries, where the coherence of the original nuclear family is preserved, makes the inclusion of new kin, relationships and practices problematic (Smart et al., 2001). While Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara's arrangements were not the result of

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[87] Other participants expressed similar ideas. For example, Sonia and Bryson saw distinct advantages to parenting as friends, rather than as a couple. Bryson said, "We wouldn't have the pressures of a couple under stress." Sonia added, "I think it is even more special than that, because that beautiful platonic love that we have, would just mean that the kid would come first, because we don't have this relationship to get in the way."

divorce or separation, they constructed Hine's family with open boundaries consistent with Māori worldviews on the ownership of children. The diversity of relationships and practices this enabled were valuable resources that were expected to enrich her life.[88]

Like Polly, Esther and Keane's tri-parenting alliance, Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara's stories about their family arrangements highlight some specific ways they disrupt and reinforce conventional heteronormative parenting discourses. In particular, their deliberate decision to disperse parenthood across two sets of couple relationships and more than one household disrupts these discourses, with the concept of whānau significant in this decision. The actual playing out of some aspects of their arrangements, informed by discourses of paternal choice and *the weekend dad*, reinforces convention.

The last family narrative introduced in this chapter builds from the previous narrative, to highlight relationships between sets of people and households following a separation. This narrative relates to Paige, her former partner Ada, their known donors Lance and Harlow, and the women's new partners Dale and Esme. It contributes to a consideration of social identity possibilities in cases where 'father' is not mapped on to 'parent.'

Paige, Ada, Lance, Harlow, Dale and Esme

Eager to have a child within the context of their cohabitating couple relationship, Paige and Ada planned for Paige to become pregnant through home-based insemination with a known donor. This couple also constructed a family narrative that emphasised the significance of a child's access to a father or information about paternal origins as a form of biogenetic capital. As Paige said: "One of the things that was a really important criteria for us, in terms of a donor,

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[88] Other participants in this study expressed similar sentiments. Timothy, an involved gay father to the daughter and son he helped Sylvie and Eileen conceive said, "I'm sort of the opinion that it takes a village to raise a child." Felicity elaborated further saying: "Think about the whole village concept. It takes a village. More people who love your kids is better than fewer…. In my experience children benefit from having lots and lots of adult relationships…. Be open to there being a more expansive relationship base for your child."

was that we didn't want an anonymous father. We wanted somebody who would be identified to the kids as their father."

As it transpired, finding a donor willing to be identified in this way was not easy. Paige and Ada's sense of personal responsibility saw them persist in this goal. The couple asked about eight men if they would donate for them on this condition before Lance,[89] a heterosexual friend, came forward. Home-based inseminations began shortly after Lance volunteered to be the couple's donor. When Isla was subsequently born, Lance's biogenetic contribution to her conception became a kinship resource for the women. They accessed this resource to confer fatherhood on him, as had been the case for Keane and Manny.

When Isla was about 18 months old, Paige and Ada decided they would like a biogenetic sibling for her. This time, Paige said, conception with Lance's sperm "just didn't happen." She added: "Maybe the timing wasn't right. So we let it go at that point." By the time Isla was nearing four, the couple were ready to try again. Their positive experience of collaborating with Lance was brought to bear on the formation of a second reproductive relationship with Harlow, a single gay man. Although Paige, Ada and Harlow had not previously met they lived in the same area and knew one another by sight. When Ada bumped into Harlow one day, she suggested he "come around for a cuppa." Harlow accepted the invitation. During his visit, the women broached the possibility that he become a donor for them. Harlow readily agreed. As he recalled, this was not the first time a lesbian couple had asked him to be a donor. He said previously: "It just didn't feel right for me. Then it did on this occasion." Elodie was conceived within two months of their first meeting. Like Lance's biogenetic contribution to Isla's conception, Harlow's donated sperm led to him being constituted by the women as Elodie's father.

While Paige and Ada prioritised enabling relationships between Lance and Isla, and Harlow and Elodie, their stories indicate that the men could choose whether

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[89] Lance was not interviewed, because of geographical location.

or not to take up opportunities for involvement with the children. As Paige said: "It didn't really matter too much about what kind of involvement they wanted to have. They could be really involved if they wanted to be or not. That didn't feel that important." Paige's reflection fitted with Harlow's recollection:

> The understanding for me has always been that I can see Elodie whenever I like and Elodie can see me when she likes…. The girls were very clear right at the beginning, I could see or be involved in Elodie's life as much or as little as I wanted to.

An interesting tension is evident. Lance and Harlow's biogenetic contribution to conception was transformed "into [a] bedrock social relationship of unquestioned benefit to [the] children" (Millbank, 2008, p. 164). But this did not translate to an expectation on the part of the women that the men actually needed to be involved fathers for those benefits to be reaped. The men were given the freedom to define the extent to which they wished to be involved (if at all) in a context of increased societal pressure to be hands on fathers (Cosson & Graham, 2012; Dempsey & Hewitt, 2012).

Paige and Ada's construction of fatherhood involvement as optional drew on the same discourse of paternal choice used as a resource in Polly and Esther and Deena and Mere's family narratives. Within this discourse, Keane and Manny can position themselves as either active or distant, however, unlike Lance and Harlow—who can also position themselves as active or distant—Keane and Manny's options were subject to Polly, Esther and Deena's expectations that they would actually parent. Keane and Manny's biogenetic fatherhood was conflated with parenthood and parenting. Lance and Harlow's was not.[90]

Paige and Ada were to be 'the' parents. Paige's biogenetic contribution to Isla and Elodie's conception—like Polly's to the child she and Esther planned and Deena's

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[90] Whether or not Lance was a legal parent was not ascertained. Harlow, like Manny, was, but not because he was to parent. Harlow was pleased Paige and Ada suggested he be identified as Elodie's father through the birth registration process. Being wanted as an identifiable father by the women was a resource that gave meaning to his fatherhood. Moreover, Harlow felt the inclusion of his name on Elodie's birth certificate would signal to her in the future that he had always wanted her.

to Hine—was a kinship resource accessed to confer motherhood/parenthood on her and her relationship to Ada, a resource accessed to confer motherhood/parenthood on Ada. Legal parenthood, earlier noted as an important resource for Esther that was available to her under the particular regulatory regime in which she negotiated parenting, was not available as a resource to Ada who was negotiating parenting under the regime prior to the commencement of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2. This regime made no provision for legal parenthood for women in Ada's position. Despite this, Paige and Ada added Ada's name to the form notifying Isla's birth, alongside the names of Paige and Harlow. Paige explained:

> When we had Isla, we actually did try and register her birth with both our names on the birth certificate and they sent it back to us: 'You can't do this.' So, you know, we were a bit ahead of our time, obviously!

Believing the birth registration process should have allowed for her to be identified as a third legal parent, Ada's only other means of securing a legal relationship with her children was to become a court-appointed guardian to them, which she did while they were still young. This became a resource that reinforced her position.[91]

The couple's parenthood bestowed particular privileges. As Paige said, "We were really clear that we would be the ones who had all the say about, you know, what happened with the kids and things like that." Harlow deferred to their parental decisions, which minimised negotiation and conflict:

> Paige: In terms of our relationship with you Harlow, around Elodie, is that there has never been some kind of idea, you know, you've just been really happy to support what we're doing and to form your own relationship with her that's kind of separate from us.

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[91] Other non-birth mothers in this study whose children were born prior to the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2 came into force also chose to gain guardianship of their children to reinforce their positions.

Harlow: Yeah.

Paige: So we haven't tried to kind of negotiate things all the time. So that doesn't create room for conflict in a way. So we're not kind of negotiating about schools—

Harlow: Yeah.

Paige: Or you know, whether—

Harlow: … I don't do any of the shaping, shifting, opinion stuff with Elodie at all. All we do is play and have a nice time together.

While Deena rejected coupledom as the preferred basis for parenthood and Paige and Ada's framing of parenting was couple-centric, open family boundaries were common across both familial configurations. Such boundaries were justified for the same reasons—the benefits afforded to the children. As previously illustrated, Hine was expected to benefit from a diversity of relationships and practices as valuable resources that would enrich her life as she moved beyond early infancy. Isla and Elodie—at 12 and 8 years old respectively—had been benefitting from the richness this afforded them since their own early childhood years. Paige's comment is illustrative:

> One of the things that so heartens me is the richness of family that these girls grow up with. In some ways, I think that children just need to be loved by as many people as possible. They have a *huge* network of people that just *love* them and want to spend time with them and who see them as being really important in their lives. I'm just immensely grateful for that.

Further, open family boundaries were perceived as overcoming the shortfalls of the nuclear family. The following observation of Harlow, who identified as Māori, on the isolating impact of the nuclear family versus the richness of whānau is reminiscent of Deena's earlier observation on whānau and its advantages for children:

> I think one of the great things is that Elodie and Isla have so many people in their lives. I mean children would appear to be—so often in a two-parent family, a nuclear family, [children] are isolated … I've always been aware that there are a lot of people around. That comes a little bit from my side of the family and Ada's side of the family as well. I think that's a real incredible richness; to break the nuclear mould into this much wider whānau of different people. It's enriching. It's good for the girls.

Such richness worked both ways—it benefited Elodie and Isla but also those related to them. Harlow elaborated, with reference to his parents, siblings and nieces and nephews:

> The whānau relationship with Elodie … is really enriching for our family, both her grandparents, who are in their eighties, just adore her and really enjoy her company as do my brother and sister and their children and then another generation of children as well. So she's very much included as part of our whānau. That's how it sort of works.

Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara's open family boundaries largely came about through their access to whānau as a cultural resource and associated views on collective responsibility for children rather than an effect of divorce or separation. This was not wholly the case for Paige and Ada. Their open family boundaries both reflected the inclusion of Lance and Harlow—and the men's families of origin—in Isla and Elodie's lives from the outset and the dispersal of parenting across new couple configurations and households as an outcome of Paige and Ada's separation when Elodie was a toddler.

Paige emphasised the way these boundaries expanded to include others both pre and post separation, including her new partner Dale, and Dale's family, post separation:

> It's sort of like—the little family is the two kids and Dale and I now. Reaching that family out a bit wider it includes Ada and Harlow and Lance. And then the extended family I would see is Ada's family and certainly, when we were together, for me that was very much like belonging to that family too. But being separated, that's kind of changed. And of course Dale's family. And interestingly, Dale's sister and her partner have been involved in both the kids' lives right since they were born. So they're very much the girls' family as well. And you know that's just become more—systemized I suppose now that we are in a relationship together.

This comment is a pertinent example of how planning for and doing family and parenting is an emergent, fluid and contingent process that evolves over time in response to unexpected changes in relationships. The contingency effect is

striking in a context of stipulating the shape of the relations between various people while negotiating parental relations.

Following Paige and Ada's separation, Paige retained residential day-to-day care of Isla and Elodie in the family home.[92] She drew on divorce discourse to explain the difficulties of navigating new care arrangements without access to alternatives to heteronormative models of family:

> Ada and I went through a very difficult time when we separated. You know? Around how, you know, like what happens to family when you separate. I think that when heterosexual couples separate, there's already a whole heap of systems in place that simplify that, there's a whole lot of social constructs around how that process happens and so on. And I don't think we have that as lesbians. So you know, there were a lot of things that were, you know, really difficult around you know—like what would normally happen, without there being too much difficulty around it and so on, is that if children are really little and a couple separates then the children stay with mum. You know? One of the things that was incredibly difficult was, what do you do when there's two mums? And you've got— and children are still really little. You know? Cause Elodie wasn't even two when we separated. Because of that whole thing about the way that I think that—like say Ada as the second parent, kind of could so easily become disenfranchised by the separation, because she's not on the birth certificate, and you know, all those sorts of things…. I think that because there are no kind of systems that really help that—that help us as lesbians to be able to negotiate that process and there aren't those, you know kind of strong legal pieces that provide rights and so on, and at a time of a relationship breakup of course there's a lot of emotion and things that are kind of in that, which makes it very hard to negotiate all that stuff.

While Paige's narrative implies Ada was not disenfranchised by the breakdown of their relationship Ada may have felt otherwise. Following her exit from the family home, she noted she became "that part-time second parent sort of thing",

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[92] Whether or not Paige's biogenetic connection to the girls was the deciding factor in determining her right to day-to-day care of them over Ada's was not established. Following the separation of heterosexual couples, where one parent is a biogenetic parent, and the other a social parent, this 'rule' is rarely questioned. Nina and Ellen's arrangements after they separated challenged this rule. Both women were birth mothers to their 'own' child and non-birth mothers and court-appointed guardians to the 'other's' child. The children lived alternate weeks with their mothers, moving together between the original family home and Ellen's new home in the same area. As Nina said: "The children are always together. They are a constant in each other's lives." To date, the patterns same-sex couples follow when negotiating shared parenting post separation remains an unexplored area in the research literature (Power, Perlesz, Schofield, et al., 2010).

providing limited care of Isla and Elodie from her new residence in ways reminiscent of fathers engaged in post divorce or separation parenting.[93] Not unlike the way fatherhood can be constituted as passive in this context (Smart & Neale, 1999), Ada's motherhood/parenthood is constituted as secondary to Paige's primary motherhood/parenthood. Paige's biogenetic relationship to the girls is privileged over Ada's social relationship with them. Ada's reference to becoming a *part-time second parent* following the women's separation possibly suggests she did not consider herself a secondary mother/parent of the girls on the basis of either her social relationship to them or the caring practices in place *prior* to the separation.[94]

Over time, Dale began contributing to care arrangements, becoming increasingly involved after moving in with Paige, Isla and Elodie. Drawing attention to contingency and fluidity in the doing of parenting, her involvement reinforces old patterns of partners of mothers—in this case, a primary mother—having the status of parents or acting like parents. Reflecting on Dale's role, Paige also drew on divorce discourse while explaining the girls' acceptance of Dale, which she credited to both their familiarity with a diversity of relationships and practices pre-separation and shared ideas about what makes a family:

> As we've established a relationship, and kind of become a family, they've just really—there's been no problem for them to accept Dale as another mother. You know? Basically, in terms of the care of the kids, I mean we take turns at putting them to bed and you know, all that sort of stuff. It's kind of a shared mother sort of role too. Initially you know they wanted me, and Dale was kind of seen as the default position, kind of thing. But over time, like we never tried to push that in any way and over time they've just found their own way with it. I think largely, the fact that

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[93] At the time this familial configuration was interviewed, several years after Paige and Ada's separation, Ada was providing care for Elodie every Wednesday and on alternate weekends. There did not seem to be a similar arrangement in place for Isla. The reasons for this were not shared.

[94] These practices were not established during the interview, but would have been useful to consider here, particularly given the body of literature that draws attention to non-birth mothers' experiences of invisibility and marginalisation (see for example, R. Brown & Perlesz, 2008; Gabb, 2005; Hayman et al., 2013; Malmquist & Zetterqvist Nelson, 2014; Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014). It would also have been useful to consider this with reference to heterosexual relationships. Women's biogenetic mothering is often prioritised over men's biogenetic connection both pre and post separation and in either case, this is often associated with greater involvement in day-to-day care by mothers.

they've had this diversity of relationships even prior to that has made that easy. Because I know often what happens in relationships of course is that, you know, when that new person comes in, you know, it can be just huge struggles. But we haven't had any of that at all…. It's also because we haven't had this nuclear idea of what a family is….. It's not like she's taking Ada's place. You know? Which is what often happens. You know the new dad comes in and then the old dad is out or—you know? It's kind of like well this is just another mother.

Bringing the number of mothers to three, Paige's relationship to Dale conferred motherhood/parenthood on Dale in the same way it had for Ada when they were a couple. Ada's much later repartnering with Esme[95] did not similarly confer motherhood/parenthood on her perhaps because the couple neither lived together nor with the children at the children's primary residence. Like Deena, who was willing to embrace the possibility of multiple mothers for Hine, Harlow could see additional opportunities for social motherhood inclusive of Esme in the future. As he said, "Potentially, Elodie and Isla have got four mothers, which has to be better than one." His assumption that four mothers are better than one mother could be understood as consistent with his views on the richness of whānau versus the isolating impact of the nuclear family.[96]

Regardless of what the future might bring, by middle childhood, the repartnering process had brought marked changes to Isla and Elodie's original familial configuration. Now receiving care across two households with their mothers and their mothers' new partners (one resident, one non-resident), the girls also maintained non-parental (and non-residential) relationships with their respective fathers. Harlow's comment, "It's a fascinating complexity of relationships" serves to sum this up.

Paige and Ada's family narrative, like the previous two family narratives, draws attention to some of the ways they disrupt and reinforce conventional heteronormative parenting discourses. In particular, their story highlights the

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[95] There was no suggestion that Esme should be included in the interview, perhaps because her relationship with Ada was relatively new at the time.
[96] It may also serve as a justification of a situation over which he has no control. Questioning the women's choices may impact on the existing, largely harmonious relationships he has with them and Elodie.

ways open family boundaries that are inclusive of donors as fathers and significant others can serve to mitigate the slippage or movement away from a previously imagined 'secure' place—pre-conception couple-centric parenting planning—towards contingency and fluidity in the unplanned dispersal of parenting post conception and separation.

In this chapter, I have storied three family narratives in considerable detail. I turn now to a discussion of the significance of these narratives in relation to the themes that run across them and key thesis arguments.

Concluding discussion

The three sets of lesbian couples discussed in this chapter use their family narratives to construct themselves as innovators in comparison to people who rely on *traditional stereotypes* or that *nuclear idea of what a family is*. The couples' sense that they are innovating is consistent with the neoliberal ethos of individuals as entrepreneurs freely determining the course their lives are to take and managing them with considerable initiative and risk (Gershon, 2011; Hamann, 2009; Joseph, 2013; Richardson, 2004). To further reiterate points made in Chapter 2, their decidedly reflexive, thoroughly researched approach to family formation draws attention to the exercise of agency necessary to any lesbian couple embarking on conception of a child together (see for example, Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Hayman & Wilkes, 2016). It also identifies them as classic neoliberal subjects; the couples are constructed through their narratives as successful users of reproductive technologies with the freedom, agency and choice to fashion their own families. This sense that they are innovating—of consciously and deliberately expanding possibilities for families—plays out through their respective constructions of a three way parenting model, a whānau based family group, and, following the separation of one couple, several whānau informed recombinant family groups. They innovate by 'making it up' and *break[ing] the nuclear mould*. But, even while they make it up, they 'use the template', because the neoliberal context they are located within implicates them in homonormative processes of normalisation. As discussed earlier in the thesis, these processes are fundamental to neoliberal modes of governance, particularly self-regulation. Hence the couples self-regulate; their use of the template invokes

heteronormative models of family as reference points in their stories and serves to legitimate their particular family-building activities and arrangements. In other words, they innovate (in conformity and through constraint).

The idea that people's unique stories can contribute to new public narratives but that they also rely on existing public narratives as templates for these (Elliott, 2005; Loseke, 2007), was introduced in Chapter 2. The introduction to this chapter indicated that the 'children are damaged without a father' story and the 'hurt of a missing father' story are key public narratives that the couples relied on as templates in storying their families. The couples deliberately chose known donors who were prepared for a degree of non-residential participatory fatherhood as dictated by the couple (fathers and parents or just fathers). While their choice in this matter is consistent with the previously mentioned trend suggested by the research for couples to choose known donors interested in this kind of fatherhood (see for example, the lesbian couples who chose known donors for this reason in Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman et al., 2014; Luce, 2010; McNair et al., 2002; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Surtees, 2011), this study extends further on that research. It does this by drawing attention to the ways the couples, as neoliberal subjects, understood themselves as personally responsible for protecting their children from the possibility of damage or hurt that not having a father might entail. Polly and Esther and Deena and Mere could have chosen a knowable donor, but their sense of personal responsibility for the outcomes of the choices they made on their children was such that they were committed to the pursuit of known donors, motivated by the need to avoid what might be perceived of as a deficit in the lives of children. While Polly and Esther's sense of personal responsibility in this matter may have waivered in the face of their driving force for children if the 'easier' option of an anonymous donor had actually been available, Deena's sense of personal responsibility, bound up in her reparation of the past and whakapapa, and reinforced by Mere, was unlikely to have waivered had this option been possible. Because Paige and Ada's children were conceived prior to the HART Act 2004,[97]

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[97] See Chapter 1, page 7.

they could have taken up this option, but similarly motivated, persisted in the search for a known donor—a search that involved approaching about eight men before Lance, who met their criteria, became the donor of their first child. Such persistence proved unnecessary when the time came to have a second child, but only because Harlow, the first man they approached when conception with Lance *just didn't happen*, happened to meet their criteria.

Other public narratives also served as templates for the couples, including cultural tales that link romantic love, the couple relationship and parenthood with happily ever after endings. The couples' families include two women who share parenting responsibilities.[98] Convention requires that they have a present father. As they seek to fulfill this aspiration of what is best for their children, the couples' use the established convention of coupledom and its conflation with parenthood as a narrative resource to prioritise their positions, over the position of known donors. In this process, known donors are constructed as secondary helpers, supplementary or subordinate to the couples.

Consciously or not, these couples' narratives about their planned and actual parenting arrangements privilege coupled parenting models even while their family boundaries remain relatively open. Polly and Esther's tri-parenting alliance is inclusive of Keane as a third parent, however their child's family life is expected to centre around them as the residential primary parenting couple. Deena readily suggests Mere and Barbara might like to be additional mothers/parents for Hine, and while neither took up this option, Mere nevertheless engages in parenting activities on a daily basis because she is Deena's partner and Hine lives with them. Paige and Ada reinforce the convention of coupledom by retaining parenting relationships for themselves— 'father' was an important kin connection for their children, but it did not map on to 'parent.' When this couple separated, the convention of coupledom was reinforced again when Dale, as Paige's new partner, took over from Ada as the primary social parent.

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[98] In the case of Deena and Mere, Mere was not constituted as *a* parent, but she did share in parenting responsibilities.

In fulfilling their aspiration for what is best for their children, the couples also use divorce discourse as a narrative resource to prioritise their positioning in these familial configurations, which further contributes to the construction of known donors as secondary helpers who are supplementary or subordinate to coupled parents. The couples' families start at the juncture divorced heterosexual parents find themselves at after the break down of the couple relationship, but theoretically without the tensions past conflict may have generated (Segal-Engelchin, Erera, & Cwikel, 2005). The couples must actively plan for the fathering or parenting involvement of the donors, much as separating heterosexual parents are forced to start planning for their parenting when they no longer occupy the same residence. How Keane and Manny practice parenting will be or is already both like and unlike conventional ways of doing male parenting in a variety of circumstances, including when men are not co-resident with the mothers of their children. What separating heterosexual parents have developed and the Family Court has regulated via parenting orders[99] is another useful resource.[100]

Simpson (1998) observes that in the divorce context, it is at this juncture that underlying assumptions about family and parenting become explicit. Two such assumptions that are made explicit in the couples' stories are that mothers are more crucial to children's upbringing than fathers and that paternal involvement is an optional choice. The couples draw on these assumptions as they prioritise their positions over the donors' positions. Of the donors, only Manny had been active in the matter of becoming a father, however he accepted his supplementary or subordinate status without question—his own assumption that children need one home base and that Hine's home base would be with Deena and Mere left intact the assumptions that mothers matter most and that paternal involvement is negotiable.

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[99] Parenting orders specify responsibilities for day-to-day care of a child and when and how people who are not involved in daily care but are important in a child's life can have contact (http://www.edenfamilylaw.co.nz/topics/care-of-children/.).

[100] It is also a resource for other parents who are planning to parent across households.

On the surface, three way parenting models and whānau based family groupings potentially represent innovative solutions for lesbian couples seeking to provide fathers for their children. Likewise, following the separation of lesbian parents, whānau informed recombinant family groupings potentially represent an innovative solution to maintaining significant adults in children's family lives and to the incorporation of new adults. However, the stories of the couples in this chapter highlight the ways in which their planned or actual family and parenting practices are underpinned by a series of conventional solutions to the provision of care for children. Framed by heterosexual kinship traditions, the persistence of predominantly heterosexual understandings and practices across their stories speaks to normalisation processes, which are returned to in more detail in the next chapter. B. Davies (1991) states, "The means of translating an idea into everyday practice may not easily be achieved, one's life-practice-as-usual, or life as the practical expression of old familiar discourses always coming more readily to hand" (p. 50). For the couples in this chapter, this observation appears apt—their attempts at innovation are sometimes undermined by 'the practical expression of old familiar discourses.'

Chapter 6 repeats the organisational pattern of this chapter, introducing the family narratives of a further set of three lesbian couples. These couples' stories position known donors as much more socially distant—they are neither fathers nor parents. Their stories exemplify the neoliberal agendas of choice and personal responsibility, which have been considered in less depth in this chapter. This emphasis on choice and personal responsibility illustrates the constitutive power of homonormativity in neoliberal contexts. The family narratives are similarly contextualised with reference to relevant literature and interview material drawn from other familial configurations in this study, through the use of footnotes.[101]

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[101] See Appendix 9 and 10 for participant biographies for these other familial configurations.

Chapter 6: Storying uncles and friends: "He's not the dad, he's the donor"

Introduction

The notion of paternity has a tendency to be linked to fatherhood/parenthood irrespective of circumstances (Moore, 2007). Kinship and relationality are typically understood to exist *within* and be transferred *through* biogenetic substance, hence this link. Regardless of whether kinship and relationality are transferred as a result of conception following heterosexual sex or as a result of donor insemination, it remains the case that these properties are assumed to have been transferred (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014). In the last chapter, the paternity/fatherhood/parenthood link contributed to the narrative construction of known donors as fathers or fathers/parents. The chapter explored the different forms of connectedness that become possible when a known donor is a present father. It illustrated the thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint), by examining how dominant heteronormative models of family are simultaneously resisted and reinforced.

In this chapter, the paternity/fatherhood/parenthood link is partially uncoupled. Rather than being narratively constructed as fathers or fathers/parents, known donors become deconstructed entities. Put another way, a known donor, as a human being, and his sperm, are deconstructed into unconnected component parts (Hertz, 2002). Paternity continues to have relevance, insofar as knowledge about paternity is accepted as an important source of biogenetic capital, but a social relationship as a father or father/parent does not automatically follow from a biogenetic relationship. Instead, paternity is reworked as a hybrid relationship.

This chapter also focuses on the family narratives of three sets of lesbian couples at different stages of imagining, planning for and practising family.[102] The

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[102] The family narratives of these couples were chosen because they illustrate the different ways in which the participating lesbian couples constructed known donors in cases where the donors were neither expected to have nor had paternal or parental status. Including the narratives of

ordering of each family narrative within the chapter allows for an in depth exploration of kin differentiation across the reproductive arrangements of the couples, and the relatives and non-relatives who agreed to or had already donated sperm for them, with respect to the relatives/non-relatives' social proximity from close (known donors who are relatives)[103] to more distant (known donors who are non-relatives). This sequencing was a deliberate approach relevant to the ways the couples construct themselves as mothers and parents while negotiating how variously positioned donors fit in the lives of the children whose conception they intend to or have facilitated.[104] The chapter explores how these three couples use given kin relationships, chosen kin relationships and non-kin relationships in their stories about these negotiations.

Although the couples in this chapter dwell among the same dominant heteronormative public narratives as the couples in the last chapter, including the 'children are damaged without a father' story and the 'hurt of a missing father' story, they construct the donors as uncles or friends, through stories about the importance of children having access to knowledge about paternal origins. These couples, like those whose stories were the focus of Chapter 5, locate their stories in assumptions about identity transmission and belonging consistent with the whakapapa emphasis in New Zealand, but they differentiate between access to such knowledge and access to a father. This differentiation is also consistent with the second trend suggested by the research discussed in Chapter 3. Reiterating, this trend sees lesbian couples choose known donors on the basis that this knowledge can be accessed in the future (see for example, those who chose known donors on this basis in Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman et al., 2014; Luce, 2010; McNair et al., 2002; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Surtees, 2011).

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those planning children and those with children enables consideration of differences between aspirations and practices.
[103] With those sharing the most percentage of DNA presented before those sharing a lesser percentage.
[104] Had this not been a thesis agenda, I may have chosen to sequence the narratives according to family-making process at the time interviews were conducted (for example, waiting to inseminate, actively inseminating, expecting a child, parenting a child and so on).

While the donors are expected to be or are physically present in the couples' planned or actual children's lives, constructing them as uncles or friends renders them absent as fathers/parents, supplementary or subordinate to the parenting couples. This construction enables the couples to story their coupled and parenting selves and identities in particular ways, while establishing themselves as the only parents of their children. They give weight to those aspects of public narratives that suit this goal, such as the 'children do best with parents who are in a committed relationship' story and the 'children will be confused with more than two parents' story. Despite the opposite sex basis of these stories, they prefer them to public narratives associated with father-right debates and father-right movements about the damage or hurt created by father absence. The former public narratives are inextricably connected to the latter public narratives, because the fatherless literature that supports the latter is underscored by a conservative understanding of family. This understanding assumes children fare better when reared in a home with a married mother and father present (see for example, Blankenhorn, 1995; Dennis & Erdos, 1993).

The social position of uncles and friends is important to briefly mention here, because it affords a conceptual space to consider the men's absence as fathers/parents. The social position of uncles places them inside kinship, with dominant cultural definitions suggesting that they are permanently and unconditionally connected to their nephews or nieces through their location within an established system of biogenetic or affinally based *given* kin relations.[105] Uncles can also be 'fictive kin'; as such, they are located in a separate and arguably more distanced system of *chosen* kin relations. In these cases, the status 'uncle' is conferred as a result of a man's friendship with the parents of a child (Mason, 2008).

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[105] With respect to biogenetic relatedness, an uncle is either biogenetically connected to his siblings' children through his sister as birth mother to those children (a maternal uncle) or through his brother as father to them (a paternal uncle). In affinal relatedness, an uncle is socially connected to his partner's siblings' children. While he has no biogenetic relationship to them, the children themselves, and his own children, will have a genetic connection (unless one or more of the children were adopted).

The social position of friends, on the other hand, can place them inside *or* outside kinship; friendship ties "have flexibility built into their content" and are therefore open to individual negotiation (G. Allan, 2008, p. 4). The families of the lesbians and gay men documented by Weston (1991) and Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) emphasised the significance of friendships and friendship networks as enduring sources of relational connectedness. For these cohorts of women and men, friends were pivotal to the chosen families they were creating; friends could *be* family or *like* family (Weeks et al., 2001).[106] 'Close enough' to be inside kinship, these friends were distinguished from other friends who remained outside kinship, positioned within a broader social system of non-kin relations.

Pahl and Spencer (2004) point out however, that the boundaries between given and chosen kin relationships can change and soften, a process referred to as suffusion. Non-kin can become kin, moving inside kinship, in response to changing modes of relating and associated degrees of commitment. When lesbian couples construct a known donor as an uncle or friend, his location in a system of given, chosen or non-kin relations legitimates his presence in the social networks of the children he helps conceive, albeit with varying degrees of closeness. At the same time, his absence as a father/parent is reinforced through enabling legal claims to parenthood and the responsibility of parenting to remain with the couple. Uncles and friends might help look after children from time to time, but they do not bring them up or have the legal rights and responsibilities of guardians.[107]

Donovan (2006) and Nordqvist and Smart (2014) use the term 'absent presence' to (respectively) explain the negotiation of an *unknown donor's* biogenetic relatedness to children and the formation of an imaginary or enigmatic

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[106] Over time, the historical emergence of friends as family or like family also gained currency for heterosexuals in response to changing relationship patterns in an increasingly turbulent society (Weeks, 2007; Weeks et al., 2001).

[107] Because an uncle's connection to his nephews and nieces can be flexible, in terms of actual social and emotional proximity (Dempsey, 2012b), some uncles, in some cases, may assume particular family responsibilities that arguably have paternal/parental-like characteristics including regular contact, support or care when parents' circumstances change (Milardo, 2008).

relationship with him.[108] Because he is unknowable (either permanently, or until his children reach a pre-determined age in the case of donor identity release programmes), knowing him becomes a particularly alluring prospect, which produces his ongoing presence in the family formed through his donation (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).[109] I further this line of reasoning in this chapter, arguing that while the men concerned are *known donors* to the couples for whom they donate, *because* they are only to be known in particular ways (uncles/friends), while remaining unknowable in others (fathers/parents), they too acquire an absent presence, which must be navigated as the couples work kinship out.

I suggest the men's absent presence will apply until their biogenetic contribution to conception is revealed to children. At such a time, the men could potentially become knowable as fathers/parents, should they, or their children, disrupt the constructions built by the mothers. With respect to children, Dempsey (2004) states, "In an inversion of the conventions of genealogical descent, a notion of father does not exist until the child brings one into being and establishes the parameters within which a father will continue to exist" (p. 93). Theirs are therefore transilient relationships, or relationships that can shift from one form to another (Konrad, 2005). The donor-child connection has the potential to shift forms; it can give rise to other connections, including those between the genetic relatives of the donor and the child (Nordqvist, 2014a). It is not, therefore, only a father who might come into being at this point.

In their narrative construction of known donors as uncles or friends, the couples in this chapter give prominence to their parental identities through engaging in kin differentiation and kinning practices (Howell, 2003). I argue that the multiple

[108] The use of the term 'unknown donor' here, covers both knowable donors and anonymous donors (see Chapter 1, for a description of donor type).

[109] The unknown donor's absent presence is also addressed elsewhere in the literature. For example, both Burr (2009), and Grace, Daniels and Gillett (2008), suggest he is a 'shadowy figure.' Similarly, Hanssen (2015) refers to him as a 'shadow actor' and Hertz (2002) as 'ghostlike.' Crawshaw and Montuschi (2014) argue that following disclosure of conception methods to children, the unknown donor becomes a person with a biography that must be managed and conjoined with the family in some way. Following disclosure, the mothers in Hertz' study constructed an image of a father for their children to support their self-identity.

ways in which kinning practices are used by the couples to bring planned and actual children into significant and permanent relationships with themselves as parents and the donors as uncles or friends highlights the compelling power of convention. While homonormative processes of normalisation and the neoliberal agendas of choice and personal responsibility are to the fore, the couples nevertheless skillfully navigate conventional kinship, further illustrating the thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint).

Constructing the men as uncles or friends works for the couples in two specific ways. Firstly, children's perceived right to information about their paternal origins is protected. The men's expected and actual locations in their children's social networks afford opportunities for positive relationships that map onto biogenetic relationships with their accessibility, as the source of donor sperm, representing a potential form of biogenetic capital, which can be readily called on in response to questions or when deemed appropriate. At such a time, a child will learn that the man previously known as an uncle or friend was instrumental in his or her conception. Secondly, the cohabiting couple relationship as the exclusive location of parenthood is protected. The couples strategically balance children's right to information later in their lives with a desire to be the only parents of their children, a useful defense against potential challenges to their fatherless family forms.

The family narratives of the first two sets of couples introduced in this chapter explore kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between given kin. The couples look back on the steps taken to find a known donor who could help bring their plans of family to fruition. At the time of their interviews, these memories were very recent. The first couple reflects on their preferred conception pathway and the impact of pragmatic considerations that forced particular choices. Originally anticipating achieving conception using a knowable donor, this couple later received an unsolicited offer of help from the intending non-birth mother's brother and his wife, who had privately agreed he should donate for them. The couple's acceptance of this offer set them on an unexpected kinship trajectory. This trajectory had particular implications for family

relationships, which brought into focus questions about the novel forms of relating brother-donors make possible. These questions were ongoing at this early stage of family formation.

Welcoming the way the non-birth mother would be genetically connected to the couple's child through her sibling relationship to the brother-donor, the couple indicated during their interview that they suspected a pregnancy following a first insemination attempt, a suspicion confirmed shortly thereafter. The brother-donor's biogenetic and social connectedness to the couple's child was utilised by them to construct him as a 'special' uncle, someone who would be physically present in the child's social network but neither father nor parent. This narrative illustrates the ways his biogenetic contribution to conception is deconstructed through externalisation of the reproductive relationship and by locating specific negotiations within laws governing assisted reproductive procedures and parenthood.

The second couple introduced in this chapter was close to the time of an initial insemination attempt when interviewed. Analysis of their family narrative expands on the theme of kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between given kin, through consideration of the significance of family resemblance for the intending non-birth mother's consolidation of her identity as mother/parent. Drawing from a discourse of biogenetic kinship shaped by heteronormative family forms, the non-birth mother accesses old ideas about family resemblance to explain her desire to match for physical likeness. Reflecting the established clinic norm of matching for physical likeness for non-biogenetic parents of heterosexual couples using donor insemination and IVF, the non-birth mother's desire impacted perceptions of donor suitability and subsequently prompted the couple to ask her cousin to be their donor. Projecting ahead to the conception and arrival of a child, the cousin-donor is constructed as 'uncle-like'—a 'stand in' for the non-birth mother through his similarity to her. Working out new ways of relating was a continuing exercise for this couple at this point in their family planning with the cousin-donor—like the brother-donor—expected to retain a place in the child's social network separate to that of father or parent.

The family narrative of the third and final couple introduced in this chapter explores kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between friends. The narrative represents a retrospective view. Already practising family at the time of their interview, the non-birth mother looks back on what she and her partner had planned for, and what has come to pass, since the birth of their four-year-old son. Her reflections are interspersed with the reflections of the two donors who shared sperm provision for them. Unlike the previous two sets of couples who were navigating the multiple statuses of donors located inside kinship by differentiating them as particular sorts of given kin (special versions of uncles or cousins), the status of this couple's two donors was not as easily navigable—kin closeness, through a system of given kin relations, can make things 'easy.' In this couple's negotiation of the boundaries of kinship, potential exists for highly suffused relationships; the donors could conceivably move inside kinship by becoming chosen kin (friends who are family or like family) or remain outside kinship as non-kin (friends who are *just* friends). While both the couple and the donors appeared aware of the different possibilities for relationships and roles that particular kinds of friends, friendships and kinship categories afforded, the meanings they gave to these relationships and roles, and their associated expectations, sometimes diverged. This was the source of some tension, which surfaced at key moments in their relationships.

Despite some tension, this couple's relationship with the donors, the donors' relationships with the boy, and the donors' roles within the boy's social network were well established at this point in the life of the family. The non-birth mother primarily constructed the donors as the kind of friends who are non-kin. While each of the donors is potentially biogenetically related to the boy, this particular construction did not confer on them the status of fathers or parents. But they were on occasion defined as *family* friends. This status is arguably an example of friends who could be considered family or like family. While this construction might imply a move towards counting them as kin, in practice, this was not the case.

The first family narrative relates to Lydia and Roslyn. Divergence from their planned conception route proved a catalyst for the active working through of

kinship in unforeseen ways. Lydia and Roslyn's evolving engagement with the novel forms of relating made possible through a brother-donor is a central theme of their narrative and is highlighted through consideration of the ways in which the brother-donor's biogenetic contribution to conception is framed as relatively less important.

Lydia, Roslyn, Curtis and Claire

Lydia longed for a baby. Eager to experience pregnancy and childbirth, she began exploring the possibility of conceiving a child through donor insemination with her long-term partner Roslyn. According to Lydia, Roslyn "didn't have quite the same urge." While Lydia hoped Roslyn would "come round", she understood her initial ambivalence at the prospect of creating a family. Roslyn reflected on this:

> I have had sort of moments where I've gone: "Oh, my life is so going to change." I'm not going to be able to drink a nice glass of red. I won't be able to afford the things that I like in life, which have always been travel and good food and good wine. I won't say fast women! I have had moments where I think: "Oh no, that means…" You know? And it's forever, you know? It's not just like we'll get over it. Well, no. It'll be this little life that will need us for the rest of their life…. That's freaky. It's huge!

Despite Roslyn's ambivalence, Lydia's enthusiasm for family proved motivating for her. In imagining parenthood, she began to see that they were both ready and resourced for this step:

> We decided after 13 years with the cat and us, we could add one more! We've a bit more love to give, I think. We got to the stage where we thought you know, we'd be quite good at it, so we'll give it a bash.

Lydia, who understood their intended transition to parenthood as *a natural progression*, draws on a traditional life course narrative as a resource in her storying of the theme of parental readiness:[110]

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[110] Goldberg, Downing and Moyer (2012) suggest that parenthood is represented as a normative part of the life cycle following commitment to a partner and achievement of relationship stability. Transitions to parenthood have been widely studied in relation to heterosexual couples but are understudied in relation to lesbian or gay couples (Goldberg, 2010).

> We've done heaps together. We've spent a lot of time travelling overseas and we've lived together with other people, flatting. We've worked and each studied and it [becoming parents] just sort of feels like a natural progression. We got married last February.[111] It does feel special. It does feel different. I didn't expect it to feel any different cause I couldn't be any more committed than I am—or than I was.

Rather than organise conception themselves, Lydia and Roslyn initially sought to conceive through the assistance of a fertility service provider using a knowable donor. Consistent with the dominant heteronormative model of family, Lydia and Roslyn's choice reflected a belief in the couple relationship as the exclusive location of parenthood and the basis for the construction of family. As Lydia said, "This is about us as a family, you know … and our child." Irreconcilable with open family boundaries, a known donor represented a risk to these; he could potentially breach them, through claims to paternal and/or parental presence on the strength of his biogenetic contribution to conception. Arguably, for Lydia and Roslyn, family boundaries were understood as less porous than for the couples in the previous chapter, a finding consistent with a range of studies that highlight lesbian couples' concern about the potential for donor disruption to their families, particularly relative to the parental identity of the non-birth mother. For example, Wojnar and Katzenmeyer (2014) found lesbian couples chose unknown donors to avoid complicating family dynamics and/or to remove any perception of threat to the non-birth mother's position (see also, Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Hayman et al., 2014; Kranz & Daniluk, 2006).[112] Guarding family boundaries against 'excess kinship' is important to many lesbian parents (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).

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[111] In point of fact, Lydia and Roslyn did not marry. Rather, they entered into a civil union, the only option available to them at that time. In the UK context, Weeks (2007) notes that the Civil Partnership Act 2004 was immediately understood by the public as the same as marriage. Some years later Heaphy et al. (2013) found that most of the lesbian and gay couples they studied who had entered into a civil partnership automatically saw that partnership as a marriage and routinely deployed the language of marriage. This pattern may also be relevant to the New Zealand context, for couples that had a civil union prior to the more recent option of same-sex marriage (see Chapter 2).

[112] Paradoxically, Erera and Segal-Engelchin (2014) found some gay men perceive lesbians as undesirable reproductive partners for similar reasons—the potential for lesbians to threaten their position.

While the couples whose stories are the focus of Chapter 5 deliberately constructed their known donors as fathers, Lydia and Roslyn's story distinguished between children's right to be fathered and children's right to information about their paternal origins. As Lydia said: "When the kid hits 18 they can access information. I think that is good. They should be able to." Conversant with the ways in which fertility services are structured by laws governing assisted reproductive procedures and parenthood, their route to conception would allow them to realise a vision of family that aligned with that law and protected their family boundaries. Under the provisions of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2, they would become the legal parents of their child while the donor's parental status would be extinguished. At the same time, the HART Act 2004 would position the donor as a potential source of information about paternal origins in the future through the donor identity release provisions of this Act.

Lydia and Roslyn were disappointed to learn that there would be a long wait for a knowable donor to become available:

> Lydia: We went along to [the fertility service] and had a chat and discovered that the waiting list [for a donor] was a year and a half long.
>
> Roslyn: Yeah, it was 18 months.
>
> Lydia: Yeah. At first we were led to believe it would be six months. And then when we went along it was: "Oh things have changed. It's 18 months." Oh shit! That changes everything, really.
>
> Roslyn: When he [the specialist] said that, my heart sort of sank because I had said to Lydia, "I don't want to have a newborn when I'm 40." You know? So I sort of—we were both quite disappointed and we left and sort of discussed it and thought, "Well, maybe it's not meant to be."

Roslyn described explaining their disappointment to family, during an overnight visit in the home of her younger brother Curtis, his wife Claire, and their two children, then three and four years old:

> We went home to visit my family. They [Curtis and Claire] said, "Oh, what's going on in your life?" And I said, "Oh, we wanted to start a family and we're really gutted cause there is an 18 month waiting list."

The women continue their story:

> Roslyn: The next morning before breakfast our sister-in-law said—we hadn't even had coffee—we were sitting in our pajamas with the kids. She sort of just strolled out, sat on the couch and said, "How would you feel if Curtis was the donor?" That's my brother. I didn't actually respond immediately cause I was a bit shocked. I was like: "Whew! Where did that come from?" You know?
>
> Lydia: Especially because you know, having looked into if we recruited a donor, what they would have to go through, we realised it is a huge commitment for the man. You know?
>
> Roslyn: So we were quite sort of blown away and didn't say anything for a few minutes and then we're like, "Wow, that's great."
>
> Lydia: I think I cried.
>
> Roslyn: Lydia did start crying.
>
> Nicola: So you actually made a decision immediately?
>
> Roslyn: Yeah.
>
> Lydia: They weren't sure that we had but I think we both knew…. We did go away and talk about it.
>
> Roslyn: I couldn't believe how generous they were being. Like they'd obviously gone to bed that night and discussed it. It wasn't Curtis that came up with it. It was actually my sister-in-law. I don't know if that was because she was having trouble getting pregnant and she thought maybe she might have to—a friend offered an egg to her. She thought that was really special. So I think maybe, along those lines, she was quite open to that sort of thing.[113] And of course my brother probably just went, "Oh yeah, sweet as."

Lydia and Roslyn's desire to have a child within the timeframe they had envisioned became a catalyst that over-rode their preference for a knowable donor when presented with an alternative, readily accessible option—Curtis.[114] Illustrating how the circumstances of conception may need to be renegotiated with pragmatic considerations forcing choices and/or pushing couples in unexpected directions as new information and resources emerge (Hayman &

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[113] As observed in Chapter 5, some heterosexual women object to their partners sharing of sperm, which they perceive as belonging within the couple relationship. Claire's difficulties achieving conception may have sensitised her to Roslyn and Lydia's disappointment, as Roslyn implies. Further, this may have outweighed any potential reservations Claire, as someone who has 'rights' in her husband's fertility, might have otherwise had.

[114] Curtis and Claire were not interviewed. Knowing it was impractical to include them in the timetable for interviews, I chose not to ask Lydia and Roslyn to act as a go-between for me.

Wilkes, 2016; Mamo, 2007; Nordqvist, 2014a), Lydia and Roslyn's 'push' towards Curtis was "a huge leap" (Lydia). This leap represented a significant shift away from their agreed plans.[115]

Working with the fertility service to achieve conception in a clinic setting continued to be a priority for Lydia and Roslyn. As an external agency experienced in managing reproductive relationships, including intragenerational sperm donation arrangements between first-degree relatives such as theirs,[116] the clinic functions as a kinship broker and mediator (Dempsey, 2004). A significant site for kin differentiation (Thompson, 2001), the clinic would help locate specific negotiations with Curtis and Claire within the law. While remaining clinic clients would not remove all risks associated with the potential for Curtis to disrupt Lydia and Roslyn's family through claims to paternal or parental presence, clinic-imposed counseling requirements for all four adults would help to disambiguate kinship by clarifying intentions and delineating relationships and roles (Short, 2007b; Thompson, 2001).[117] Lydia and Roslyn found this a useful process.[118]

Thompson (2001) maintains that a need to disambiguate kinship is particularly evident in cases of familial donation. In such cases, explicitness about the creation and maintenance of 'proper' kinship relations is necessary to rule out any suggestion of adultery or incest between reproductive parties. This

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[115] When first considering donor options, the couple did in fact briefly consider recruiting one of Roslyn's brothers as their donor. Believing the men might feel unduly pressured or obligated by such a request and inclined towards a knowable donor for the reasons already identified, they rejected this possibility immediately. Strathern (2005) argues pre-existing ties in familial gamete donation can subtly imply the presence of pre-existing obligations.

[116] A well accepted set of relationships in intrafamilial sperm donation (The Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2012).

[117] Counseling requirements are unavailable for those arranging home-based insemination. Parties to these informal arrangements are sometimes underprepared, which can create tensions that may be difficult to resolve (Dempsey, 2004; Riggs, 2008a, 2009; Van Reyk, 1995). Nordqvist and Smart (2014) state, with reference to informal arrangements, "Parents embarking on donor conceived parenthood may have little grasp of the issues they are likely to face, and even those who feel well prepared may find that the reality is more challenging than they anticipate" (p. 3). Such tensions and challenges are explored in the third family narrative in this chapter.

[118] Sally provided a contrasting perspective on clinic-imposed counseling. As she said: "They make you pay for two sessions—an hour long with a psychologist. They ask you questions that sound like you've never thought about anything … I was a bit offended. I was saying: 'My god, you think we haven't thought of that? We thought about this for the last seven years to get to this point.'"

observation appeared to hold true for Lydia who did not want Roslyn and Curtis' parents to think she had engaged in adultery by conceiving through sexual intercourse with Curtis. As she explained: "Being family, it actually felt better to keep it clinical…. They [Roslyn and Curtis' parents] are not going to worry that I slept with my brother-in-law."

Arguably, the externalisation of the reproductive relationship was a resource used strategically by Lydia and Roslyn to disambiguate kinship. It enabled the deconstruction of Curtis' biogenetic contribution to conception in a context of his existing status of father/parent to his and Claire's two children, and the pre-existing interpersonal relationships that were inevitably a component of his family membership and long-term sibling relationship to Roslyn, and his brother-in-law relationship to Lydia. Nordqvist and Smart (2014) observe that connections stemming from known donation, including familial donation, cross genetic and social kinship categories. Making sense of these, in the absence of an obvious script or established custom and practice, requires careful consideration because different meanings and expectations for new forms of relating are possible for different family members.

Mindful of this, Lydia and Roslyn, together with Curtis and Claire, explored the new ways of relating that Curtis' donation would make possible—they intended to 'do' kinship, rather than simply be "a particular and fixed kind of kin" (Thompson, 2001, p. 176). Kinning or self-conscious kinship (Howell, 2001, 2003) draws attention to the active working through of kinship in every day life, something that is specific to individual people and their relationships (Mason, 2008). The four adults' relationships to each other, to Lydia and Roslyn's child, and to Curtis and Claire's children, as well as the children's relationships to each other, needed to be worked through and understood by them all in the same way. Kinship claims were at stake; pre-determining relationships would enable "the correct requisites of relatedness" (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014, p. 118) to come into play following conception. This was particularly important if Lydia and Roslyn's cohabitating couple relationship as the defining feature of family life was not to be undermined.

Lydia and Roslyn constructed themselves as parents relative to Curtis. His sperm provision and resulting biogenetic contribution to conception was not a relational basis for parenthood. Instead, he was to occupy a separate relational space as a 'special' uncle, relating to both them and their child accordingly. He would have a 'special' relationship with, and would likely spoil, 'Little Spark,'[119] who might resemble him. The following extracts illustrate this:

> Roslyn: We're all very clear that he'll be a special uncle. But we will parent.
>
> Nicola: He *will* be an uncle.
>
> Roslyn: He'll be a special uncle though…
>
> Lydia: We'll tell the child at age appropriate times when it comes up.
>
> Roslyn: Curtis said, "We're [Roslyn and Lydia] to parent." If we needed help or support, they're always there. But as far as he's concerned, and Claire is concerned, it's our child.
>
> Nicola: So are they thinking of the future baby very much as a niece or nephew?
>
> Roslyn: Yeah, yep.
>
> Lydia: I think they do feel an extra desire to support us. Like if anything happened to us, maybe we'll discuss them possibly being the guardians. Who knows? There's sort of an unspoken agreement there's a little extra element in the relationship. Like they'll be the first to know when we get a positive [pregnancy test]…. Especially because they've got kids as well. The kids are going to ask questions. The more they know as soon as possible, the less interested I think they'll be!
>
> Roslyn: I think my brother will—he spoils—he's very generous, my younger brother. He spoils all his nieces and nephews but I think he'll probably spoil this one especially. I can sort of see that he will spoil Little Spark. I'm sure—I've said to him—I think when he sees the child, or perhaps when it grows and there might be certain characteristics or mannerisms that will be like him. Naturally he will think—
>
> Lydia: He'll find it interesting.
>
> Roslyn: Interesting. Yeah.
>
> Nicola: In an intellectual sense?
>
> Lydia: Yeah. He may be slightly emotional but I think it'll be more sort of interesting than heart wrenching or anything.[120] As far as how special the

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[119] Little Spark was Lydia and Roslyn's nickname for the baby Lydia had newly conceived.

[120] Riggs (2009) maintains that the emotional aspects and implications of sperm donation are under represented in the research literature, which has tended to focus on pragmatic aspects.

relationship will be, I think that just the fact that the child will know—so the child will know that they are there because he helped us because we wanted it so much.

Nicola: So that will be the story, the family story?

Roslyn: Open and honest from the start. I don't want any secrets and closets. I just think there is no need for that.

Lydia: …. So yeah—something like, "Your uncle Curtis helped us to make you," when they're very little, I think…. Eventually you get around to sperm!

The emphasis in Lydia and Roslyn's story on Curtis as a special uncle, with a special relationship to their child, who he helped the parents conceive, serves to acknowledge his simultaneous biogenetic and social relatedness to their child. He will be both the child's biogenetic father, through his contribution to conception, and the child's uncle, through his sibling relationship to Roslyn and brother-in-law relationship to Lydia. It is his status as uncle, however, that is given significance. Kinship is choreographed (Thompson, 2005) by the women in ways that foreground his social relatedness while guarding nuclear family boundaries. Curtis' dual relatedness will become a family story that the women will share with their child, and Curtis and Claire's children, from a young age and in response to questions.[121] In these ways, the child's right to information about paternal origins will be upheld.

Dual relatedness will also be a feature of Roslyn's relationship to her and Lydia's child. Her sibling relationship to Curtis will genetically connect her, and her family, to the child, through his body/sperm/genes, thus reproducing her background in the genetic make-up of that child (Luce, 2010).[122] She will also be

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While his study addressed the emotional energy expended by gay men with particular reference to the men's identities, Lydia's comment raises questions about the emotional energy potentially expended by any known donor, on meeting his donor-offspring.

[121] Presumably, the family story will also account for the three children's genetic relatedness as half-siblings through Curtis, and social relatedness, as cousins, through Curtis and Roslyn's sibling relationship.

[122] Achieving a genetic connection through use of a brother-donor was important for other couples in the study, as addressed in the next family narrative. Genetic closeness was also important for Freida. Freida and her partner Norma were the recipients of an egg donated by one of Frieda's family members. The women parented the twins Frieda subsequently conceived with the support of their known donor Granger, who was introduced in the last chapter. Similarly, infertile heterosexual couples sometimes prefer familial donation of gametes motivated by a

a social mother/parent, through her relationship to Lydia as the birth mother, and a paternal aunt, through her sibling relationship to Curtis. Once again, the women choreograph kinship through their active decision to foreground particular relationships—in this case Roslyn's status as social mother/parent over her status as paternal aunt.[123]

The genetic connection particularly appealed to the women:

> Roslyn: It'll have my DNA. Not that that was ever a problem. I couldn't love Lydia any more. I'll love this little [baby] that comes from her. But now that I think about it I think, "God, that's really cool." Like, you know, it will have certain—
>
> Lydia: I get this whole—oh, our baby could look like either of us!
>
> Nicola: That's right.
>
> Lydia: Like both of us.
>
> Nicola: Has it added a dimension you hadn't previously considered?
>
> Roslyn: No, I hadn't sort of thought about it.
>
> Lydia: Which we wouldn't miss, if we didn't have it.
>
> Roslyn: It's sort of now that we are going to have it that it's really nice.
>
> Lydia: It's sort of cool.

Brother-donors (and other family members) can be understood as ideal donors for lesbian couples because of the genetic connections. For example, the lesbian couples that chose brother-donors in the Hayman et al. (2014) study did so because they assumed a genetic link between the non-birth mother and the child would validate the position of the non-birth mother. Conversely, brother-donors can also be understood as unsuitable or risky on the grounds that this irreversible connection, which can never become unknown, renders them 'too' close (Nordqvist, 2012b; Strathern, 1995). While many of the couples in Nordqvist's (2012b) study were drawn to the possibility of a brother-donor for

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belief that this will preserve a family's genetic history through the maintenance of a genetic tie, perceived, in turn, to provide the recipient with the kind of 'genetic closeness' to his or her child that Freida valued (The Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2012).

[123] A decision reinforced by the power of motherhood discourse, which renders other roles irrelevant.

the kinds of reasons already mentioned, most rejected this option considering their closeness problematic; they could disrupt the non-birth mother's parental identity.[124] Likewise, couples in Luce's (2010) study were anxious a brother-donor might displace the non-birth mother from her parental position.[125] Luce elaborates:

> Women who considered using a family member as a donor and chose not to pursue that option often decided that a biological relationship of, for example, a sibling, nephew, or cousin could potentially be used to subvert the co-parent status of the two women. The donor might want more involvement in parenting the child, and other family members might support his wishes, given that the child 'is really his' even more so (biologically) than one of the child's mothers. (p. 123)

This is what Lydia and Roslyn risked had they not been successful in establishing new ways of relating that were mutually understood by everyone—that Curtis' biogenetic relatedness could trump Roslyn's genetic and social relatedness, should he assert fatherhood over unclehood. This could potentially jeopardise the family boundaries and sideline Roslyn as a parent, however her legal parenthood, and Curtis' lack thereof, would prevent actual displacement as might occur for non-birth mothers in similar positions without recourse to this protection.

Externalisation of the reproductive relationship provided legitimation for this couple's conception pathway and construction of family. Further, medicalising the insemination process in a context of relationships that have other resonances

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[124] Goldberg's (2012) study suggests some gay couples are both drawn to and wary of sister-donors and/or the possibility of a sister becoming a surrogate, for the same reasons identified by lesbian couples.

[125] The viewpoints of the lesbian couples that are the focus of the remaining two family narratives in this chapter represent both understandings of brother-donors, as explored in their narratives. Other couples provide additional examples. Emma and Fern's two children had different donors. The couple were pleased their first child's donor was Fern's brother, because of the genetic connection this facilitated between her and the child. By the time they were ready for a second child, Fern's social motherhood was well established and the significance of a genetic link had dimensioned in importance. Instead, they sought a donor who was willing to be an involved father. Logan fitted this criterion. On the other hand, Asha and Tracey were in negotiations with a potential known donor accessed through the internet after deciding against using Tracey's brother because of his closeness. As Tracey said, they both felt "really weird about that."

supported meaning making about the forms of connectedness made possible when a known donor's construction as a special uncle renders him paternally and parentally absent, while being physically present in the child's social network. By constituting Curtis' biogenetic fatherhood as secondary to his unclehood (and Roslyn's paternal aunthood as secondary to her social motherhood/parenthood) through a careful choreographing of kinship, prominence is given to the women's parental identities and their family is strengthened. While dominant cultural definitions of uncles suggest they are unreservedly tied to their nephews and nieces, they are not parents, so they are not a threat to parental identity.

The family narrative of the next lesbian couple relates to Abigail and Victoria. It develops the theme of kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between given kin, through an exploration of the significance of family resemblance in strengthening the intending non-birth mother's identity as mother/parent. Recruitment of this mother's cousin as a donor on the basis of their similarity involves the couple in ongoing decisions about how they should relate to one another, as well as how the donor should relate to a child conceived in these circumstances.

Abigail, Victoria and Rory

Prior to becoming a couple, Abigail and Victoria both knew they wanted children in the future. Once they became a couple, they began to explore their options. The women agreed they would have two children through donor insemination, with Abigail to conceive their first child, and Victoria their second. They described themselves as *really gutted* at their inability to reproduce biogenetically with one another:

> Victoria: We always get really gutted that we can't actually have a baby that's ours.
>
> Abigail: That's both ours.
>
> Victoria: It sucks. I've never, like, felt sad about that in my whole life. I didn't realise that, until we started talking about it seriously, and then it was like, "Damn it, that sucks!"

As lesbians, no amount of sexual relations would result in a child (Cloughessy, 2010). This left the women facing the dilemma of how to reconcile this reality with their view that family involves conceiving children with this biogenetic connection. This view is informed by a discourse of biogenetic kinship, within which the heteronormative family is 'the' biogenetic reproductive unit (Jones, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, central to this discourse is an understanding that biogenetic substance transfers from parents to child, that this constitutes relatedness (Carsten, 2001; Thompson, 2001), and that the outward, bodily expression of such relatedness manifests in resemblance (Becker, 2000; Richards, 2006).

Family resemblance expresses continuity and creates continuities; "It is a way of constructing relations in a network of already existing relatives, a way of placing the new body into the group of the family body and constructing the new individual body as a family member" (Marre & Bestard, 2009, p. 65). While generally understood to originate in conception with inherited traits passed down, family resemblance is also used to construct family membership where genetic connectedness does not exist (Burr, 2009; Marre & Bestard, 2009; Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).[126] Where this is the case, an implied or figurative genetic connection is invoked, enabling family members to 'pass' as genetically connected (Jones, 2005; Millbank, 2008).

Mason (2008) comments on the contemporary fascination with family resemblance, noting that resemblance issues are "highly charged with kinship" (p. 30). One aspect of resemblance is physical likeness.[127] Such likeness is a key signifier of family membership, identity and legitimacy, a point that has been applied in the context of sperm and egg donation for heterosexual couples (Becker, Butler, & Nachtigall, 2005; Hargreaves, 2006), sperm donation for lesbian couples (Nordqvist, 2010) and adoption contexts (Marre & Bestard,

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[126] Adoption practices provide one such example. Marre and Bestard (2009) suggest adoptive parents look for aspects of resemblance or some previous connection with their adopted child and that this begins the process of relating to and forming a lasting relation with that child.

[127] Other aspects of family resemblance, such as character, temperament, particular inclinations, talents and humour may be less tangible (Mason, 2008). Aspects such as these are frequently hotly contested by family and unreliable (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).

2009). Physical likeness became an important resource for Abigail and Victoria, which they mobilised to bring unity to their family given they could not jointly procreate. Their use of this as a resource draws attention to their plan to practice family in ways consistent with a discourse of biogenetic kinship, despite being a lesbian couple.

Physical likeness was particularly significant for Victoria, the intending non-birth mother for the couple's first child, whose conception was the immediate focus of attention. Victoria understood her motherhood/parenthood would likely be considered inferior to Abigail's and that she could lack status and recognition. Gabb's (2005) study found lesbian non-birth mothers can feel uneasy about their status and Hayman et al. (2013) findings suggest these mothers are acutely aware that they are not recognised as genuine parents in the public sphere or well supported (see also, R. Brown & Perlesz, 2008; Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014). Victoria's narrative suggests she intended to use physical likeness strategically to redress the privileged status that Abigail, as birth mother, could expect to be accorded as the 'real' mother of their planned child, a strategy used by other non-birth mothers (see for example, Ripper, 2009). As Victoria said:

> I felt like [having] a baby that looked like me and was a reflection of my family and what I grew up in and that sort of thing. If I wasn't going to be [the birth mother] then I wanted it to look you know, a little bit like me.

Working from the premise that sameness gives rise to bonds (Nordqvist, 2014a), Victoria's focus on physical likeness can be understood as a means to establish and affirm her place in the family through creating a visible, embodied kinship connection that would unite herself and the baby. Arguably, this focus represents an attempt to reproduce herself by producing something similar (Strathern, 1995)—a baby that looks *a little bit* like her. Like Lydia and Roslyn, she engages in kinning or self-conscious kinship practices, actively working through kinship in her every day life.

The production of such a baby would require a donor who looked like Victoria on the basis that their shared physical likeness might result in the reproduction of her image in the child (Hayden, 1995; Luce, 2010). In prioritising such a donor,

she accesses old ideas that draw from the established clinical norm of matching for physical likeness between intending non-biogenetic parents of heterosexual couples using donor insemination.[128] Finegold (1964), an early commentator on donor insemination, stated: "It stands to reason that there should be a serious attempt to match the physical make up of the husband and the donor. We look for similarities in the colour of the hair and eyes, the complexion and height" (p. 38). Since the publication of Finegold's volume, such matching between husband (or partner) and donor has been well documented with typical themes including its prevalence (Daniels, 1985; McWhinnie, 2001), its significance (Grace et al., 2008; Snowden, Mitchell, & Snowden, 1983), why it is a sensitive issue for some families (Becker et al., 2005) and its use as a family connectedness strategy (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).

Studies confirm that matching for physical likeness between intending non-birth mothers and donors, or both mothers and donors, has subsequently emerged as a typical practice for many lesbian couples (see for example, Hayden, 1995; Hayman et al., 2013; Jones, 2005; Luce, 2010; Millbank, 2008; Ripper, 2009; Suter et al., 2008).[129] Nordqvist (2010) observes the practice is arguably a way of counteracting the power of the donor to challenge family bonds. I suggest the donor's power could arguably increase, however. Another adult (the donor) in the non-birth mother's family who looked like her, could potentially undermine the parental dyad formed with her partner—the physical likeness between the non-birth mother and the donor, if it is manifest in the appearance of the child, could signal to the families that the non-birth mother, donor and child really belonged together, rather than the non-birth mother, her partner and the child. Regardless, it is a problematic and normalising practice. In reinforcing the heternormative family as a biogenetically connected, two-parent model it potentially undermines non-heterosexual, non-biogenetic parenthood and diminishes the status of social parenthood (Nordqvist, 2010).

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[128] This clinical norm was later applied to IVF.
[129] This practice has also been documented between gay men and ovum donors (Dempsey, 2013).

Victoria's brother Coen looked like her. Their physical likeness would invoke the literal genetic connection between them, facilitating her contribution to the child's genetic profile and potentially reproducing her image in that child. Coen was however, unsuitable:

> Victoria: Originally, we probably would have had … my brother. Cause we felt like we wanted, if Abigail was going to have the baby, you know, it would be amazing [for me] to have a biological connection that way. But he just didn't turn out to be that suitable.
>
> Abigail: You can say why. It's all good.
>
> Victoria: He's actually in jail. So, clearly not suitable and—got a bit of history with drugs so while we've always been close, and that would have been the closest connection we could have had, it just wasn't going to be an option. We discounted him.

Coen, Victoria said, was "really gutted" he couldn't be their donor. As noted with reference to Lydia and Roslyn, pragmatic considerations can force choices. Presumably Coen's history, coupled with the logistics of sperm donation from prison, were considered insurmountable obstacles that pushed Abigail and Victoria towards Rory, Victoria's cousin, who also looked like her. Given their cousin relationship, Rory also had the potential to become the means to Victoria's genetic relationship with the child.

Rory readily agreed to be Abigail and Victoria's donor.[130] Drawing on a range of different forms of connectedness, including looking alike, being alike and emotional and social connection to explain Rory's suitability, the women's account suggests he is almost interchangeable with Coen:

> Abigail: I got drunk and asked Victoria's cousin, just randomly. He was like, "Sure."
>
> Nicola: Had you talked about him as an option at that point?

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[130] Rory was not interviewed. Gaining his perspective would have added another dimension to Abigail and Victoria's narrative, but the couple were reluctant to ask 'more' of him. At the time of their interview, he was undergoing pre-insemination tests through a fertility service provider, which demanded significant commitment and time. In addition, he had been required to see a counselor. Requesting his permission for me to contact him was understood as an additional demand that they preferred not to make on him. This draws attention to the delicate balance recipients of known donor gametes must strike. Their reliance on donors means they cannot risk jeopardising arrangements through unnecessary or 'unreasonable' requests.

Abigail: Not really. We had, and she was like, "Yeah, I'd be cool with that." I was like, "Oh yeah." But we didn't talk further.

Victoria: We hadn't really talked much about it.

Abigail: It struck me—I get on really well with him.

Victoria: We're very close. He's practically like a brother.

Abigail: A brother. And so it just kind of felt right. He kind of said yep, straight away.

Victoria: He's already got a child as well … He's had a kid to a previous relationship.[131] I mean one of the reasons he ended up being such a good option, is because he is so similar to me. Like he actually kind of looks like me.

Abigail: Here's a picture. That's him and me there.

Victoria: He looks exactly like my brother who looks quite a lot like me. He's really—he's always been into the same things as me. We've grown up side-by-side doing all of the same things our whole lives. If there is anyone that could be similar to me, it'd be him and he and Abigail just clicked straight away, when they met.

Abigail: Yeah, yeah, we got on really well. It was only the second time I'd met him, when I asked him. I just felt like it was the right thing to do at the time.

Victoria does not choose Rory for the genetic connection per se, but because their closeness is useful to her. They are *very close*—he is *like a brother to her*. Because he *kind of looks like* her, using him will create the possibility for physical likeness between herself and the child in a context where people give symbolic likeness weight. This will establish her as a plausible mother and parent to that child, enabling her to pass as such. Victoria and Rory are also similar in other ways; they are *into the same things*, which they have been doing *side-by-side* their

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[131] It is not unreasonable to assume that Rory's position as an acknowledged father and parent was an additional factor in Abigail and Victoria's perception of his suitability as a donor. This factor was important to other couples in this study. Reese and Simone were planning a family together. They intended to ask their friend Jake to be a donor for them but expected to wait until he and his partner Lavinia had a child. As Reese said: "I would want him to have his own kids first. Just 'cause I know he really wants kids and I know that that would be hard for him…. I wouldn't want him to be feeling like he's missing out on his kid." Becoming a full time father/parent to his own child was understood by this couple as a means to protect their family boundaries. Jake could be acknowledged as their child's father, but not as his parent. Having his own child would satisfy his perceived need to be a parent and not just the biogenetic father of their child.

whole lives. Abigail gets on *really well* with Rory too.[132] Presumably this is important to her, given the similarities between the cousins. In consciously choosing a donor who resembles herself, Victoria constructs Rory as a suitable stand in for her, a source of sperm in conceiving her and Abigail's child.

Abigail and Victoria's preferred pathway to conception was clinic-based insemination. As was the case for Lydia and Roslyn, externalisation of the reproductive relationship became a resource for them, which facilitated deconstruction of Rory's biogenetic contribution to conception within a context not dissimilar to that which Curtis was located in. Rory, like Curtis, was already a father/parent, with pre-existing interpersonal relationships through his membership in Victoria's wider family and hers in his, their cousin-relationship, and his cousin-in-law relationship to Abigail pending the women's formalisation of their partnership through the provisions of the Civil Union Act 2004, a (then) newly available resource. While the clinic helped align negotiations within the laws governing assisted reproductive procedures and parenthood for both sets of couples, Abigail and Victoria's efforts to disambiguate Rory's kinship status proved more challenging for them, than had Lydia and Roslyn's disambiguation of Curtis' kinship status, given their divergent ideas about the new forms of relating his donation would make possible.

Crossing genetic and kinship categories, Rory will be the child's biogenetic father through his contribution to conception, the child's first cousin once removed through his cousin relationship to Victoria and a social relation to the child through his cousin-in-law relationship to Abigail. As previously discussed, making mutual sense of connections such as these is important, given the range of meanings and expectations individual family members may attribute to them (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014). Tensions arose for the women because they had not made mutual sense of or fully pre-determined the 'correct requisites of relatedness'[133] for Rory, as their narrative illustrates:

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[132] She could not have known Rory well at this point, because it was only their second meeting.
[133] Nordqvist and Smart's (2014) expression, introduced in the last family narrative.

Nicola: What kinds of things do you want to set in place in terms of Rory's relationship and role with a child?

Abigail: That's a good question, aye.

Victoria: Yeah. Well he definitely won't be a father figure. But he'll—I mean, regardless of whether he is a father of our child or not, he'll still always be a special person in our lives. So we just kind of see that he'll take that role that he would have taken with my child anyway, even if he hadn't been involved. I'm the godmother of his child. So, it'll be like, just an uncle, a role model. Yeah, that's how we kind of see it working. I don't know if it will end up being like that but—

Abigail: We've kind of felt a little bit differently about this, I reckon. Like to do with his role. Cause you're quite—like Victoria is quite—I think you're a little bit more like, how do I put it? Just wanting us to be the parents whereas I'm a little bit more open to more involvement probably, from him, maybe. But I'm happy to go with that because I think that is just going to be easier, in general. But probably I'm more happy to just—you know. I don't know. Like I mean you know how we've talked about, well, what's he going to be called? And—

Nicola: I was wondering that too.

Abigail: See for me it's fine, if they want to call him dad or whatever. But—

Victoria: To me it's absolutely not. He's not the dad, he's the donor.

Nicola: So what sort of story are you imagining telling the child about who the biological father is? If you're not wanting to use the word dad, and yet he's going to be in the child's life, have you thought about how you would describe him?

Victoria: We've talked about this a lot and still are kind of unsure of how we will actually tell that story at an appropriate level for the child to understand. But, we both agree that we will tell the child as soon as they kind of ask or as soon as we feel it is the right time. That Rory is the father. I guess we've always said that we'll tell the child that this is a person who has played a special role in making them and that is a special person in their life.

Abigail: But for me, I'd much prefer to be able to say, "This is your father" kind of thing. I just think it's easier. But there's a big difference between Victoria and I. I've come from a family that is very disconnected biologically and geographically so I think it is really important that kids know exactly where they come from, kind of thing, whereas Victoria's family is kind of quite different. Yeah. So I see it from that point of view … I have been really disconnected from my family and knowing who my real blood stuff is. I think it is important to know that for sure and to be clear on—yeah.

Nicola: And what does your cousin think, Victoria? What's he wanting?

Victoria: He's kind of cool with—

Abigail: I think we still need to talk more though, I do.

Victoria: Yeah.

Abigail: I think that like, it's not entirely clear. It's not even really that clear between you and I.

Victoria: Yeah. I mean he's clear that he's not going to be a father.

Abigail: What would you want him to be called, though?

Victoria: Well, not dad.

Abigail: Yeah but what?

Victoria: I don't know. That's something we'll discuss. When we're not being taped, maybe! It's definitely something we need to discuss.

In their narrative, Victoria articulates ambivalence in her responses to questions about Rory's relationship to the child she and Abigail want to conceive. These ambivalences highlight her use of particular ideas about biogenetic connectedness and social parenting. Resisting and negotiating conventions, she rejects the possibility of Rory as 'a' father for the child, because this is inconsistent with a two-mother/parent model of family. Victoria simultaneously accepts Rory will be 'the' father of that child, and that, as personally responsible parents, she and Abigail will need to explain this to him or her at some point. Similarly, she reiterates twice, that Rory will not be a 'dad.' Perhaps, in Victoria's view, a father cannot be disregarded altogether given his biogenetic contribution to conception is a necessity, whereas a 'dad', often understood as someone who supports his child through active parenting participation, is not a necessity in families that already have two parents. Arguably she applies a framework of choice to biogenetic relatedness in line with the findings of Weston (1991) and Weeks et al. (2001), as discussed in Chapter 3.

Victoria's own parenthood, which she expects to formalise through the provisions of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2, will reflect the original legislative principles underpinning donor insemination for heterosexual couples, the purpose of which was to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the infertile man and his partner as intending parents and *unknown donors* through donor anonymity (Daniels & Lewis, 1996b; Frith, 2001; McWhinnie, 2001), however Rory will be a *known donor*, with members of the women's

wider families well aware of this. Victoria's access to new possibilities for formalising social parenthood, in combination with older ideas about donor anonymity, help explain her positioning of Rory. *If* he is to be a father at all, he will be a father in a particular kind of way—someone significant but his relatedness to their child will be contained.

Victoria uses her narrative to construct herself as a parent relative to Rory in ways congruent with Lydia and Roslyn's construction of themselves, as parents, relative to Curtis. Like them, she upholds the couple relationship as the locus of parenthood and foundation for family using legal resources that were unavailable to lesbians under earlier regulatory regimes (the Civil Union Act 2004 and the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2). She also rejects sperm provision as a relational basis for parenthood distinguishing between children's right to be fathered and children's right to information about their paternal origins. These are key issues for Victoria that are central to her positioning as a social mother/parent and which impact her approach to negotiation with Rory. His paternal and parental absence is important to her positioning, which could be jeopardised through acknowledgement of his status as father or his involvement in parenting. Rory, like Curtis, is therefore expected to occupy a separate relational sphere to the women, relating to them, and their child, from a (potentially) flexible uncle-like space, rather than a parent-like space.[134] The men's respective relational spheres are understood as a continuation of the kinds of relationships that would have applied if the children had been the joint biogenetic offspring of the mothers.[135] Part of the children's social networks, the men/relationships are simultaneously constituted as

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[134] A number of known donors in this study occupied flexible uncle-like spaces. Constructed as fathers, their relationships and involvement with their children were informed by cultural expectations about the role of uncles. For example, Declan said: "The analogy very much in my mind is my relationship with my sister's children…. I'm not … called Uncle Declan or anything like that [by his children]. But that's very much the analogy in my mind. I'm known. I'm part of the family. I visit occasionally. I recognise birthdays." Similarly, Nina used this analogy to describe Sean's role: "'Benevolent uncle' was the best kind of way—the shorthand, to sum it up. You know? Someone who clearly loved the children, cared for the children, and the children knew of in their lives as related, as family, as their dad, but who was one step removed from decision-making."

[135] Some heterosexual couples using familial donation in New Zealand also expect relationships to reflect those that would have applied before the donation (Adair & Purdie, 1996).

'special.' Their specialness is to become an integral component in the sharing of family stories, the central purpose of which is to pass on information about paternal origins—the children will all eventually know who their 'fathers' are—while consolidating the couples' status as parents.

Abigail constructs herself as a parent relative to Rory in a very different way; her relationship with Victoria and parenthood are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Her personal experience of a biogenetically and geographically disconnected family is a resource shaping her acceptance that sperm provision could form the basis for a paternal and/or parental relationship. She sees possibilities for Rory to be positioned as father/dad and involved in raising their child in some capacity, and accesses her experiences, a discourse of biogenetic kinship and the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins to explain her position. She does not fully share Victoria's issues, because Rory, as a potential father/dad, does not threaten her positioning as birth mother/parent. Were he to take up fatherhood, less would be at stake for her.

The differences in Abigail and Victoria's construction of themselves as parents relative to Rory draws attention to paradoxical perspectives that show the lived negotiation of many of the dilemmas faced in known donor insemination about 'who' the donor will be to the child, including unresolved tensions. Demonstrating the challenges of working through these tensions, Abigail and Victoria both acknowledge that 'proper' relational modes are not yet settled and further discussion between all three of them will be needed. They therefore keep a space 'open' for later decision-making.

Abigail and Victoria utilised physical likeness strategically to consolidate Victoria's parental status and to strengthen family connections in a context of 'unbalanced' relationships. Victoria's plans to render the donor paternally and parentally absent ensure he is less likely to disrupt the two-mother/parent family they are creating; his simultaneous position as her cousin and acknowledged donor means he is a potential threat to her construction of nuclear family parenthood. As Nordqvist and Smart (2014) state, "There is a

constant potential for the [known] donor to fall into the kin category despite being positioned and conceptualised as non-kin" (p. 124).

The final family narrative to be examined in this chapter relates to the third lesbian couple, Genevieve and Lynley. The narrative provides a retrospective account of the ways in which the couple was already practicing family at the time of their interview, from the perspective of the non-birth mother. Looking back on what she and her partner had planned for, and what subsequently transpired following the birth of their four-year-old son Henry, the non-birth mother's reflections are interspersed with those of the two donors who shared sperm provision for them. The narrative builds from the theme of kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between given kin to kin differentiation in sperm donation arrangements between friends. Primarily constructed by the couple as the kind of friends who are non-kin, as opposed to the kinds of friends who are chosen kin—family or like family—the donors remain outside kinship.

Genevieve, Lynley, Pascal and Shamus

Genevieve and Lynley had been together for 15 years at the time of their interview.[136] Relatively early in their relational life, Genevieve began to imagine creating a family with Lynley at some point in the future. Implying that they were not 'a family' without a child, she said, "I think my vision, when I met Lynley, was always that one day we would have a family ourselves." Lynley was keen to have a family too and readily agreed to be the birth mother to a child. Genevieve didn't consider this a practical option for herself, because she was the couple's primary wage earner.

Genevieve and Lynley's plans for family percolated for a long period while they waited for access to new legal resources promising support for their relationship and intention to jointly parent to be passed by parliament. In the first decade of their relationship, these resources were unavailable to them or other lesbians

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[136] I had arranged to interview the couple together, in their home, however on my arrival Lynley decided not to participate. While Genevieve and I talked, Lynley listened in, occasionally. As the interview concluded, she made some brief observations. Because these did not specifically address the areas already covered, they have not been utilised in this narrative.

wishing to parent together. The resources, the Civil Union Act 2004 and the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2, combine old ideas conflating coupledom with parenthood with new possibilities for formalising same-sex relationships and social parenthood in ways that reflected the significance the women gave to the couple relationship in the construction of family. Parenthood—as a dyadic project—would reside exclusively in their relationship. This understanding, shared with Lydia, Roslyn and Victoria, was instrumental in Genevieve and Lynley's deliberate decision to delay progressing their plans for family until both acts came into force in 2005.[137] Genevieve explained her thinking about this delay in some detail:

> Genevieve: I guess I was waiting for the Civil Union Bill to pass, before I was ready to commit to bringing a child up. I wanted full security—to know that as the other parent I would be named on a birth certificate. That the child would be—I didn't want to have to go through the problems that friends in America had done with adoption and guardianship and the legalities of parenting.
>
> Nicola: But that wasn't the Civil Union Act that enabled you to be named on the birth certificate. It was the Status of Children Act.
>
> Genevieve: Correct. It was the Status of Children Act that followed. But at the time, I wanted to be sure in ourselves that Lynley and I had entered into a relationship that was recognised by state. I wanted, we wanted, excuse me, we wanted to be sure, that when we brought a child into the world, we'd done it correctly and properly and that our relationship was recognised…. And I guess it was also a little bit of publicism of the fact that I will wear a ring that symbolises that I have a life partner, and thank you very much I have a certificate to prove that our relationship is valid, and you know what, my child—or our child that we bring into the world—enters into that.

Genevieve's emphasis on practicing family *correctly* and *properly* draws attention to her recourse to benchmarks for heteronormative family forms as a cultural template (Pannozzo, 2014), including legal relationships between two-

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[137] Similarly, Asha and Tracey decided to hold off looking for a known donor until after the Civil Union Act 2004 came into force and they had entered into a civil union. The couple mistakenly believed it was the Civil Union Act 2004 that would secure Tracey's legal parenthood as the intending non-birth mother to their planned child, something that was important to them. As Tracey said, "We wanted to be the baby's parents and I think the nice thing in New Zealand is that if you are in a civil union you can both be named on the birth certificate." While not the case in New Zealand, a civil partnership is one of the mechanisms through which legal parenthood for non-birth mothers can be achieved in some countries (Crawford, 2014; Nordqvist, 2012a).

parent couples, legal relationships between parents and children, and co-residence for families, even as she disrupts these benchmarks through her lesbian relationship. This emphasis also signals a wish to secure for their child a normative childhood. As she went on to elaborate:

> I wanted to be sure that Lynley and I were solely the parents, we were solely in charge of this child's destiny, our love and our raising and input that was in his life. I guess we wanted, as the two parents, to bring a sense of normality as well—that we weren't three people bringing up a child or two households bringing up a child. We wanted to stay very traditional with two parents, as traditional as you can be: two parents only.

Genevieve's narrative underscores the ways lesbian parented families become intelligible to themselves and others by stressing their similarities to heteronormative models of family (Clarke, 2002; Hicks, 2005; Ripper, 2009). State sanctioned relationship and parenting rituals, symbols and their tangible artifacts—identified by Genevieve as a public life time commitment to her partner, a ring, and certificates—serve to legitimise lesbian parented families. As Hayman et al. (2013) suggest, they support the negotiation of family identities and create visible connections between family members (see also, Nordqvist, 2012a; Short, 2007a; Suter et al., 2008). This is particularly important in a context where lesbian parented families may be ambivalently received or opposed (Clarke, 2002; Nordqvist, 2012a; Peregrín, de la Rosa, & García, 2014).[138] These kinds of rituals and symbols are problematic, because of their implication in homonormative processes of normalisation that connect with good sexual citizenship and constructions of the normal lesbian, as discussed in Chapter 2. They reify and measure lesbian parented families against heteronormative discourses that reinforce the salience of the heteronormative social order and fail to create spaces for recognising families who either choose not to use such rituals and symbols or do not have them at their disposal. In the process, those practicing family in other ways are delegitimated, rendered

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[138] It is also a legacy of the 1970s and 1980s, where custody cases positioned lesbian parents as unfit, leaving them with little option but to 'prove' their 'fitness' to parent (Epstein, 2009).

invisible and excluded, as other researchers have noted (see for example, Clarke, 2002; Epstein, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2013; Wilson, 2013).[139]

Once Genevieve was confident the necessary legal resources to support her relationship with Lynley and their intent to jointly parent were in place, a decision about a donor was the next step. As she said, "I guess the hardest thing was to determine exactly who we would ask." She and Lynley developed a short list of possible donors they could consider approaching that drew from their familial and social networks. With their couple relationship as the cornerstone for parenthood and family, any donor chosen, would be located outside kinship; sperm provision was not considered a relational basis for fatherhood, parenthood or family membership. Like Lydia, Roslyn and Victoria, the women distinguished between children's right to be fathered and children's right to information about their paternal origins.

Genevieve recollects their thoughts about this distinction, with reference to their son Henry:

> I wanted to be sure, as did Lynley, that at some stage in Henry's life, he would know who the biological – I'm not going to use the word 'father' cause he doesn't have a father. But certainly, the person that supplied the biological material that brought him into life. I wanted to make sure it wasn't a stranger. I had read both on the internet and in books about people who use unnamed or unknown donors, and I thought there would always be a sense of wonder when he was older. I wanted to be sure that the donors respected our decision that we were going to do this and would leave us alone. I did not want—I did not want anyone else to be a party to our parenting. I was looking for some biological material to ensure that Lynley and I could conceive a child that we would bring up.

Genevieve accesses old ideas about donor insemination that serve to maintain the privacy of the infertile man, construct him as the sole father and male parent of his donor conceived children and obscure the donor's identity (Daniels, 1998; Frith, 2001; Grace et al., 2008; McWhinnie, 2001). She describes herself as *looking for some biological material*; this instrumentalist, scientific discourse

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[139] Including some of the lesbian parented families in this study (and heterosexual, unmarried sole mothers who can be stigmatised for rearing children alone).

suggests sperm, as *biological material*, is simply a means to an end with the 'ingredients' objectified and commodified (Grace et al., 2008).[140] Implicit in her use of the term *biological material* is the assumption that sperm can be separated out from the man who produces it—he becomes depersonalised as a machine-like "producer of products" (Daniels, 1998, p. 78)—a necessary condition if he is to be discounted or obliterated as a donor, father or parent. These ideas are useful for Genevieve, because they enable her to plan and construct a family that positions her as one of only two parents, with the donor neither father nor *a party to* their parenting—paternally and parentally absent.

While Genevieve claims Henry *doesn't have a father*, her research, using the internet and books, informed her belief that it was important he eventually know *the person that supplied the biological material that brought him into life*. As a personally responsible parent, she did not want her son to experience *a sense of wonder* about his paternal origins in the future—the donor represented important biogenetic capital for him, rather than fathering capital. She therefore combines old ideas about donor irrelevance to families formed through donor insemination with newer, competing perspectives about possible donor relevance to—at least—their offspring. In this way she both negotiates and resists conventions as she draws boundaries around the family unit.

Genevieve's brother and several neighbours and friends were on the couple's short list of possible donors. Genevieve's brother was quickly discounted as a donor both because he was *too close* and because he did not have a child of his own. Believing this might generate an unacceptable level of interest in and concern for their child than would be the case if he had his own child to focus on, this was a risk they were unwilling to take. Their neighbours and some of their friends were also discounted as *too close*, as Genevieve explains:

> We had neighbours and friends within our own close environment, all of which had produced three choices locally. I know as a fact two of them

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[140] Daniels and Lewis (1996a) discuss commercial and non-commercial models of sperm donation suggesting that the commercialisation of sperm impacts on which men are recruited to provide sperm and the meanings subsequently given to sperm provision by the men, recipients, offspring and others.

would have had no problem whatsoever, but it was too close to home. They had their own children and it was incredible that these men would offer this as a gift to us, but I felt it was too close. You know? There would always be that interest in how the child was growing and always wanting to, perhaps, be a part of it.

Genevieve's view was informed by how she imagined she might respond, if she were a donor:

If I had been asked, if it had been possible, to donate sperm to another couple, I guess I would be constantly wanting to ensure that child attained the best. I would also be wanting to shower that child with gifts and attention and see photos. I would want to be a part of it. I guess that scared me a little; by doing it with people I knew that were so close that perhaps there would be interference later on.

Other friends remained on the short list as possible donors, however. Notwithstanding Genevieve's apprehension about the potential for a friend-donor to interfere, an ongoing friendship with a donor remained an important criterion for her:

The other criteria was that they had to be—they had to be known to Lynley and I well enough as friends, that they could continue to be our friends. Okay? They could continue to be a part of our lives and a part of our child's life, without any parental role. Without any inside—you know, without expecting anything in return.

This criterion presented a dilemma. A donor who was also a friend was important because of the biogenetic capital he represented, which could be readily accessed through his continuing role in the women's lives, and by extension, the life of their child. Yet his closeness would need to be managed if unrealistic expectations or intrusion, on his part, into the central parent-parent and parent-child relationships were to be avoided.

In time, Genevieve and Lynley approached Pascal and Shamus, with whom they had a long-standing friendship, asking if they would jointly share sperm

provision for them.[141] The men, who had been together for about 10 years when they were interviewed, agreed.[142] The women planned to mix their sperm. They deliberately chose this strategy because it would disperse or dilute individual claims of the men to fatherhood/parenthood by creating uncertainty about paternity in the short term. This suited their intention to be the only parents of their child, while simultaneously accounting for his right to information about paternal origins in the long term, something they considered important.[143] While an innovative strategy that secured both men's investment in the reproductive arrangements, this approach by the women provides another example of the ways in which they utilised old ideas about donor insemination that served to protect the privacy of the infertile man. Pre-existing conventions for heterosexual couples include pooling the sperm of several donors to preserve donor anonymity and create ambiguity about biogenetic paternity (Finegold, 1964), a practice previously documented in New Zealand (see for example, MCART, 1994; Watkin, 1998). This practice later began to appear in accounts of lesbian self-insemination practices, particularly in the 1970s, when obscuring biogenetic paternity was important because lesbians were losing custody of their children (Dempsey, 2004; Pies, 1988; Weston, 1991). Incorporating a radical feminist critique of the patriarchal nuclear family form (Dempsey, 2004), this practice amongst lesbians no longer makes the same sense given DNA paternity tests are widely understood to provide conclusive proof of biogenetic fatherhood (Luce, 2010).

Genevieve uses her narrative to construct Pascal and Shamus as the right donors for them:

> We had definitely together decided they were the two. It was convenient, it was easy, they were nice people. You couldn't want better biological

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[141] Genevieve and Lynley were the only couple in this study that sought out two men to jointly donate.

[142] The men were interviewed separately to Genevieve several months after my interview with her, because the two sets of couples live in geographically distant locations from one another.

[143] Berkowitz and Marsiglio (2007) provide an example of a gay couple who mixed their sperm prior to the insemination of the woman who was to carry their child. Rather than a strategy that dispersed or diluted their individual claims to fatherhood/parenthood, the men asserted each was therefore the father of one of the resulting twins, which illustrates both the investment they made and the ways procreative meanings emerge from a social, interpretative process.

material, speaking of intellect and looks. They were—you know they weren't on medication, their family hadn't been on medication. They were—they were very artistic and dramatic—an interesting person on one [hand] and a very academic, studious, hard-working person on the other. Both physically fit, both well traveled. Both were really nice guys. And you know, both of them had been known to both of us for ten years.

While potentially risky as part of Genevieve and Lynley's friendship network, a range of mitigating factors proved persuasive in convincing them that Pascal and Shamus were *the two*, including preparedness for their sperm to be mixed and convenience. As *really nice guys* that the women knew well and who also happened to be smart, good-looking and healthy, the men were useful to their family-making as suitable sources of the *biological material* Genevieve referred to in earlier extracts. Thus Genevieve skillfully uses available resources—two friends, who together represented the best biogenetic material she had to hand—to build family, making choices between a range of competing factors and weighing the risks of each.

Pascal and Shamus recollected what was significant about the women's plans from their perspective:

> Pascal: They approached us with their plan and called the shots. I guess I was kind of over the moon because I knew what they had wanted to do earlier; they'd talked about it. I was eager and willing … We sort of ploughed into it. I think Genevieve wanted to have, had suggested some documentation, a contract or whatever.
>
> Shamus: Mm.
>
> Pascal: But she also said that Lynley didn't want that. It was always going to be Lynley who was having the child. We just went along with, "Whatever you want." They hashed out the plan. I'm not sure if you're aware that we both acted as donors.
>
> Nicola: They did tell me that.
>
> Pascal: They wanted that. For me that appealed, because I wanted Shamus to be—I liked the idea of him being as involved as possible. I thought that it would be quite clear who was the par[ent]—the bio[logical]—the donor, but he was less keen, but it involved us both. We weren't like flipping a coin, or whatever. So that concept appealed to us.
>
> Nicola: Did you not have a particular need to be a father, Shamus?
>
> Shamus: Pascal has got a much stronger parent drive.
>
> Nicola: You weren't programmed like he was!

Shamus: Not particularly. I think it's a really nice thing to do [donate sperm] but it's not something that I *had* to do.

Nicola: So that was quite a difference between you. But you were happy enough to come on board?

Shamus: Yes, yes. I liked the situation where we actually knew the other people involved and were good friends with them. I felt quite comfortable with that. With people I didn't know, I think it'd be—I'd have a bit more difficulty with it. So, no, I don't have the same sort of drive. It's a really neat thing to be able to do but it's not something I had to do.

Pascal points out he and Shamus *ploughed into* sperm donation for Genevieve and Lynley. The women had been the ones that *called the shots* and *hashed out the plan*, not them, with Lynley utilising her privileged status as intending birth mother to put paid to Genevieve's preference for a contract—an example of the ways women who are birth mothers, and women who are not, can be differently positioned in their negotiations with known donors. Pascal, who was *over the moon* and *eager and willing*, appears more invested than Shamus, who he wanted to become *as involved as possible*, and who observed that while donating sperm was *a really nice thing to do*, particularly for friends, it was not something he *had to do*. Pascal, he thought, had a *much stronger parent drive*. Pascal's *drive* may have meant he haboured particular hopes for, or assumptions about, he and Shamus' donor-mother/parent relationships and donor-child relationships and roles in the family the women were creating, which appeared to be at odds with the women's expectation that the men remain uninvolved in their capacity as donors. Arguably, this is highlighted through his self-corrected reference to *the par[ent]—the bio[logical]—the donor*, which also suggests he understood the terms for their joint sperm donation. As mentioned in Chapter 4, disparities sometimes exist between the expectations of lesbian couples and gay donors, in relation to donor-child relationships and roles. This is frequently the case, despite agreements between all parties on this matter prior to the conception and birth of children (Dempsey, 2004, 2005a, 2012a; Riggs, 2008a, 2008b; Scholz & Riggs, 2013). Both men—but particularly Pascal—had little time to reflect on potential disparities in expectations however, because home-based inseminations began a month after the women had first broached sperm donation with them.

Genevieve, who believed that "there'd be no problem whatsoever conceiving", was proved correct, when Lynley became pregnant with Henry on the fourth insemination. Rather than mixing the men's sperm contributions as she had for previous inseminations, on this particular occasion Genevieve *double hit*:

> Genevieve: What we did was we did it twice. On that very last occasion, one of the gentlemen was out for the night. We decided that we would double hit. So we used one sperm sample that night and the next morning we used another. So they weren't mixed but there were two.
>
> Nicola: So there was still no way of knowing which sample worked.
>
> Genevieve: That was fine; still no real way of knowing. The reason—I remember Pascal had decided that sometimes, you know, there's fast sperm and slow sperm and that perhaps there's some kind of enzyme that is competing. I think he was discouraged that we already weren't pregnant after time one or two and he really wanted us to consider trying separately.… But the next thing—we had a sample from his partner in the morning so I made sure that there were two inseminations. My goodness, that was all go.

Genevieve's reference to the men's sperm as *sperm sample[s]* continues to invoke the instrumentalist, scientific discourse underlying her narrative; their sperm are just specimens to be alternated in a successful experiment that only one of them will 'win.' In alternating the sperm used on this occasion, she also continues to access old ideas about donor insemination premised on safeguarding the infertile man's privacy as resources for her stories. Doctors once advised heterosexual couples using donor insemination to have sexual intercourse following inseminations. This practice created the possibility the male partner could be the biogenetic father of any resulting child through generating uncertainty about paternity (Grace et al., 2008; Hayden, 1995; Snowden & Mitchell, 1981). Inseminating with an infertile man's low-count sperm or "worthless semen" (Finegold, 1964, p. 50), combined with a donor's high-count sperm, is another existing convention that was also used to create the same possibility.[144] By the early 1980s, Snowden et al. (1983) recommended this

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[144] This convention was important in a context where donor conceived children could be declared illegitimate and branded a bastard by the court. Combining sperm in this case prevented courts from determining whether or not the donor was a child's father and provided

practice be discouraged, because it introduces "social confusion and self-deception" (p. 171).

Pascal and Shamus' joint participation in Henry's conception was made in the context of their pre-existing interpersonal relationships with the women—in this case, a long standing friendship, rather than given kin relationships, as was the case for Curtis and Rory. Understood by both sets of couples as non-kin prior to the question of sperm donation arising, introducing sperm donation into the equation heightened other possibilities for relationships and roles that particular kinds of friends, friendships and kinship categories afforded. Henry's birth brought these possibilities into sharp relief as each of the adults experienced for the first time what it meant to bring a child into the world—a child whose existence was made feasible because of the men's willingness to jointly provide the necessary sperm, but who was only biogenetically connected to one of those men, with the identity of that man not formally established.[145] Mindful that this man now had a particular connection to her son that she herself could never claim, which, if established, could threaten her social motherhood/parenthood, Genevieve worked to limit 'excess kinship' (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014) by reinforcing the couples' mutual and previously taken-for-granted non-kin status, intending that this status continue unchallenged into the future.[146] As noted earlier, neither she nor Lynley considered sperm donation a relational basis for family membership, fatherhood or parenthood; Pascal and Shamus, from the women's perspective, were to remain outside kinship, as friends who are *just* friends, rather than the kinds of friends who are chosen kin—friends who are family or like family.[147]

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some measure of legality to the procedure given it was illegal to list a man who was not the biogenetic father of his child on the birth certificate (Finegold, 1964).

[145] Once Henry was born, conjecture about the identity of his 'real' father began based on his perceived likeness to one of the men. Genevieve, Lynley, Pascal, Shamus, and some of the men's friends, all engaged in such speculation.

[146] With paternity not formally established, Genevieve was the only adult, of the four adults, known to have no biogenetic connection to Henry.

[147] For some study participants, friends who were also sperm donors *were* chosen kin/family, indicative of the increased flexibility built into the ways family connections are organised and the consequences of this for relationships that may otherwise have been understood as non-family (G. Allan, 2008). For example, Nina said: "We chose Sean for that reason. He was family. But he

Continuing again to invoke an instrumentalist, scientific discourse in her story, with sperm a means to an end, separate from its producer, Genevieve recalled making this distinction clear to the men in negotiation with them:

> We talked about the expectations that we had ... In fact I spelt it out: that by giving us sperm, they were giving us sperm only. That in no way, shape or form could we ever offer them a title of father and they were never going to be parents. They would be continued in our family to be seen as family friends, close family friends. Which is fine. We would continue that friendship. That if either of them split up that wouldn't in any way change how we felt about either of them—that that's their business to go separate ways but we would be in contact with both of them anyway, as we would. That in no way did we want financial support and no way were they ever going to have input: choice of school or in anything at all. I was quite adamant that there were no visiting rights, that there was no access. That we lived far enough away that we would continue to see them as friends, and at that stage we probably saw them maybe three or four times a year. We'd go and stay. We'd have great times.

Genevieve uses her narrative to construct Pascal and Shamus in this passage (and elsewhere in her interview) as *family* friends, potentially implying a willingness to count them as chosen kin. Immediately after using this term, she refers to them as *close family friends*. Her use of this more intimate term presumably acknowledges the simultaneous biogenetic and social relatedness one of the men has to Henry, much as Lydia and Roslyn and Abigail and Victoria constituted Curtis and Rory's dual relatedness as 'special.' However, this was not a term she returned to. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the status of family friends, conferred as a result of a long-term peer relationship between a friend of one or both of the parents of a child, is arguably an example of friends who could be considered family or like family.

At the same time, Genevieve expected the men would continue in their original role as *just* friends, a status she utilised much more frequently in the interview and one that precludes any movement towards kinship. The couple's friendship

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wasn't like immediate family, a blood relative.... We liked the fact that you [Sean] weren't a blood relative but that you were in the family.... You were family." And Sonia commented: "I also have a 'gay family' who are even closer in a different way, than my 'family family'.... Take Bryson, who I'm going to have the kids with, he's been my best friend eight years now." She later added: "Bryson is family to me in the most amazing way.... He's more than a best friend."

with the men was to continue unaltered by the their joint provision of sperm, not unlike the way Lydia and Roslyn, and Abigail and Victoria, expected relationships with Curtis and Rory to reflect a continuation of the kinds of relationships that would apply if their children were the couples' joint biogenetic offspring. This expectation is further stressed through her refusal of any *input* from the men, which could be construed as familial, paternal or parental.

Pascal however, understood he and Shamus would be considered extended family:

> Genevieve had said, "You would be considered extended family."
>
> I thought that we'd be extended family, a little bit like grandparents. I thought there was space for that…. I thought there was like a big space, for another couple of uncles and that grandparent thing where we would like to go to the birthday, or something.

These extracts speak to the possibility of Pascal and Shamus moving inside kinship by becoming chosen kin—in Pascal's words, extended family—rather than remaining outside kinship as non-kin, friends who are *just* friends. Drawing from a model of traditional family in his narrative, Pascal saw possibilities for, imagined and arguably expected this shift as a 'natural' extension of a long-term friendship, which would be irrevocably altered by the provision of sperm. He knew he would never be a parent, a point reiterated several times during the interview, but from his perspective, this did not automatically prevent a relationship and role with Henry similar to that of an uncle or grandparent. Pascal's use of 'uncle' possibly suggests awareness that this is a relatively common role for known donors who provide sperm for lesbian couples.

While the men continued to value their friendship with the women and the regular opportunities this provided for them to spend time with Henry when visiting in one another's homes, and vice versa, Genevieve and Pascal's divergent understandings of alternative possibilities to the conditions imposed by Genevieve, had nevertheless created some ongoing tension between the two sets of couples in the years since the boy's birth. By and large, this tension was eased through the men's amicable accommodation of the women's family practices. All

four adults perceived the potential sperm provision created for highly suffused relationships—relationships that could, in theory, allow for non-kin/kin boundaries to change and soften in response to shifting modes of relating and concomitant obligations (Pahl & Spencer, 2004). Although the adults may remain non-kin going forward, they accepted Henry would direct relationships between himself, and the men, in the future; he could, feasibly, choose them as *his* kin and possibly even his fathers. Other studies of lesbian couples who used known donors found children developed increasing agency in constructing their own kin as they got older (see for example, Goldberg & Allen, 2013; Goldberg & Scheib, 2016). United on this point, they intended to take their direction from him in the years ahead.

Genevieve and Lynley's family narrative emphasises the importance of 'proper' families for children. It also emphasises the ways in which Genevieve, as a non-birth mother, works to give prominence to her position in negotiation with the couple's donors by drawing firm boundaries around the nuclear family unit through particular rituals and symbols and old ideas about donor insemination. Notwithstanding these boundaries, Genevieve recognised they could potentially shift in the future. As Dempsey (2004) observes, "Flexibility, good will and a propensity to accept the inevitability of some degree of change and uncertainty may well prove increasingly crucial in the future arena of establishing kinship to children within lesbian and gay communities" (p. 100).

This chapter has provided an in depth and storied account of three family narratives. In the final section of the chapter, I discuss the significance of these narratives in terms of their crosscutting themes and relationship to core thesis arguments.

Concluding discussion

As discussed in Chapter 2, the neoliberal agenda of personal responsibility requires individuals to make future-orientated predictions about the likely ramifications of particular choices (Weeks, 2007). The lesbian couples in this chapter use their family narratives to convey some of the predictions they made about the repercussions of their choices in the matter of a donor. The couples'

stories suggest they consciously calculated and made rational decisions about the possible benefits of a known donor for children (access to a father and/or information about paternal origins safeguards ontological security) versus the potential risks that a known donor might pose to core couple parenting relationships (he could interfere in parenting relationships and undermine the non-birth mother's parental identity). In seeking to balance personal responsibility, choice and risk the couples steered a middle course, choosing known donors who were prepared to be available as a source of information about paternal origins at the couples' discretion. As previously mentioned, this choice reflects the choices couples have made in other studies (see for example, those who chose known donors on this basis in Dempsey, 2005b; Hayman et al., 2014; Luce, 2010; McNair et al., 2002; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Surtees, 2011).

In steering a middle course, the couples sought to safeguard their future children's ontological security, at the same time as protecting their future parenting relationships and the parental identity of the non-birth mothers, by transforming paternity into a hybrid relationship. In this way, they are innovative (in conformity and through constraint). Following Sullivan (2004), they planned to or did build flexibility into anticipated or actual donor-child relationships. Applying Sullivan's analysis, their children would know the donors were related to them, but that they would not be expected to relate to them as 'dad.' At some point, the children would also know that they did have a father and that as a flexibly defined male adult with a legitimate place in their social networks, they could pursue a relationship with him on their terms (rather than their parents' terms), both as they matured and as their knowledge about their family form matured.

The couples' first preference in donor type may have been an anonymous donor. Given this option was no longer available at the point they were ready to begin their families, they could have chosen the closest alternative, a knowable donor (Lydia and Roslyn initially intended to use a knowable donor, but were discouraged by the waiting list). A knowable donor would have guaranteed protection of the parenting relationship and the parental identity of the non-

birth mother, something that was particularly important to Victoria and Genevieve. The couples accepted that, while there were constraints on forming a family in the way they might ideally prefer, this was an acceptable sacrifice for the sake of their future children. The ability for their children to know their donors in particular ways (uncles/friends) was more crucial than concerns about the potential for donor interference, which could be managed by containing the donors in order that they remain unknowable in other ways (fathers/parents), at least initially. The couples' closed family boundaries position the donors as supplementary or subordinate to them.

The couples' stories suggest they understood that doing anything other than the responsible thing in the matter of a donor would be irresponsible. The couples use their narratives to actively construct certain sorts of personally responsible selves and identities, accomplishing these selves and identities in relationship to one another. They are responsibilised sexual citizens, normal lesbians and good couples/parents[148] who take their future or actual children's needs into account. At the same time, they accept that the consequences for their children of the deliberate choice to create two-mother models of family will be theirs alone to bear.

As outlined in Chapter 2, responsibilised sexual citizens, normal lesbians and good couples/parents are self-regulating subjects who have internalised particular norms as a result of homonormative processes of normalisation. The neoliberal governance of such citizens, identities and relationships plays out through the internalisation of these norms. It also plays out through liberal legislation, the result of an equal rights politics shaped by neoliberalism (D'Emilio, 2000; Richardson, 2004; Richardson & Seidman, 2002; Seidman, 2002). In particular, this legislation encourages and produces good couples/parents (Garwood, 2016). The couples' stories suggest they have internalised the norms underpinning public narratives about romantic love, the couple relationship and co-residential coupled parenthood as the appropriate

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[148] Technically, Lydia and Roslyn and Abigail and Victoria were not yet parents at the time of their interviews. In their narratives, they therefore project their *imagined* parenting selves and identities, a distinction not generally made in this discussion.

context for childrearing—'first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in the baby carriage.'[149] As good couples/parents, the couples therefore followed the normative life course cycle, entering civil unions prior to attempting to or actually conceiving children. Garwood (2016) claims that same-sex relational recognition (such as civil unions and marriage) and same-sex reproductive law are vehicles for normalising processes, ideas first introduced in Chapter 2. She links the privileged status of marriage within same-sex reproductive law to the ways this law upholds traditional ideas about how families should be formed within neoliberal contexts. As good couples/parents, Lydia and Roslyn and Abigail and Victoria intend to utilise the law to secure Roslyn and Victoria's legal parental status, something Genevieve had already secured. Illustrative of the tension between empowerment and curtailment in family-building activities, these interconnected forms of adult-adult and adult-child relational recognition can contribute to a sense of empowerment through feelings of autonomy and legitimacy in an area where previously there was none. While an achievement, such forms of relational recognition have their own constraining regulatory effects. As Cloughessy (2010) points out, this kind of legislative change allows couples to reproduce the security of conventional family and parenting structures that sustain heteronormativity. Lesbian parented families that mirror traditional heterosexual parented families are rewarded for heteronormative compliance, but other forms of lesbian parented families are not (see also, Garwood, 2016; Santos, 2013).

Furthermore, as good couples/parents, the couples' internalisation of the norms underpinning the kinds of public narratives mentioned above see them conscientiously work to construct normative childhoods for their children. The legitimacy of their families is contingent on the degree to which they safeguard their children's assumed right to such childhoods (Chapman & Saltmarsh, 2013). Genevieve's comment: *We wanted, as the two parents, to bring a sense of normality as well—that we weren't three people bringing up a child or two households bringing up a child* is instructive. In her and Lynley's case, this

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[149] Part of the words to an old playground song children sing when a boy and a girl like each other.

'normality' extended to a model of one major income earner and a primary caregiver biological mother.

Holstein and Gubrium (2000) state that narrative constructions of selves and identities "are conditioned by working senses of *what we should be* at particular times and places" (p. 3, my emphasis). The couples in this chapter narratively construct personally responsible selves and identities conditioned by a working sense of who they ought to be in this time and place, a time and place marked by homonormativity politics situated within a neoliberal landscape. That is to say, they are good couples/parents—parents who account for their children's needs; parents who accept that the repercussions for their children of the decision to form dual-mother families rests with them; parents who not only embrace the normative life course cycle for themselves, but who also embrace normative childhoods for their children.

The stories of the couples in this chapter, like those in the last chapter, draw attention to some of the ways planned or actual family and parenting practices are framed by heterosexual kinship traditions. The kinning strategies envisioned or employed by the couples typically utilised a series of conventional solutions prioritising couple-centred, two-parent co-residential families and the right of children to information about their paternal origins. These conventions are skillfully negotiated in some creative ways, illustrating the thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint). Underscoring the persistence of predominantly heterosexual understandings and practices in lesbian family formation, kinning strategies are borrowed from tropes already pioneered in adoption and fertility clinic politics and practices. As Schneider (1997) points out in relation to lesbian and gay kinship, lesbian and gay couples who form families: "Do not just go off on a toot in any which direction. They go off on a toot that is always (!) oriented toward or away from the hegemonic cultural discourse" (p. 273). In other words, their kinship narratives are developed and defined in relation to the normative status quo.

Chapter 7 is the final substantive chapter in this thesis. The stories of three sets of gay couples are the main focus of attention. One of the partners in each of the

gay couples plans to become or is already a known donor for lesbian couples. The gay couples, and in two cases the lesbian couples, use their couple and collective group stories to narratively construct the men as fathers *and* parents. Positioning known donors and their partners to the fore is a deliberate point of departure in this chapter that allows previously introduced kinship patterns to be revisited from their perspectives. As acknowledged in Chapter 3, there has been little research to date into gay known donors' thoughts about who they are in relation to expected or actual children with Dempsey's (2012a, 2012b) and Riggs' (2008a, 2008b) work, outlined in that chapter, important exceptions. In specifically addressing this area, this study makes a positive contribution to this knowledge gap. Following the established pattern, I contextualise the stories that follow with reference to relevant literature and interview material drawn from other familial configurations in this study.[150]

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[150] See Appendix 9 and 10 for participant biographies for these other familial configurations.

Chapter 7: Storying fatherhood as a project of the self: "We get to live that life, we get to be parents"

Introduction

The previous two chapters examined some of the ways lesbian couples construct themselves as mothers/parents while negotiating the place of known donors in their families. These couples were at different stages of imagining, planning for and doing family. Key actors in this process, they searched for and recruited particular sorts of donors who were useful to their family-making, positioning them in the lives of planned and actual children as fathers, uncles or friends. The donors were supplementary or subordinate actors in the drama set in motion by the conceiving lesbian couple.

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the narratives of three sets of gay couples.[151] It explores some of the ways in which these gay couples exercise agency and choice, through their stories about plans for or experiences of sperm provision for lesbian couples and what they do to construct themselves as fathers/parents. These stories draw on public narratives about the importance of involved fatherhood, in a context where discourses of new fatherhood are increasing but actual fathering practices lag behind (see for example, Doucet, 2007; Hearn, 2002; Wall & Arnold, 2007). These kinds of public narratives reflect the key points of the fatherlessness literature previously introduced; an uninvolved father—whether uncommitted or absent—is damaging to children (Ancona, 1999; Blankenhorn, 1995; Dennis & Erdos, 1993; Popenoe, 1996). They also reflect the wealth of literature over the past several decades that specifically highlights the perceived benefits of father involvement on cognitive, social and emotional developmental outcomes (see for example, Cox, Owen, Henderson, &

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[151] The narratives of these couples were selected for inclusion in this chapter to illustrate the different ways in which known donors and their partners planned to or were already fathering *and* parenting as part of multi-parent family forms. Including the narratives of those at the planning stage and those already fathering/parenting in this chapter enables attention to the complexities and nuances of particular fathering/parenting plans and practices, while allowing for comparisons between plans and what transpires in practice. The progression of narratives reflects the different stages the couples were at from planning to become fathers/parent, preparing for conception, and fathering/parenting a child.

Margand, 1992; Culp, Schadle, Robinson, & Culp, 2000; Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). This is an important step in the thesis, because understanding relational distinctions between what it means for a gay donor to be a father *and* a parent to children conceived by lesbian couples, in a context where both gay donors and recipients typically position donors as fathers only (if they are to be fathers at all), contributes to knowledge about possibilities for fathering/parenting identities and practices. The chapter argues that the narrative construction of fathering/parenting identities, and the fathering/parenting practices imagined or sustained, reconfigures notions of what it means to be a father/parent while simultaneously reinforcing traditional meanings. Resonating with the key thesis agendas of innovation, convention and constraint, this identity work also underscores the profoundly relational, interpretive and dynamic processes of family-making.

A central theme in this chapter is how prospective and established gay fathers/parents use available narrative resources and strategies to account for their anticipated or actual fathering/parenting identities and practices. One such resource is biogenetic relatedness; the chapter examines how prospective and established gay fathers/parents reflect on both the significance and insignificance of biogenetic ties and emotional interactive relationships in their stories.

The first two sets of gay couples are men who engage in determined efforts to become fathers/parents. Part of the relatively new trend in planned gay fatherhood/parenthood (Dempsey, 2013; Langdridge, 2013),[152] these men instigated the recruitment of lesbian couples who might be willing to participate in sperm donation and shared parenting arrangements with them, rather than vice versa. These kinds of arrangements provide a relatively accessible

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[152] Prior to this trend, gay men typically fathered children in the context of heterosexual relationships (Erera & Segal-Engelchin, 2014; Mallon, 2004; Schacher, Auerbach, & Silverstein, 2005). Tornello and Patterson's (2014) study of 739 gay fathers exploring generational changes in parenthood timing across North America, found most men over 50 years old had children while in heterosexual relationships, whereas most men under 50 years old had children in same-sex relationships. The older men who had sex with men, thus managed fatherhood and intimacy with men, via marriage and parenthood and relationships with men.

biogenetic pathway to gay fatherhood/parenthood in comparison to traditional or gestational surrogacy. They may also be easier to achieve than social pathways such as fostering and adoption, particularly given these pathways can be cost prohibitive and/or may not be legally available in some jurisdictions (Bos, 2010; N. Park et al., 2015; Tornello & Patterson, 2014).

While active in the matter of becoming fathers/parents, these two couples articulate a subordinate status in family-making processes relative to the women they either imagine collaborating with or actually collaborate with. This occurred as they projected ahead to possible sperm donation and shared parenting arrangements and/or in early negotiations of these arrangements. Similarly, the third gay couple articulated a subordinate status in relation to the women they cooperate with, both in initial negotiations and on a day-by-day basis following the birth of a child. In their case, acceptance of this status is unsurprising, given they had not made any attempt to engage in the kinds of determined efforts to become fathers/parents that were a hallmark of the previous two sets of couples' journeys towards fatherhood/parenthood. How men who actively plan to become fathers/parents or who become fathers/parents without any particular effort articulate their subordinate status is a significant theme of this chapter and one that is partially linked to a discourse of paternal choice. As previously noted, this discourse is strengthened by the broader neoliberal choice ethos first introduced in Chapter 2. The focus on the men's voices in the chapter adds a new dimension to parenting arrangements that were dominated by attention to women's voices in the previous two chapters. In those chapters the women—not the men—are to the fore in their articulation of the subordinate status of donors as fathers and/or parents, uncles or friends.

The family narratives of the first two sets of gay couples profiled in this chapter explore the deliberate separation of biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood and parenting in ways that suggest relationships with children can be flexible, negotiable and centred on practices of involvement rather than biogenetic relatedness. The couples anticipate a future as fathers/parents. In the multi-parent model of families they are planning, intimate couple relationships will

exist alongside reproductive relationships and will include one biogenetic father/parent, one social father/parent, one biogenetic mother/parent, one social mother/parent and one or more children. The biogenetic father and mother of the children born into these configurations will not be bound by traditional conjugal relationships, while both the social father and mother's doing of parenting will challenge the primacy of biogenetic bonds.[153] As Donovan (2000) observes:

> This unique way of creating family allows for an exploration of parenting that is not complicated by a sexually intimate relationship between the women and men involved. Instead, a distinction is made between biological relationships on the one hand and the 'doing' of parenting on the other. (p. 150)

In articulating an ideal of parenting that is not transposed on or complicated by such a relationship, the couples' reflection on novel family forms draws attention to opportunities for reconceptualising and expanding options for family and parenting of relevance to everyone, not just those who identify as gay or lesbian. The couples' articulation of this ideal also illustrates some of the anticipated or actual challenges of moving from ideals to practices.

The first couple, unbeknown to them at the time of their interview, was nearing the end of a lengthy online search for a lesbian couple prepared to enter a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement with them. While the men were waiting for the profile they had posted about themselves as potential co-parents on several gay and lesbian social networking sites to generate interest from lesbians couples willing to co-parent, they had responded to, and were waiting to hear from one such couple, whose profile had drawn their attention. Idealism and reflexivity are central to the men's narrative. Their story shows the details of the neoliberal context they operate within, which shapes their planned negotiation of fathering/parenting with prospective mothers/parents. As two self maximising individuals who are engaged in a reflexive project of the self (Giddens, 1991), they bring particular subjectivities (gay, intellectual, liberal and

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[153] As can other examples of social parenting such as those that occur through practices of adoption and fostering.

capitalist subjectivities) and a social conscience to negotiation, positioning themselves as agentic and privileged subjects, despite constraints on possibilities for fathering/parenting. The exercise of agency is not as determining of personal life as theory might suggest (Heaphy & Davies, 2012); while the men showed some awareness of this in their anticipation of constraints on their preferred vision for fathering/parenting, they were yet to experience any insurmountable challenges to their idealism.

The second couple was several steps ahead of the first. They had also posted a profile about themselves as potential donors who were interested in becoming fathers/parents online. This had culminated in a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement with a lesbian couple. Having almost reached the goal of 12 samples of sperm banked and quarantined with a fertility service provider, they were within three months of a first insemination attempt when interviewed. Relative to the first couple, this couple's idealism—which continues to reflect the details of the neoliberal context—was tempered by practical constraints on possibilities for fathering/parenting. Suboptimal fertility proved a formidable (but not insuperable) obstacle for the man who had originally intended to become the biogenetic father/parent. This unexpected discovery subsequently impacted negotiations with the women about which of the men should pursue biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood, and which social fatherhood/parenthood, as the other's partner.

The third couple profiled in this chapter had already become fathers/parents. One of the men became a biogenetic father/parent through provision of sperm to a lesbian couple. The other man became a social father/parent as an unexpected outcome of his relationship with his partner. The conferral of this man's social fatherhood/parenthood occurred slowly in response to both sets of couples' reformulation of previously held conceptions of family and adult-child relationships and roles across time, experience and involvement. The men's retrospective stories of the multi-parent, cross-residential model of family that subsequently evolved draws attention to the shifting meanings they give to fatherhood/parenthood and biogenetic and social forms of relatedness. Possibilities for men to engage in practices of mothering that make visible the

separation of the doing of mothering from gendered assumptions about parenting are also explored through their narrative.

I begin with Kole and Fraser's narrative. Their story illustrates the gap between idealism in imagining future innovative families and the biogenetic and social constraints of enacting them.

Kole and Fraser

When Fraser was growing up in a conservative, communist country in Eastern Europe, he imagined he would be a father one day. Picturing himself as "the best dad in the world", Fraser's story highlighted his later struggle to accept he was gay because he associated this with the loss of his childhood dream. He said, "That was really hard for me—I thought if I'm gay, I can't have kids." As Stacey (2006) points out, "Heterosexual 'situations' lead most straight men to paternity, while homosexual 'situations' lead a majority of gay men to childlessness" (p. 27).

While still in his early twenties Fraser coupled up with Kole, a same-age peer. Kole was raised in a similarly conservative communist society. Around this period, he came to the conclusion he would like to be a father too. At the time, neither of the men had reconciled or integrated what it might mean to identify as 'gay' and 'father.' Like the cohorts of gay men in earlier studies, they assumed these identities were fundamentally incompatible (Mallon, 2004; Schacher et al., 2005).

Reluctant to relinquish prospective fatherhood, the couple's 'procreative consciousness' (Berkowitz & Marsiglio, 2007) evolved over the next decade as they began to access stories about gay fathers previously unavailable to them in the politically conservative contexts in which they were situated prior to their move to New Zealand. These stories shaped their sense of what might be possible. Kole observed:

> I just hadn't heard of anyone being openly gay and having kids until about 10 years ago or so when the first news came from the U.S: Los Angeles and New York. And then I started to realise that it's possible, somehow.

Realising they could become fathers had a significant impact on the men, who valued the opportunities life in their adopted country promised in this regard. As Fraser said, "It's just amazing that we moved here…. and that we can hope to have kids." Their articulation of a number of political freedoms, including the freedom to *have kids*, was a strong theme in their interview. It illustrates the ways in which the broader social, cultural and political neoliberal context shapes gay and lesbian couples' sense of what is possible.

Kole and Fraser were initially drawn to adoption. Fraser thought that providing a home for a child in need "would help to create some kind of balance." They developed reservations about this option over time. Using what they had learned through their reading of the adoption literature, they subsequently went on to discount surrogacy as an option too:

> Fraser: Surrogacy sounded so safe and legally backed up.
>
> Kole: You know, the gestational surrogate. With a surrogate it's like, no one can take away the kid. It's yours…. It's like, bullet proof. But then, um, I started to read about the topic, mostly about adoption. And it's always a big issue for the kid. The missing parent is a huge issue. And it's like they're fantasising about it and idolising the missing parent and you know—if I'm strict—I don't know, do something that he or she doesn't like…
>
> Fraser: Then oh yeah, "My missing parent…"
>
> Kole: "My mother would do otherwise!" Or—it's like a grief. And it's extra baggage for the kid.
>
> Fraser: Even though in the first couple of years he or she wouldn't realise that something is missing, but after a couple of years it would just kick in.

Kole and Fraser access old adoption 'ghost stories' of loss, grief and fantasy about missing people in their decision-making narrative. The ghosts in these stories are "for the most part … 'as if' dead, unlike respectable ghosts, who are unambiguously dead" (Lifton, 2010, p. 71). The specter of the birth parents/surrogate mother, invoked at particular moments by the adopted child/surrogate child, are arguably invoked in the same way as the 'shadowy figure' of the unknown sperm donor by the child resulting from his donation (Burr, 2009; Grace et al., 2008). Both specter and shadowy figure represent an ongoing absent presence in the life of the family, ideas discussed in the last

chapter. Underlying the *big issue* of *the missing parent* and associated *extra baggage* are right to know-based arguments—a child's right to know the identities of those who provided the gametes used in conception is understood by the men to be in his or her best interests. Consistent with the gay known donors in Riggs' (2008a, 2008b) research introduced in Chapter 3, such arguments and understandings provide a context for reproductive decision-making and negotiation.

The men's rejection of adoption and surrogacy also engages with and negotiates old ideas about a child's right to opposite sex parents. Participating in a multi-parent model of family that included a lesbian couple became attractive to Kole and Fraser as a result of their research. This model of family would exclude parental 'ghosts' and encompass intimate couple relationships, reproductive relationships, biogenetic and social fathers/parents and biogenetic and social mothers/parents. Fraser elaborated:

> We just like this option because it would give our kids mothers and fathers, so they don't grow up feeling that they've already lost something. Maybe it is—it sounds sometimes naïve or idealistic, when I think about it…. That would be like the most perfect option, to team up with a lesbian couple.

Conventional wisdom assumes opposite sex parents are necessary for a child's wellbeing and optimal development (Clark, 2001). This assumption is reinforced by post-divorce and separation practices, where importance is given to maintaining parent-child relationships and equal contact, even where children have been primarily cared for by their mothers pre divorce (Dempsey, 2004; Smart & Neale, 1999). Kole and Fraser use their narrative to construct themselves as personally responsible intending fathers/parents to be, eager to shield their future children from the feelings of loss that could arise if they failed to secure them with continuing contact with both female and male parents.

Kole and Fraser's position appears to reflect the concerns they hold for their imagined children rather than concerns about being judged by others as unfit parents. Men are often assumed to be less competent in the primary care of children (Cosson & Graham, 2012; Doucet, 2009; Shirani, Henwood, & Coltart,

2012), yet at no time in their interview did these men imply they might be ill-equipped for this work.[154] On the contrary, they were looking forward to engaging in caregiving practices typically associated with mothering as elaborated later in their narrative. Gay men, in particular, are often seen as unable to provide adequate gender socialisation of children (Clark, 2001; Goldberg, 2012) and/or their sexual orientation may be assumed to adversely affect or even corrupt them (Goldberg & Allen, 2007; Hicks, 2006a). While Kole and Fraser do not overtly subscribe to these heteronormative arguments, their stories illustrate some of the ways they strategise as personally responsible intending fathers/parents, to deflect any possible criticism on these or other grounds through collaboration with female parents.

A multi-parent model of family was also attractive for Kole and Fraser because it would allow whichever one of them acted as the donor to have a biogenetic link to the child:[155]

> Fraser: It would be great if we were to have like a genetic link.
>
> Kole: Like really biological—we would like to be biological fathers. Well at least first. I think it doesn't matter after you bond with your kid. It can be not related to you and you don't care. But, at the moment, I feel I would like to be biologically related.
>
> Nicola: That was one of the questions I wanted to ask—how you felt about those biological connections, whether they're important. It sounds like they are.
>
> Fraser: Yes. They are, they are. The biological link is not as important to me but obviously I wouldn't mind if there was some genetic relation. Also, I would be very happy if Kole were the donor. He would be the biological father. It would be a different experience to raise a child with his genes, rather than a complete stranger's.
>
> Kole: It just feels different at the moment. But you know, probably it doesn't make any difference.

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[154] Sean considered himself ill-equipped. Reflecting on the occasions he was asked to care for his children by Nina and Ellen, he said: "It is an easier job now that they … don't need mums the same. I mean when they were small their needs were different and I wasn't really trained for it, you know? I don't think men are. I don't think they're built to be looking after little tiny things. But once they get to this sort of age now, where they don't need mum the same … they form a relationship with their dad."

[155] This would also have been the case in a surrogacy arrangement assuming one of them provided the sperm. However, this option did not allow for both female and male parents. Surrogates are not typically available as female parents, only as gestational parents.

Fraser: Yeah—if I think about it, it doesn't matter. If you raised that child it's yours. You can have good genes or bad genes and anything can turn out at the end even if it's your genes or not.

Kole: It's not because of the genes. I just think it could give some kind of extra connection. I don't know. I have no idea!

In their narrative, both men make contradictory statements about the significance of biogenetic relatedness. Ultimately, they accept biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood is not as important as a potential social relationship to a child they might parent. They argue that biology *doesn't matter* because, *if you raised that child it's yours*. Only one of the men will donate sperm. Given the other has no option but to take up social fatherhood/parenthood, the idea that there are alternative relational bases for fathering/parenting is clearly useful for them, because it validates social possibilities for fatherhood/parenthood. Dempsey (2005a) points out, "For two men intending to co-parent, there is no dominant cultural expectation, such as exists for lesbian couples, that the biological relatedness of one of the partners is a natural basis for a child's primary care" (p. 229).

Having committed in principle to a multi-parent family, Kole and Fraser instigated an online search for a lesbian couple prepared to enter a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement with them by posting a profile about themselves, and their plans, on several gay and lesbian social networking sites. With reference to this form of networking—a take on singles social networking, where straight men and women seek out potential opposite sex partners for romantic, sexual relationships—Kole said, "It's like starting to date all over again but with a twist." Both he and Fraser found that this approach to becoming parents was challenging:

Fraser: We would really like to [physically] meet people.

Kole: Because you know, this is so—

Fraser: The internet—

Kole: The internet dating thing is just so—

Fraser: I wish there was somewhere we could go and just mingle with couples.

> Kole: It's [the internet] so misleading. It's frustrating.
>
> Fraser: If you have a profile on line, it can be misleading and confusing just like an advertisement.
>
> Kole: And it's so hard to, you know, to impress a lesbian couple! What are they looking for, you know?

Fraser and Kole must market themselves in the economy of the neoliberal reproductive arena in order *to impress a lesbian couple*, something they understand will be difficult to do. The ways the men self-maximise in this arena will shape what is possible and subsequently become an important resource in a context where many lesbian couples choose known donors for their biogenetic capital, rather than for their fathering or co-parenting capital (see for example, the couples who chose known donors in Dempsey, 2012a; Luce, 2010; Nordqvist, 2012b; Ripper, 2009).[156] Competing against other prospective donors for the attention of lesbian couples through their profile was a passive process for the men, open to misrepresentation and confusion.[157] While they waited for their profile to generate interest, they therefore took active steps to build family in other ways, including planning their civil union and adopting a shared last name as symbolic steps in this process. As outlined in some detail in Chapter 6, such symbolic steps are implicated in homonormative processes of normalisation. They were also messaging couples whose profiles they liked and were waiting for a response from one of these couples at the time of their interview.

At this point in the men's journey, they were ready to meet lesbian couples. Eager to begin actual co-parenting conversations, their research had clarified what was most important to them in a potential sperm donation and shared parenting agreement, in terms of interpersonal relationships. Fraser expected any couples they negotiated with would share their intellectual liberal

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[156] Or prefer unknown donors because they do not want to co-parent outside of their relationship or otherwise risk disruption to their families (see for example, Ben-Ari & Livni, 2006; Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Goldberg, 2006; Hayman et al., 2013).

[157] The gay couples in Goldberg's (2012) study who were adopting children sometimes deliberately marketed themselves to birth parents by showcasing their privileged lifestyles, including educational attainment and financial resources. The men understood this approach as a means of 'competing' against heterosexual couples in the adoption process while simultaneously 'compensating' for sexual orientation. Such approaches presumably are also relevant for those pursuing surrogacy.

subjectivities and worldviews, developed as a reaction to the politically conservative ideals of their countries of birth and more recent experience of political freedoms in New Zealand. He also expected they would share a "similar mindset" about "how we would raise a kid." While a "good connection" between the two sets of couples based on their commonalities was a possibility, he did not intend to leave this to chance but rather, expected to build and manage the couple-couple reproductive/parenting relationships in an ongoing way:

> Fraser: This is a relationship that needs to be built and managed.
>
> Kole: Based on trust.
>
> Fraser: Built on trust … we are not like the traditional couple. We have more options and we will have chosen to be in this family. There should be constant communication and consideration—what is best for the children. And if it came to that—that they [the lesbian couple] decided we are not—
>
> Kole: Going to be a part of this—[co-parenting]
>
> Fraser: Then something went wrong right at the beginning.

Fraser understands his non-traditional partnership with Kole as a valuable resource. Conventional relational scripts will not bind the family he anticipates fashioning with Kole and a lesbian couple; by transcending heteronormative family forms, *more options* will become available to them for doing family and parenting. His mobilisation of a discourse of families of choice in his narrative invokes Weston's (1991) families of choice thesis. Weston claims those who believe chosen families offer an authentic alternative to heteronormative family forms often unquestioningly accept ideologies representing such families as independent of social constraint. While there is greater freedom in late modernity to pattern relationships in more flexible ways as the men are clearly aware, this is inevitably constrained by institutionalised framings encompassing both the normative order and the social, cultural and economic location and circumstances of any one individual (G. Allan, 2008). Fraser is mindful that both sets of couples' should pattern their relationships on *what is best for the children*. This provides another example of the men's recourse to the dominant heteronormative best interests standard in their stories, which is arguably

abstract, arbitrary and subjective (Dempsey, 2004; Hollekim, Anderssen, & Andenæs, 2014).

Fraser and Kole's research had also clarified their preferences for actual co-parenting arrangements:

> Fraser: Let's start with the best-case scenario. It is really like a 50-50 [equal time split across the two sets of couples' homes]. Or, we were thinking another arrangement could include—
>
> Kole: Two kids.
>
> Fraser: Two kids: one for each of us. One at our place [fulltime], and one at their place [fulltime].
>
> Kole: Because we don't want to be just weekend dads.
>
> Fraser: No.
>
> Kole: That's not really enough. I think we cannot really be a part of the kid's life if we only see him on the weekends—that's like uncles. It's different.
>
> Nicola: It is different. You would be like the good time dads instead of dads who change nappies.
>
> Kole: The kid's everyday life and important decisions, we would not always be a part of because we'd just be there at the weekend. No—and I really would like to do the nasty parts: changing nappies, burping the baby. You know for a while!

While the men exercise agency in their pursuit of fatherhood/parenthood and aspire to a co-parenting arrangement with a lesbian couple based on an equal, cross home time split as a preferred option, the idealism imbuing this option is tempered by anticipated constraints on what might actually be possible. In recognising they may have to accept the levels of involvement the lesbian couple define, they articulate a subordinate status. As Fraser said, "It all depends on the other couple, what we can really arrange." For this reason, they had decided they were willing to accept becoming weekend dads/uncles for a *first kid* as a *test try*:

> Nicola: What if you meet a couple of women that you really like and you think, "Gosh, we'd love to parent with these women" but they are saying, "We are happy for you to be a part of big decisions but we want the children to live with us and you can have them weekends, holidays and maybe a night during the week."
>
> Kole: Well, we thought about this and it would be okay.

Fraser: Yeah, we would go for it.

Kole: For our first kid and then we'll see—because, why not? Why not? Why not make a lesbian couple happy by giving them a child?

Fraser: And we can be a part—

Kole: For a small amount. It'll be like a test try!

Nicola: A practice run!

Kole: Yes! It sounds bad.

Fraser: It's just that we really want to have that full experience of parenting. And the other thing is that, if you really work hard with the couple then later, the situation can maybe change—you never know.

Kole: Maybe they can let you more in to that.

Fraser: But we will go for our best option.

In these extracts, Kole and Fraser use their narrative to construct themselves as new fathers, drawing on discourses of participatory fatherhood and involved father divorce discourse as resources to make sense of possibilities for their co-parenting involvement. Becoming *weekend dads*—likened to being uncles in the first extract and to a *test try* in the last extract—is not consistent with their aspirations for parenthood – this relationship to the planned child is *not really enough*. They are aware that the relational statuses of weekend dads/uncles may not afford opportunities to *really be a part of the kid's life*, to help make *important decisions*, or to participate in the full range of caring practices, including *the nasty parts*—in other words, to engage in *that full experience of parenting*. Arguably, nappy changing—one of *the nasty parts*—is a symbol of involvement in the nitty gritty practical tasks of parenting a small child. Such practical tasks, typically synonymous with activities of mothering, are ones that men have been identified as avoiding. By seeking to embrace these kinds of tasks, Kole and Fraser construct themselves as different sorts of fathers/parents—potential mothering male parents—while distancing themselves from dominant hegemonic masculinities that frame fathering/parenting in conventional ways.[158] In their view, fathering/parenting relationships to children are understood as flexible, negotiable and centred on practices of involvement. Fatherhood/parenthood is

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[158] Ideas about men mothering are explored in depth in the last narrative in this chapter.

conferred through extensive involvement, not biogenetic relatedness, or some form of secondary role, which would only serve to reinforce their subordinate status. Extensive involvement would however, involve an unconsidered separation of the child from his or her other parents.

Just as divorcing or separating heterosexual men must start planning for fathering/parenting involvement in response to the dispersal of parenting across new households, Fraser and Kole must actively plan for their fathering/parenting involvement using what they know is sometimes the outcome for heterosexual men in the divorce or separation context—models of the weekend dad/uncle—to shape what they consider acceptable. Unlike divorcing/separating men, whose parenting relationships are sustained when an intimate relationship has broken down, resolving issues about how they will care for their child and where he or she will live will not be complicated in the same way (Donovan, 2000; Dunne, 2000; Rubin, 2009). A willingness to *work hard* at couple-couple relationships is nevertheless considered important, particularly in the absence of a shared history (Dunne, 2000; Riggs, 2008a; Vaccaro, 2010).

When parenting is dispersed across multiple homes, regardless of whether this is from the outset, as Kole and Fraser intended, or as the result of divorce or separation, potential exists for parents to have time when their children are not in their care. Kole and Fraser saw this as a distinct advantage of co-parenting. As Kole said: "That's the good thing about co-parenting. You can have a bit of a breather."[159] "Sharing the load", as Fraser put it, was an added benefit. For intentional multi-parent families, or divorce or separation generated extended multi-parent families, *sharing the load* might be reflected through increased resourcing such as multiple sources of support, multiple perspectives in problem solving and/or multiple incomes (Vaccaro, 2010). Such resourcing can lessen the

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[159] Having a break was a theme that resonated with other participants. Mason, a known donor and father to two-year-old Briony, who was primarily parented by her mothers Alice and Melanie, said he "gives the girls a break." Similarly, Guy, a social father to his partner Nate's two teenage children from a previous heterosexual relationship and to their much younger donor daughters, Moana and Marama, who were conceived with Nate's sperm in the context of the men's relationship, said that every week the girls' mothers, Ngaire and Mia, "knew they were going to get that break" when Moana was in their care. As Nate added: "I think the more adults the better. It's just easier for everybody, you know?"

overall impact of domestic and employment demands on any one family member (Dempsey, 2012a; Dunne, 2000; S. M. Park, 2009; Ryan-Flood, 2005).

Kole and Fraser further asserted that multi-parent families would advantage children, a perspective that emerged in the second and third family narratives in Chapter 5 where open family boundaries led to a diversity of relationships and practices. For Kole and Fraser, it was simple; the more co-parents, the more there would be to give to children:

> Fraser: It would be just great to co-parent with another couple and I think that we would give so much more. We would be able to give so much more to the kids together…. Four people can do so much more than two.
>
> Kole: And also, that's a benefit for the kids.
>
> Fraser: Four people mean that there is always going to be someone who will be around at any time when they [the kids] need it. It can go really well.

The men understood multi-parent families as a response to perceived flaws in the nuclear family form, a point that also emerged in Chapter 5:

> Kole: You cannot not be an inventor, in this kind of situation.
>
> Fraser: … I think in the long term it would be beneficial if there was a shift in society to build more flexible but also more stable family units, because obviously, it is not working too well, in some cases it's not working at all. There are heaps of divorces and heaps of kids who aren't in a stable environment. I think if people were more flexible and more open to different arrangements it would be beneficial for the children. For example, if people who have their own kids would adopt, to save a kid from something bad, that would also be part of that flexibility and not being hung up on biological relations or traditions.
>
> Kole: We will be part of this kind of new parenting thing, whether we want or not. I hope that these things will change anyway cause it's in the air. The whole marriage and traditional families is kind of failing.
>
> Fraser: We want to break out from these social binds and it would be a great thing to eventually redefine what a family is. Because a family is a group of people who care about each other, who are there when you need them. Most of us weren't lucky enough to experience this with his or her own family. But I believe that it can work. It just needs to be more flexible

and open; the more people, the better. Well, obviously not, but four is better than two I think.[160]

Kole's narrative construction of himself as *an inventor*, underscores the ways in which accounts of family-making and parenting *in this kind of situation* draws from the language of invention (Hicks, 2006b). "Cast adrift from the old verities embodied in tradition" (Weeks et al., 2001, p. 20), the men sense that they must invent their own relational and family/parenting guidelines and that this could potentially provide an alternative model for others. Paradoxically, they draw on established heteronormative conventions as resources in their stories about the kind of family they imagine inventing, including old ideas about the significance of opposite sex parents for children and those generated by adoption and divorce and separation politics and practices.

Fraser responds to Kole's comment by pointing out the benefits to children should a *shift in society* facilitate the building of *more flexible* and *stable family units* that are less reliant on old certainties, such as *biological relations*. Basing this suggestion on his perception that the institution of the family—and in particular the nuclear family form—is *not working too well*, he cites *heaps of divorces* to illustrate this point. He and Kole are united in a belief in the need for family to be redefined; Kole experienced family rupture when his parents divorced, possibly impacting on his reformulation of family/parent. In a context of intense transformations in intimate life, the nuclear family form is being re-evaluated. According to Roseneil and Budgeon (2004), "Individuals are being released from traditional heterosexual scripts and the patterns of heterorelationality which accompany them" (p. 141). Kole and Fraser consider that change is *in the air*; promising opportunities for family innovations while *break[ing] out from … social binds*. They define a family as *a group of people who care about each other*. This redefinition, consistent with Fraser's earlier mobilisation of a discourse of families of choice, privileges bonding over

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[160] When Logan, Fern and Emma were discussing their co-parenting arrangement similar sentiments were to the fore. Emma said, "I came to the conclusion when Giles was about two that three was the ideal number of parents." Logan responded, "Three is the minimum actually."

biogenetic connections, a conclusion the men drew in their discussion about biogenetic relatedness.

Kole and Fraser provided further comment on the theme of the failings of the nuclear family in their narrative, turning to already existing Polynesian and Māori cultural resources for inspiration:

> Nicola: It sounds like you are imagining that families could look different in society.
>
> Fraser: Yeah and it would be so much better for the children and the society.
>
> Nicola: I hope that in some small way this research project might show that there are other ways of creating families that are successful.
>
> Fraser: It would be interesting to—
>
> Kole: It is so narrow minded, this old, old—
>
> Fraser: Institution.
>
> Kole: Institution: the traditional family. You know, two married people of the opposite sex having children and raising them together in the same household and that is the mould that we want and we have to fit in it.
>
> Fraser: And obviously it's failing…. And we already have these kinds of different family units. It would be interesting to look at Pacific societies where they share the load and the children go to people within the whānau who can best take care of them. Basically everyone is looking out for each other and gives his best for the bigger family unit. I mean that is what I heard, that they pass the children around, a whānau kind of approach…. And traditional Māori culture. They have this bigger, looser family unit that provides for everyone. Maybe we can get something out of that. Yeah, it [the nuclear family form] really needs to be reformed. People need to be able to get free from these bad social institutions.

Given Kole and Fraser's European heritage and relative newcomer status, their use of the concept of whānau signals just how commonplace the term is in this country, available even for those who are immigrants. A regular part of the everyday lexicon in New Zealand (Brandt, 2013; Metge, 1995), this concept is helpful for them because it validates their wish to co-parent both within and outside the construction of the intimate couple, in a context where the ideological construct of the nuclear family form continues to exert influence.

The men imagined multi-parent forms of family could work *much better* than nuclear family forms:

> Fraser: It [family] can work so much better, this way, as well. It is such a different thing to—it is a conscious decision, it's—
>
> Kole: Unlike a heterosexual couple, you know? It can just happen by accident. They aren't prepared; maybe they didn't really plan for it or whatever. It can't happen for us in this way. It has to be a conscious decision because—
>
> Fraser: It's not like heterosexual couples. Sometimes, that's just what people do. They get married then yeah, "Let's have a kid because all our friends have." No. It's a conscious decision: four people who are completely up for it…. I'm really hopeful.

Basing their decision to come together with another couple on a model of conscious fatherhood/parenthood (Schacher et al., 2005), this was a model that was understood as a strong basis for a family, because both sets of couples would be *completely up for it*. Theirs was a family-making process that diverged from a more traditional process, where having a child is *just what people do*, something that is reflective of a predetermined life stage or an unexpected, unwanted event (Schacher et al., 2005).

Kole and Fraser's narrative underscores the men's idealistic vision of family, fathering and parenting. Their articulation of particular family, fathering and parenting ideals highlights some specific possibilities for innovation in family-building. The men's aspiration for a chosen multi-parent model of family—represented by them as a viable alternative to conventional heteronormative family forms—in conjunction with an aspiration for emotionally engaged fathering were yet to be practically tested at this early stage of family formation. Connecting with the core thesis agendas of innovation, convention and constraint, the men reflexively anticipate inventing new kinds of family lives together with a like-minded lesbian couple, while simultaneously relying on heteronormative family discourses as resources for their family invention stories.

While Kole and Fraser's idealism was largely intact at the time of their interview, this was not wholly the case for Wilson and Johan, the couple at the centre of the

next narrative. Further ahead in the complex processes of family-making, this couple's idealism had been unexpectedly tested. A particular analytic theme developed as their story unfolds is the ways in which idealism is moderated through unforeseen constraints on what is possible.

Wilson, Johan, Vivian and Moira

Wilson had long held fatherhood aspirations. As he said, "I'd always dreamed that some day I would be a father." His positive experiences of relationships with children and young people were key resources for his stories about becoming a parent in the future:

> I have a lot of friends who are parents and I watch their [parent-child] relationships and I was interacting with their children over a number of years—some are now in their teens—and I just really enjoy the relationship that I have with them. It's quite special … You can't explain that relationship you have with a young person when they communicate with you and they look to you.

> I was a teacher for ten years. That's a bit of a parental environment in a way, for these young people, who are looking to you for advice … I thought it was such a special relationship, being a grown man with young people and being able to—just be part of their journey in life…. I thought you know, after ten years of working with teenagers, I thought to myself: "You know what I think? I think this is kind of a good testing ground for how I'd enjoy the relationship between a child and myself." I started to fantasise a little bit more about being a dad.

Wilson did not assume identifying as gay was incompatible with becoming a father/parent. Growing up in North America, stories about gay men fathering/parenting circulated more freely than they were during Kole and Fraser's formative years in Eastern Europe.

In his late twenties Wilson partnered with Johan, a similar aged peer who was born in Southern Europe.[161] Despite his birthplace, Wilson considered him "an Anglophile … the most English person you'll ever meet." The family-orientated

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[161] Johan put in his apologies for the interview I held with Wilson and a lesbian couple (introduced shortly), as he was unexpectedly called away on a work matter at short notice. He reviewed the interview transcript and indicated that he considered it an accurate representation of his and Wilson's journey towards fatherhood/parenthood.

couple married in Wilson's homeland and settled in New Zealand; in the foreseeable future, they intended to enter into a civil union because their marriage was not recognised in this country.[162] At the time of the interview, some four and a half years into their relationship, the men were actively pursuing fatherhood/parenthood. According to Wilson, pursuing this was "a big move forward." However, it was the right time—*a good time*—for them to do so:

> We're thinking, "This is a good time" You know? People always say, "When is a good time?" We thought, "Now is a good time!" Things are going very nicely for us. All the structures are in place so it made sense.

Wilson draws on a traditional life course narrative as a resource in his story. Fatherhood/parenthood can be progressed because particular structures, including relationship status and duration, stability in employment, sufficient financial and time-based resources and a house purchase are in place. His story evokes both the neoliberal context and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) conceptualisation of life as a planning project. As she observes, conditions of individualisation see "a kind of stage-management of everyday life, an acrobatics of discussion and finely balanced agreement" (p. 9).

Like Kole and Fraser, Wilson and Johan planned to enter a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement with a lesbian couple based on a multi-parent model of family inclusive of intimate couple relationships and reproductive relationships. With both men intending to be positioned as fathers/parents, their family make-up would similarly incorporate biogenetic and social fathers/parents, biogenetic and social mothers/parents and one or more children, whose biogenetic father/mother would not be connected by a sexual relationship. Unlike Kole and Fraser however, Wilson and Johan's idealism was modulated by actual experience of practical constraints on possibilities for fathering/parenting as they began to bump up against the complex realities of building family in this way. Constraints first emerged during medical evaluation

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[162] A civil union was the only mechanism available to them for legalising their relationship in New Zealand in the immediate years following their overseas marriage, with the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 not available during that period.

and testing of the men's semen; the results suggested one of the men had suboptimal fertility and that the other man could be expected to achieve conception more readily. This influenced the men's negotiations with the lesbian couple they subsequently chose to collaborate with about which of them should become a biogenetic father/parent through the provision of sperm, and which a social father/parent, as the other's partner.

Wilson recounted his initiation of the search for a lesbian couple via a social networking site:

> So one day … I went on the gaynz website…. I went in and I looked and I thought: "Hm. I wonder if this is a good website for meeting people for this purpose?" There was the usual gay man crap, telling everyone how big their penises are. I was like, "Okay, so it's just the usual stupid hook up site." But then I went and filtered a little bit better and I was able to find a whole section [of advertisements for women looking for donors].

One such couple's advertisement, written by Vivian and Moira, immediately resonated with Wilson. Describing this as "quite lovely", he went on to add:

> For me, it was just right. I thought, "Okay, this has piqued my interest enough that I'd like to know more" which is really what these sites are for…. I showed Johan…. I said: "What do you think of this? … What if we send a message to these girls and meet them? We'll meet, you know? It'll be a date. It'll be lovely. We'll have a nice couple of drinks and if we decide not to go forward, no harm … no one loses … we'll have a nice time and maybe we'll meet some nice girls and become friends with them. You know? What's to lose, really?"

Likening a possible get together with Vivian and Moira to going on a date, Wilson's narrative suggests a less vested approach to finding a lesbian couple than Kole and Fraser's approach—*if we decide not to go forward, no harm … no one loses … we'll have a nice time and maybe we'll meet some nice girls and become friends with them*. Wilson's stories about dating allowed for the prospect of a friendship as an outcome of meeting the women should a reproductive relationship not eventuate, whereas Kole and Fraser's stories about dating reflected a concern with impressing a lesbian couple as potential reproductive

partners first and foremost; a friendship, as a secondary possibility was not considered.

According to Wilson, Johan readily agreed to send a message to Vivian and Moira. Before sending the message, they made a profile about themselves as potential donors and fathers/parents live. The women responded positively to both the men's message and profile; subsequently, a time and place were set up for the two sets of couples to meet. Wilson remembered how nervous he was at their first meeting: "I was so nervous, that first time. I was *so* nervous. My God. You know? I got all babbly and weird. You know when you get so nervous you can't control yourself? I was buzzing with energy."[163] This meeting, which went well, led to further meetings.

Wilson, like Kole and Fraser, saw the couple-couple relationship as very important. He commented, "I think we all agreed in the very beginning that the relationship was quite important in this process and that it needs to be developed before we go forward." Getting to know one another initially took precedence over reproductive negotiations:

> The initial few meetings were not really negotiation. They were more: "Let's get to know each other. See what our values systems are. See what we believe. Have a few drinks, a cup of tea, and just talk about stuff." Cause when you talk about stuff, that's when you tell stuff about yourself.

Following a series of such meetings, the couples individually concluded they were ready to engage in more directed conversation about a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement of some description. An evening meal was planned to discuss the possibility of a donor/parenting arrangement:

> Wilson: We said, "Let's have dinner and talk about details." In the email [about the dinner] I distinctly remember saying—I put a message in there to let them know how we were feeling: "We're quite keen to go forward with this. Let's go do it."
>
> Nicola: So you put that message out before the dinner.

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[163] Logan also explained his experience of meeting Fern and Emma as one that was both nerve-wracking and akin to a date: "I was really nervous. Because—it was a bit like going on a date."

Wilson: Yeah. I said we were quite keen and then Vivian wrote back saying they were feeling positive as well. So we exchanged those messages. We were cautious but clear.

Moira recollected the agenda for the dinner:

Moira: I like details. I wanted practical details for us to engage in.

Nicola: So you'd had enough of dating? You were ready to get down to business?

Moira: It was—it was like that. I thought okay—well, the important thing is, like you [Wilson] said, the relationship. The next step was how are we going to approach seeing whether we can conceive. Are there any fertility issues here? I was interested in beginning that process while we still dated cause it could take a while.

In the weeks after the dinner, all four adults entered clinic coordinated fertility testing, expecting that Wilson would provide the sperm for Vivian to conceive through home-based insemination. Pointing out "it was [to be] me, because I was the one driving the process", Wilson went on to explain that this plan was subsequently revisited in light of the practical constraints posed by the men's test results:

We got our fertility results back and his [Johan] were much better than mine. So he said, "Well how do you feel about that?" And I said, "Well actually, that kind of changes the game a little bit doesn't it because it means you're in a better position now, from a medical perspective, to push the process rather than me." I wasn't upset about that so much, really. As I said, "This is just one of a number of options which could appear in this scenario and if they all lead to parenthood then yah, I'm happy!" I said, "How do you feel about it?" He said: "Well, I actually feel like I'm in a spot now where I can do this…. It makes good sense." So it was kind of a very scientific, rational discussion.

Wilson and Johan's *scientific, rational discussion* led them to conclude that Johan should undertake sperm provision. This conclusion, illustrative of the challenges of moving from ideals to practices, provides another example of the ways in which the circumstances of conception must sometimes be revised when pragmatic considerations force choices in addition to those noted in the last chapter (Hayman & Wilkes, 2016; Mamo, 2007; Nordqvist, 2014a). Their

conclusion did not allay the women's concerns about the potential impact this change of plans represented. From their point of view, further negotiation was warranted about which of the men should act as the donor and become a biogenetic father/parent, and which a social father/parent, as the other's partner:

> Moira: I think the first interesting test of our relationship as four people came when we found out that Wilson's swimmers weren't really active.
>
> Wilson: Yeah. To the threshold that they, you know—and now even Johan's—they're [the fertility service staff] saying they want to improve even Johan's fertility because it's threshold. "That's not good enough. We want better!" What are these guys? Olympic swimmers or what?
>
> Moira: I think what was really interesting was like, "Okay, let's see how Johan's swimmers are doing", but our approach is quite interesting. We kept wanting to ensure that this switch, of who is going to be the biological dad, that the boys were comfortable in their relationship with it. So we kept going subtly back: "You know, there's still a chance that Wilson can be the dad here. It just means we're going to have to work at it. How important is it to you [Wilson] to be the biological dad?" We wanted to make sure that there wasn't any weird dynamics.
>
> Nicola: So it wasn't just about which sperm swam fastest?
>
> Moira: We didn't want an alpha male defined by science—right: "You're going to be the dad cause you're the fitter. The better-bred winner." We don't want that. We wanted in their relationship, for them to be very sure that there wasn't going to be any dynamics about who is going to be the biological father in their relationship that might then affect our relationship that then gets displaced on to the child. You [the men] must have thought we were crazy.
>
> Wilson: To be honest, I just thought this is the most logical process. So go with it…. What's the most logical way to go forward with this? You know? I know it is very scientist of me but it is very kind of—you know? This makes the most sense. So don't push it…. Don't push something that isn't going to logically work. This actually makes the most sense. I have no argument against it so let's go for it….
>
> Moira: So we're throwing in all these questions to be sure that what we are about to do [inseminate with Johan's sperm, instead of Wilson's sperm] is very comfortable for them. There's no room for the slightest bit of doubt … cause it'll impact.

Moira considers the two sets of couples' approaches to the dilemma Wilson's reduced sperm motility presents as *the first interesting test* of the developing adult relationships. Presumably, the women wanted to maximise chances for

conception. For Wilson's sperm to be useful to them, it needed to be "the right shape, the right speed, and in the right quantity" (Moore, 2007, p. 147). Because Johan has the higher level of sperm motility, it is potentially more useful to them. Knowing this, the women are nevertheless willing to persevere with Wilson as the donor. They understand for conception to occur with his sperm, they will have to *work at it,* which may not have been necessary with Johan's sperm. Their narrative suggests they have access to advice readily available through both popular culture and science-based medicine that targets heterosexual couples who are seeking to conceive 'naturally' about how to improve sperm quality. They understand they are personally responsible for improving their reproductive health, with health more broadly accepted as "a task and achievement of the responsible citizen, who must protect and look after it or face the consequences" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 140). A willingness to *work at it* also runs counter to existing practices in donor insemination for heterosexual couples where expanding technologization and the commercial marketing of procreation combined with fertility industry standards tends to qualify only particular kinds of donors and sperm—typically, donors with 'germ-free', potent sperm (Moore, 2007; Sullivan, 2004).

Wilson deflects the focus on his fertility that Moira opens the exchange with by drawing attention to Johan's fertility, which, while acceptable, could be improved. At the same time as using his story to construct himself as reasonable, he intimates any expectation that sperm should be *Olympic swimmers* is unreasonable and by implication, constructs the fertility service staff as unreasonable. Notions of sperm as swimmers competing in a 'race' or 'obstacle course' to the 'finish line' are prevalent in both popular culture and science-based medicine.[164]

In their hesitation to discount Wilson as the donor, Vivian and Moira reject similar ideas that conflate the *alpha male*, virility and winning—they don't want their donor to simply be *the better-bred winner* of the two men. It was important

[164] Old ideas about sperm competition theory are reinforced by gendered biomedical imagery underscoring the assumed active role of sperm in fertilization, in comparison to the assumed passive role of the egg (Baker & Bellis, 1993; Martin, 1991; Mischewski, 2005; Moore, 2007).

to them that *the boys were comfortable* with the proposed change of donor. Their concern can be understood in a context of hegemonic masculinity where understandings about sperm as a powerful symbol of male sexuality can sometimes lead to infertile men feeling less masculine and/or having difficulty accepting their infertility (Mischewski, 2005; Moore, 2007; Nordqvist & Smart, 2014). Vivian and Moira therefore *kept going subtly back* to the question of biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood to ascertain whether there were *any weird dynamics* arising from the proposed change as a means to protect both the couple-couple and the adult-child relationships from possible future problems. Because Wilson projects himself as someone that rejects constructions of masculinity that are bound up with hyper fertility, they are eventually able to accept Johan as the *better-bred winner* and prospect for biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood. That he happens to be the man with the higher level of sperm motility is an advantage that is secondary to the men's feelings.

Wilson further deflects a focus on his fertility by deploying a scientific discourse as a narrative resource. His *very scientist* and practical approach to conception communicates a science-orientated, pragmatic self—a self concerned with the facts and physical evidence of his reduced sperm motility and how to address this, rather than a self with feelings about the status of his sperm. In Wilson's view, *the most logical way to go forward* is for Johan to donate instead. He implies the men's sperm are just a means to an end and as such it doesn't really matter which of them provides it and subsequently claims biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood. This is an idea that has been espoused by other gay couples. A more complex picture emerges however, when details on how couples actually manage biogenetic connectedness are probed (Dempsey, 2013).

In refusing to locate fatherhood/parenthood in sperm, or accept that a biogenetic contribution to conception is the only means by which fatherhood/parenthood can be conferred, Wilson's narrative self construction as an intending non-biogenetic father/parent is informed by his relationships with both the man who contributed to his own conception and the man who actually fathered/parented him as he grew up:

I reflect on my stepfather, who is so important in my life, with whom I share no genes but I carry his name. You know? I have a biological father with whom I have no relationship at all and I look identical to him. When I met him, I was looking in a mirror of the future. Except, in every other way [including] his behaviour, he just wasn't the kind of person I wanted to be. That reminded me that biologically—the biological aspect isn't as important to me.

He elaborated further:

I always think very fondly of my stepfather and I carry his name. I call his family my family and his nephews and nieces are my cousins. We always treat each other that way. I've never been treated as an outsider. So for me—I look at that [relationship] and then I look at my family that I am related to biologically and we have the same relationship. That closeness is there. It's—you know, I think relationships are built deliberately. There aren't—you cannot just expect that they will happen.

Wilson's experience of developing close social relationships with his stepfather and his stepfather's nephews and nieces are important resources for him that he brings to his storying of an alternative relational basis for his own fathering/parenting.[165] The idea that *relationships are built deliberately* is useful for him because it will support his social fathering/parenting, the only option available for him at this point.

Once Johan had been confirmed as the donor, the next goal involved banking samples of his sperm for quarantine, a goal almost achieved at the time of interviewing. During this period, the couples began to explore some of the practicalities of having a child together, as well as possible constraints. The multi-parent family they were working towards would include four separate parent-child relationships and two couple-based parent-child relationships, to be located within and across two households. Disrupting conventional heteronormative parenting discourses and practices, their (planned) decision to

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[165] Like Wilson, Anton reflected positively on growing up with a stepfather/parent. He used this as a resource in his story about his partner Tremain's social fatherhood/parenthood of Levi, the son they conceived with Anton's sperm and the help of a surrogate in a traditional surrogacy arrangement. As Anton said: "I don't see one of us being the biological parent and the other one not being a parent. Like I fully see us as being parents. I have a stepfather. I grew up with him. He's more of a father than my own father—my biological father. So I don't think that biology means anything, in some cases."

disperse parenthood across two sets of couple relationships and two households mirrors the (unplanned) dispersal of parenthood across new couple configurations and households in the post divorce or separation context. This arrangement would require careful consideration of each of the adult's patterns of involvement in the day-to-day care of the child as well as the implications of particular patterns on the child's living arrangements.

Wilson regularly returned to the question of involvement during the interview, as illustrated in the following extracts:

> It is hard to predict how much we're [the men] going to be involved…. We [the four adults] … chat about this aspect of involvement. We have to be careful not to overly prescribe the situation before it happens. I keep coming back to that idea that there are some things that need to be rigorously negotiated and there are other things that need to be left to chance.

> I'm most concerned with the environment in which a child is raised and getting to be one of four parents involved. … I'm really open to negotiating what that role involves. The thing is, all four of us, we're such different people and we all have strengths that we bring to the table and there will be times when it's probably better for one of us to be involved … and another one not to be involved. I think I want to leave some of this to chance and some of this to being organic.

Like Kole and Fraser, Wilson understands fathering/parenting relationships to children as flexible, negotiable and centred on practices of involvement, rather than something that is exclusively defined in biogenetic terms. As he later added:

> The relationship you make with the child is one that you make with the child. The child—when the child wants to know who their parents are they don't pull out the birth certificate…. They know that based on behaviour. So from that aspect parents are parents based on what parents do with that child.

Wilson and Johan anticipated that their fatherhood/parenthood could be conferred without the kinds of extensive involvement that Kole and Fraser considered necessary to fully experience parenting. While Wilson and Johan were open to different possibilities, they were not seeking a co-parenting arrangement based on an equal, cross home time split.

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Aside from a firm decision that Vivian and Moira would take main responsibility for the child's care in their home as his or her primary legal parents and guardians, little practical detail about the men's participation in care practices had been decided. While Wilson's concern that they not *overly prescribe the situation before it happens* may have been a contributing factor, the time preceding their interview, had of necessity, been focused on fertility testing and exploring the constraints Wilson's reduced sperm motility raised. According to Wilson, it was now time to focus further on *the kind of situation we would like*:

> We know the fertility stuff. We know it's possible. We have the resources now. We have the processes in place for that. Now we can really just focus on you know—before we actually turn the button on—we can spend the next three months continuing to explore and negotiate the kind of situation we would like…. We can talk about all the possibilities and the ones we like the most and the ones we don't like and go through all of that over a whole lot of wine and really just get into it and see which kind of situations we'd enjoy having. And then finally, when we feel like we're at the stage where we've made some of the more concrete decisions, without over-prescribing it, then we can say, "Right … ready, set, go!"

Wilson expected however, that whatever participation in care practices actually entailed, it would occur in the context of the child's main residence, at least in the early years:

> Wilson: It's about us moving around more than the child…. You don't want to disrupt them in the first few years … I think they should be exposed to our home. So they know it's their home but I don't believe in 'pass the baby.'
>
> Nicola: So you're not planning on shifting the baby backwards and forwards?
>
> Wilson: No … this is a very strong opinion—I think those are very unsuccessful models of parenthood. I think they are based on a very negative situation, which is the divorce.
>
> Nicola: But there are lesbians and gay men planning that from the outset once the baby is past the breastfeeding stage.
>
> Wilson: Maybe when the child is a bit more able to—I think it can work. But I think as a newborn it would be terrible to kind of move it around. I think both homes have to be homes for the child. I get really disappointed when I see heterosexual couples who divorce—they put all the pain onto the child. "You will move to these houses, these times, with these people." I think that's terrible because it is your relationship that has fallen apart

and you should be doing everything possible to kind of—. I've seen a couple of really successful examples. I don't know how they made this work. They kept the main house. The parents moved. The child has a stable home: Their own bedroom, their own toys, their own everything…. Monday to Friday, father lives in the house. On the weekend, the mum does. They brought an apartment just down the road so that they could do this. Now I thought that was quite adventurous. I don't know that would work long-term. I just think it's really important that the burden is not put on to the child.

Divorce discourse informs Wilson's opinion about possibilities for parenting across residences. While Kole and Fraser utilised divorce discourse as a resource to reinforce their parenting status and participation in care practices, Wilson utilises this in ways that potentially diminish he and Johan's parenting status and possibilities for participation in care practices, as subordinate actors to the women. In the first (unsuccessful) post divorce model he draws from, children are expected to move between their parent's residences—while he wants his child to come to know their house as a second home, because he or she will not be passed backwards and forwards (at least in the early years) his/her experience of this home will be limited.[166] In the second (successful) post divorce model, the child remains in one residence, with the parents moving between this residence and their separate individual residences. While Wilson considers this a *quite adventurous* model, he doesn't know if it works long term, perhaps suggesting this is not something he aspires to try in their own situation.

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[166] Many of the donors who were constructed as fathers (but not necessarily parents) in this study considered their homes to be a second home for their children. Logan and Noah bought houses in the same neighbourhood as the mothers of their children to facilitate their involvement with them. The men's homes were set up for the children and included bedrooms for them. Logan's son Giles saw a number of advantages to multiple homes. He said: "Other people might just get to … go to their *own* house every day, and this similar old house, and it might get boring. But I have lots of houses…. It's always nice to have a lot of houses cause you can go to different places and it's also nice having part of your family living in different places, cause that means you get to see some people sometimes, and some more people another time." He also thought there were pragmatic advantages in the event of a disaster. As he said, "If this house caught fire, then I'd have all my dad's family … to actually go to." Conversely, Sean, who had also bought a house near his children's home so he could be closer to them, resisted his house being framed as their second home and had not set it up to accommodate them over night. He elaborated: "The kids are both getting to that stage where they'll say: 'Oh Dad, can we come and stay at your place?' And I say to them: 'Well, there's not much point coming to stay at my place because you've got all your things at your mum's place…. You've got your own comfortable beds there'…. It's easier for me to go there to look after them."

Because Wilson and Johan will not be residential parents, Wilson's emergent, organic approach to practical details also arguably diminishes their parenting status and possibilities for participation in care practices as subordinator actors to the women. Even though much remains uncertain, Wilson articulates their subordinate role through numerous comments that imply they will take direction from the women and/or wait to be called on to 'help' them or 'save' them. These excerpts are illustrative:

> We made it clear that we want to be available. We want to be clear that we're not off limits, ever, and that that's part of it.
>
> You [Vivian and Moira] may find that it's [parenting] quite a smooth process or you may find it's absolutely insane where the child never sleeps and Vivian's about to have a nervous break-down cause she's like sleeping erratically, losing her mind—"Someone come in and save me!" You know? Sometimes she may need three solid days where we're there sleeping on the couch taking care of things.

Wilson and Johan's decision to collaborate with Vivian and Moira may have been the most straightforward route to the kind of fatherhood/parenthood they sought for themselves, but it was also the only route they considered. While their narrative suggests they might have aspired to the image of the new father—an emotionally responsive, competent and equal caretaker (Lupton & Barclay, 1997)—in practice they did not choose to explore avenues to fatherhood/parenthood that would enable them to fulfill this image in a fulltime, residential capacity. Instead, they imagined that they would leave the daily, residential work of rearing children to Vivian and Moira, an arrangement that also reflected what the women imagined for themselves. A discourse of paternal choice is therefore invoked. As discussed in Chapter 5, this particular discourse positions paternal involvement as optional. According to Mallon (2004), "In a family where there is a mother, a man can decide how much or how little he wants to participate" (p. 138).

At this point in their family-building activities, the two sets of couples were excitedly anticipating a first insemination attempt expected to occur approximately three months after the interview. In the interim, they intended to further fine-tune the *kind of situations* that might work for them.

Like Kole and Fraser's narrative, Wilson and Johan's narrative emphasises some of the resources they use to construct themselves as prospective fathers/parents. As the intending social father/parent, Wilson projected ahead to construct himself as a particular kind of father/parent through his behaviour and actions. He understood his doing of fathering/parenting would occur in ways unrelated to biogenetic connections and that what this looked like would be revealed over time. Wilson's perspective on who can be and do father/parent and his belief that the doing of fathering/parenting can manifest in multiple ways connects with his openness to innovative options for family, despite the unexpected practical constraints experienced during the initial stages of family-building. His appeal to a discourse of paternal choice, coupled with a resistance to locating fatherhood/parenthood in sperm and rejection of male hyper fertility resonates with key thesis themes of conformity and resistance, normativity and challenges to the norm.

The third gay couple profiled in this chapter are Max and Patrick. The men were already fathers/parents at the time of their interview. Max's biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood was conferred when partners Nicole and Jeannie birthed a son who had been conceived with Max's sperm following home-based insemination. Patrick later became a social father/parent to the boy through his relationship to Max. The conferral of Patrick's social fatherhood/parenthood had not however, been planned for or anticipated. Both men are active agents in their meaning-making about fatherhood/parenthood; the ways in which meanings about fatherhood/parenthood emerge through interactions is a key analytic theme of this narrative.

Max, Patrick, Nicole and Jeannie

As a gay man, Max believed his prospects for fatherhood/parenthood were limited. He had privately decided that if a lesbian couple ever asked him if he would provide sperm for them, he would. As he said, "I'd always thought if I ever had the opportunity to do it then I would." Donating would be conditional however, on the proviso of his known, involved fatherhood/parenthood—something he had always imagined for himself. Rather than engaging in a determined effort to become a father/parent by actively recruiting lesbian

couples to participate in a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement like the men in the previous two narratives, Max waited to be approached by potential couples. His fatherhood/parenthood would be situationally driven, subject to the initiation of others (Stacey, 2006). A couple drafting him in as a necessary third party to their conception plans would likely be the key actors in family-making processes, not him.

Max was one month into a new relationship with Patrick when a lesbian couple he had not previously met—Nicole and Jeannie—made it known to Patrick, at a party, that they were looking for a potential donor. Nicole described the circumstances that led the women to make this enquiry of Patrick as well as what happened next:

> Patrick [a friend of Nicole's] was flatting with another friend of ours and they were having a party. Jeannie and I had been talking for a while about having a baby. We'd tried [inseminating] earlier [with a knowable donor], through a clinic, and hadn't been able to get pregnant. It was incredibly expensive and stressful so we gave up on that ... So we went to this party and I said to Patrick, "Hey if you know anyone who is interested in being a donor, we're keen." And he went, "Ohhhh!" as Patrick is inclined to do. So that was cool and then he comes back 10 minutes later [after ringing Max, who wasn't at the party] and says, "Max will do it." We were like, "Whose Max?" Sorry Max.... And so we were like: "This guy is odd. He hasn't even met us, yet he says he'll father our child."

Given Nicole and Jeannie's previous failure to conceive through knowable donor clinic-based inseminations, Nicole's reference to *our child* captures their original preference to locate parenthood exclusively in their cohabitating couple relationship. In keeping with clinic processes structured by laws governing assisted reproductive procedures and parenthood, any child born to them through this means would have 'belonged' to them. In thinking about Max as a possible donor, the women used their experience of the clinic and the dominant heteronormative model of family as resources to reinforce their position as key actors in family-making processes, and the position of possible donors as subordinate actors. A donor was not expected to be a parent to their child, nor have any 'ownership' in that child.

Patrick and Max returned to the story Nicole had begun:

Patrick: When Nicole brought it up at the party and I rang Max, he went "Yep" straightaway. And I said: "Oh, hang on, should we talk about this? Do you want to meet Nicole?" And he's like, "No, I'll do it." Initially I thought, "Whoa, that's too big, just calm down, we'll wait." But he was really—you'd obviously decided beforehand hadn't you, that—

Max: It's not something that you think about all the time. But obviously as a gay man, you know that you're not going to have many chances to [become a father/parent]. So, you know, I'd just always thought I'd do it.

Nicole explained that the two sets of couples agreed to meet together in the weeks following the party:

So, it sort of moved from there. We said, "That's great, we'll get together and have dinner and have a chat about things and see what happens." Because we'd been through a clinic we had a donor's form ... so I decided to re-type it and got Max to fill it in ... just so we could—right through to why are you interested in doing it, what would you like to see and all that sort of stuff. It was *really* grown up. The whole way we went about it.

Providing Max with a donor form to fill in is another illustration of the ways in which the women drove family-making processes, as key actors. A focal point for discussion, this form also prompted Max to voice his expectations of fatherhood/parenthood in return for his sperm. Investing sperm with meaning, he understood the biogenetic contribution to conception it represented could be used to confer his fatherhood/parenthood.

Max's expectations of fatherhood/parenthood caught Nicole and Jeannie unawares. Jeannie recalled their response to the news that Max wanted contact with the child:

Max wanted to see him. He wanted access to him, didn't he? We were like: "Hmm, don't know if we like that! This is a surprise. We need to think about this now." We went along with it. But we were still a little, "How's this going to work?"

Not only did Max want contact with the child, he wanted to formalise his fatherhood/parenthood through the inclusion of his name on the child's birth certificate. As he said:

> I suppose at the beginning, and not necessarily knowing how things were going to work out, I suppose just for myself, I wanted the child to have some recognition of me. Even if I wasn't part of his life, I thought being on his birth certificate would be a kind of lasting thing for him to be able to see, if things didn't work out.

Arguably, Max had some bargaining power, even as a subordinate actor. He exerted his influence using resources at his disposal to orientate Nicole and Jeannie away from the model of family they had previously aspired to and towards a model of family inclusive of involved fatherhood/parenthood. His knowledge of the women's circumstances was one such resource; he had learned of their conception history and continuing hope for a child in the course of discussions and could use this to reinforce his conditions. His access to the discourse that all children have the right to and need a father and/or information about their paternal origins via the mechanism of the birth certificate was another useful resource. This resource is strengthened by the ways a deliberate failure to secure this right is regularly wielded against lesbian parents as evidence they are not adequately providing for their children (Scholz & Riggs, 2013). Donors who want to be recognised as fathers can press the advantage this gives them.

While Nicole and Jeannie *went along* with Max's terms, doing so represented a significant change to their original plans to confine parenthood to coupledom. Max had agreed the women would be the child's primary parents caring for him or her in their home on a day-to-day basis. While this arrangement reinscribed their status as key actors in the family-making processes and his status as a subordinate actor, the women's willingness to revise previously held conceptions of family to accommodate him would nevertheless alter their family-making trajectory irrevocably. It also raised vexing conceptual, relational and pragmatic questions. With Max constituted as a father and additional parent, what form would the family now take? How would Patrick figure in the family, both as Max's partner, and as a man who had also openly declared a long-term wish to be a father/parent? Who would he be to the child? How would multi-parenting across residences work in practice? Without ready answers to these kinds of questions, concrete plans for conception were nevertheless set in

motion. Working through uncertainties in the months ahead would remain a continuing exercise for both sets of couples.

Little time was lost—home-based inseminations, narrated with humourous references to transporting sperm in a container nestled inside a sock to keep it warm on one occasion, and a café handover, with the container hidden in a paper bag on another, quickly began. These were depicted as relaxed, stress-free occasions that stood in stark contrast to the women's previous highly stressful clinic-based inseminations. Crediting the adults' relaxed approach to her early conception success after only two cycles of inseminations, Nicole became pregnant with Elliot about five months after she and Jeannie first met Max. The women remembered sharing the positive results of the home pregnancy test in a phone call with Max and Patrick immediately following the test, after which the women joined the men in the house the men had subsequently come to share for a celebratory glass of champagne. Patrick laughingly reported: "Max thought he was the man. It [his sperm] was the most potent stuff on the planet." From the moment of Elliot's birth some nine months later, through until the two sets of couples' joint interview when Elliot was three years old, the pragmatics of everyday life with a young child served to facilitate the resolution of the couples' earlier questions about family form, adult-child relationships and roles and multi-parenting across residences.

The couples had amicably reached some shared understandings of their family form. Time, experience and involvement saw the family consolidate as a multi-parent, cross-residential model with the constitution of Max as a father and additional parent confirmed from the outset with Patrick's social fatherhood/parenthood following later. Fluid family boundaries accommodated Max and Patrick's couple relationship, Nicole and Jeannie's couple relationship, Max and Nicole's reproductive relationship, Max and Nicole's respective biogenetic fatherhood/motherhood, Patrick and Jeannie's respective social fatherhood/motherhood and four distinct adult-child relationships. Like the men and women in Weston's (1991) study, "Grounding kinship in love deemphasized distinctions between erotic and nonerotic relations while bringing friends [Max, Patrick, Nicole, Jeannie], lovers [Max and Patrick; Nicole and Jeannie], and

children [Elliot] together under a single concept" (Weston, 1991, p. 107). Theirs were highly suffused relationships; these men and women had collectively moved inside kinship as chosen kin, with love for one another—as a unifying concept that developed and deepened over time—woven throughout their stories. Their flexible family boundaries also released them from what Weston (1991) has referred to as "the genealogical logic of scarcity and uniqueness that, for example, would limit a child to one mother and one father" (p. 196).

This familial configuration's particular model of family mapped family boundaries in distinct ways, relative to Elliot's overlapping membership in three units of affiliation. Firstly, Elliot was the pivotal member of the primary unit of affiliation, which also encompassed both sets of couples. As Patrick said, he was "the peg in the middle … that draws everyone in." Nicole and Patrick elaborated:

> Nicole: I think … the immediate family we have now, with the five of us, is really important because this is Elliot's family. I think it is irrelevant that it's our family.
>
> Patrick: That's it. It's … his family.
>
> Nicole: This is Elliot's family. This is who he thinks is important.

Secondly, Elliot was a pivotal member of the two separate couple-child triads, which were also theoretically distinguishable units of affiliation. As Max observed, "I suppose I also see me, Patrick and Elliot as well—as maybe another separate group." This *separate group* played out during alternate weekends and some holidays, when the men parented Elliot in their home, an arrangement that was expected to continue to evolve in response to his development, needs and routines.

Building further from this conceptualisation, the men recognised the boundaries of their particular couple-child triad could reach out to include members from their respective families of origin too. Max pointed out the two different groups he and Patrick's couple-child triad made when combined with either members from his family of origin, or members from Patrick's family of origin, were "different groups [but] all entwined." "From Elliot's point of view" Max added, "he's got probably 30, 40 people in his family."

According to Max and Patrick, Elliot was increasingly recognising the interrelationships between and movements across the various groups of people making up his family. Rather than guarding against 'excess kinship' (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014), this familial configuration had come to conceptualise who might be counted as kin in inclusive ways.

Time, experience and involvement also enabled the couples to reach some shared understandings about possibilities for social relationships as an alternative relational basis for fatherhood/parenthood with respect to Patrick. Patrick's place in the family and relationship and role with Elliot were initially much less certain than was the case for Max, whose biogenetic contribution to the boy's conception allowed him to readily claim a place as his father and additional parent, given prevailing discourses that conflate the two. Similarly, possibilities for Max's actual relationship and role with the boy were also accessible to him, through new ideas about options for known donor involvement in the families of lesbian couples and older ideas about the form non-residential fatherhood/parenthood can take in the divorce or separation context.

Both Patrick and Max suggested the brevity of their relationship when reproductive negotiations between Max and the women first began compounded consideration of Patrick's place going forward. It was impossible for them to predict whether their relationship would be sustained through the period of time it might take for conception to occur, the duration of a pregnancy, and beyond. With reference to this chapter in their story Patrick said, "I was kind of like a spare wheel at that point." The women elaborated:

> Jeannie: You brought us together and said, "You guys work it out." Patrick really was the catalyst and helped us to sort of get it going. But that's *really* changed now.
>
> Patrick: Yep, really changed.
>
> Nicole: Cause you [Patrick] were really clear that this was a situation between Max and us [Nicole and Jeannie]. Because you kept saying, if something happened between you two [the men], because you hadn't long been going out, then you didn't want it to interfere in us [the women] trying to have a baby. So that was really clear. But once things developed there and these guys became more and more settled and had their civil

union and stuff… Elliot has always seen these guys as dad. Except it's 'Daddy' and 'Pat'.

Max intended to become a father/parent in exchange for sperm regardless of whether or not his relationship with Patrick endured over the long term. He commented: "From my perspective, I was going to do this. Whereas Patrick was—we'd only known each other two months." Leaving unspoken who Patrick was—or what his relationship and role to a child might be—Max's reference to the two months since they were first introduced suggests he did not assume Patrick would have a part to play in the arrangements he worked to secure with the women. Later however, this *really changed*.

When Patrick first brought Max and the women together, he did not realise that Max was intent on fatherhood/parenthood:

> At the beginning I thought that what we were doing was that Max was providing an opportunity for Nicole and Jeannie to become parents. That's what I thought. I thought Max was a sperm donor. That's initially how it started off for me.

In expecting social separation between Max and the child, Patrick accessed existing ideas underpinning donor insemination for heterosexual couples consistent with clinic practice. Unlike Max, Patrick was informed by the conventional assumption dominant in many gay and lesbian circles that the provision of sperm by an alternative means to vaginal sex severs a father/parent donor-child relationship (Dempsey, 2004). In his view, being a donor was not conflated with fatherhood/parenthood—it would allow *Nicole and Jeannie to become parents*, not Max. The men's disparate understandings of sperm donation illustrates Nordqvist's (2011) claim that sperm donation, as a social activity, can evoke possibilities for conflicting definitions of reality.

When Patrick came to realise Max was to be a father/parent, he did not immediately see possibilities for himself to become a social father/parent as Max's partner despite wanting children, "I've always wanted children: always, always, always." Struggling with Max's exchange of sperm for fatherhood/parenthood he said: "At times though, I did think: "Why can't it be

me [that donates sperm]? Why can't it [the child] be mine?" Patrick's assumption that a biogenetic contribution to conception is necessary to the conferral of fatherhood/parenthood is in direct tension with his understanding that being a donor is not conflated with fatherhood/parenthood. Despite his struggles, his investment in Max, and Max's investment in Elliot, led him to similarly invest in the boy. Because the men lived together, and Elliot spent regular time in their home, opportunities for Patrick to help Max father/parent Elliot emerged naturally. Time, experience and involvement therefore marked Patrick's transition from the partner of a sperm donor, to the partner of a biogenetic father through sperm donation, to his construction as a social father/parent, a transition that was complete by the time the two sets of couples were interviewed. As Patrick said: "It wasn't until Max and I became closer, and we started to have Elliot [to stay], that it changed for me. I thought: 'Well, I'm not someone now on the periphery any more. This is us.'" While unexpected, this was a transition that was valued by each of the adults and one that exemplifies revisions to conceptualisations of family and adult-child relationships and roles.

The actual practice of social parenthood can change a desire for biogenetic fatherhood. Patrick elaborated:

> When my niece was born I saw the reaction that she got from my parents and remember thinking, "They're never going to react like that with Elliot." Even though they do. They adore him. I thought—I really wanted to give them [his parents] a child of my own. But then after Max and I talked about it, and after talking with Nicole about it, I realised that Elliot *was* our child. And that we had everything that we needed. Mum—she rung me and she said—although Millie [his niece] is different, she still thinks about Elliot every day, she still loves him to pieces, and that was it for me. Once I knew that they saw him in that light and accepted him, I was happy. I'm happy.

The process of becoming a social father/parent over time, experience and involvement shaped Patrick's narrative construction of alternative relational possibilities for fatherhood/parenthood and proved a catalyst for revising

previous views about biogenetic relatedness.[167] Realising he was, in fact, a father/parent to Elliot, and that his parents had embraced Elliot as a legitimate member of the wider family, replaced his earlier wish to have a child that was biogenetically his. Claiming a donor conceived child as a legitimate member of a wider family is compounded by the complex meanings families give to genetic relatedness, which can lead to a range of feelings that must be negotiated where 'stranger genes' are present (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014). This negotiation occurs in the absence of a pre-existing cultural framework to establish kinship links (Nordqvist, 2014c). In some cases, without this cultural framework, donor conceived children are not accepted as kin by their social grandparents (Goldberg, 2012; Nordqvist, 2014c; Sullivan, 2004) or they are ambivalently accepted (Ryan-Flood, 2009). Patrick's happiness, following the phone call with his mother, suggests he was aware of these possibilities.

Although Max narratively constructed his own fatherhood/parenthood through his biogenetic connection to Elliot, this didn't preclude him from recognition of alternative relational possibilities for fatherhood/parenthood with respect to Patrick once it became evident to him that theirs was a committed, long-term relationship. As he said: "I wouldn't view Patrick as not his [Elliot's] dad…. He's always been there." 'Being there' is a resource used to confer Patrick's social fatherhood/parenthood and one that is linked to time, experience and involvement—ideas that resonate with the men in the previous narratives in this chapter, who accepted, to varying degrees, that practices of involvement can confer fatherhood/parenthood.

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[167] This was also the case for Guy. When Guy met Nate, Nate insisted he and his then six and eight year old children were a "package deal." Nate added: "Guy embraced that really well…. He had no pre-conceived ideas about how to parent. I was like, 'Okay this is how I do it and this is why I do it.' Guy took to that real easily." Although Guy found social fatherhood/parenthood rewarding, he was drawn to the idea of becoming a biogenetic father to an infant because he had not experienced parenting children from birth or in their early years, and wondered if the connection might feel different. When Nate donated the sperm for Ngaire and Mia that resulted in Moana's conception and birth, Guy decided to become a donor for a different couple, on the same basis— that he be known as a father. During the year this couple unsuccessfully inseminated, Guy formed a strong relationship with Moana. As he said: "Initially, I would have liked to have a biological connection [to a child]. And then, after Moana was born, I felt quite differently. Not straight away, probably about a year later." Realising "there was enough movement within myself and I got what, I suppose what I needed, or wanted, from Moana", he chose to discontinue with donating.

Max and Patrick's parenting identities and roles, relative to Nicole and Jeannie's parenting identities and roles, were explored by the women in response to the comment Patrick made that opens this extract:

> Patrick: We take our lead off them [the women], don't we? Like for example the food issue. Elliot is going—we're trying to get him to eat more food so they, Nicole and Jeannie, have put that as a plan to work on. So that is something that we are going to come on board with....
>
> Jeannie: We have Elliot the most. We see him the most and see the changes and so—say, "Hey, we need to work on this, that and the other." But it's fairly equal, I sort of feel, in the parenting. These guys see quite a lot of him....
>
> Nicole: I think that we probably do give more of a lead in terms of this is what we are doing. Just like even the other day about the sleeping thing?
>
> Patrick: Yep.
>
> Nicole: You know? Cause you guys didn't know—
>
> Patrick: We didn't know he wasn't sleeping.
>
> Nicole: He doesn't actually need a sleep now [during the day] so that was fine. I don't think you would have made that decision not to give him a sleep if we hadn't said, "He doesn't need a sleep." In that sense—
>
> Jeannie: We do sort of lead things but I don't see us as—well, we are primary caregivers, in the nature of it all, but I don't see us as too much more than these guys.
>
> Nicole: No.

Patrick agreed with the women's perception of parenting roles:

> He has four parents. But we seek guidance from Nicole and Jeannie as to how to play our roles.... So they set the pace and we run with that pace. But it's not—we still have autonomy. We can still contribute to that. I think we have in the past. We've contributed to how those things should go.

The men's status as subordinate actors to the women is further reinscribed in their narrative, even though they are ideologically considered as the women's parenting equals. The women, as Elliot's residential parents, take primary responsibility for the management of his daily care, routines and related decisions conveying that to the men—they *lead things* and *set the pace* and the men *run with that pace*. In leaving the main work of parenting to the women,

including decisions about what is best for Elliot, they draw from the same discourse of paternal choice Wilson and Johan invoked in their narrative, arguably achieving a form of parenthood that couple imagined for themselves.

Max and Patrick use their stories about their ongoing participation in some parenting practices to construct themselves as new fathers and mothering male parents, a position Kole and Fraser aspired to. In Kole and Fraser's narrative, nappy changing was identified as symbolic of involvement in the practical tasks of parenting. As mentioned, these tasks are linked with activities of mothering and are sometimes avoided by men. These ideas are built on here with reference to learning how to mother through activities of mothering, including *the food issue* and *the sleeping thing*.

Silva (1996) states, "Motherhood is female, mothering need not be" (p. 12). Mothering, while typically performed by females, can also be performed by males (Dunne, 2000).[168] Donovan (2000) elaborates on this idea, in the context of lesbian known donor reproduction:

> Biological fathers who are involved in parenting their children are freed up to engage in practices of care that traditionally might have been associated with mothering. This is partly because they are not involved in sexual relationships with their child(ren)'s mother therefore their involvement is distinct from the assumptions about gender roles that often are attached to such relationships. It is also partly because the focus of their relationship can be on parenting, since often they see their children separately from the mother(s) and so have to perform all the practices of care necessary for the child to get by until they are returned to their mother. (p. 162)

Max's relationship with Nicole was established for reproductive purposes, not sexual purposes. Because his relationship to Elliot is not reliant on gendered

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[168] Likewise, either gender can perform father. This is illustrated by lesbian non-birth parents who find performing mother challenging within a gendered parenting binary system that relies on the norm of one mother/one father. For example, some lesbian non-birth parents in both Gabb (2005) and Padavic and Butterfield's (2011) studies deliberately performed a gender-bending hybridization of mother/father. Others performed father, particularly where they neither wanted to mother by engaging in the behavioural prescriptions expected of this role nor felt particularly suited to those prescriptions. Lesbian non-birth parents Pagenhart (2006) and Tulchinsky (1997) also invert the binary by performing 'lesbian daddy' or 'dyke daddy.'

assumptions about how a father-child relationship should look or on what a father should do, attention is drawn to possibilities for destabilising gendered parenting arrangements through separating the doing of mothering from such assumptions. His relationship to Elliot is centred on practices of care akin to those of the mothers, all of which must be performed if Elliot is to 'get by' until he is reunited with his mothers. Patrick's relationship to the boy is also centred on such practices.

Max and Patrick began regularly caring for Elliot in their home while he was still an infant. Early on, Nicole and Jeannie became concerned that the men were not performing the necessary practices for Elliot to 'get by', including regular nappy changes:

> Nicole: One of the early things that we did, was—we weren't sure what the guys were doing when Elliot was a baby and going there and it was like, "Oh, he's only had one nappy change!" It was like: "What?! One nappy change?!" And all those sorts of things. So Jeannie did like a chart.
>
> Patrick: A poster. I've got it on Elliot's wall.
>
> Nicole: You know—he gets up, you change his nappy, you give him a feed, he has a little play and then a sleep.
>
> Patrick: She cut out little pictures from magazines—nappies, jam-jars and nutella. He has a ... bottle to go—and we've still got it on his wall. Elliot's routine at 16 months, I think it was.
>
> Nicola: You have to learn those things.
>
> Patrick: That's what I mean when I say we take our cue off them.
>
> Max: And you want to keep him to the same schedule. You don't want to— it does affect his sleep pattern and all that kind of stuff. You know? Neither of us want him to—
>
> Patrick: And we have less time to learn these things, don't we. I mean they [Nicole and Jeannie] know—they get to learn that a lot quicker. We learn that from them.
>
> Jeannie: I agonized over that.
>
> Nicole: "Should I do it?"
>
> Jeannie: "What are they going to think?"
>
> Patrick: I loved it! When I saw it: "Oh my god! Love it!"

"Raised as males" Stacey (2006) observes, "Most gay men do not receive direct cultural socialization in the feminine labors of 'love and ritual' – kin work,

emotion work, domestic labor, childcare, nurturing" (p. 30). She continues, "Unlike heterosexual men, they cannot rely on women to perform these services for them" (p. 30). Presumably, Max and Patrick will not have received such socialisation; without a woman present in their home, and in the absence of Nicole and Jeannie to perform feminine labour for them, they must learn to perform it themselves when Elliot is in their care.[169] Taking their *cue off them*, they recognise they have *less time to learn these things*. Nappy changing, bottle feeding and sleep routines are all illustrative of the practical tasks of parenting men sometimes shy away from—Max and Patrick, who cannot avoid them, must *learn that from them*.[170] In indirectly making their presence and expectations of 'appropriate' performance felt through the provision of the poster, Nicole and Jeannie simultaneously reinforce both the men's subordinate status and the perception that Elliot can't 'get by' without their intervention. In learning how to mother through activities of mothering, these men contribute to degendering the assumed essential nature of parenting at the same time as consolidating assumptions about women's expertise as parents. This simultaneous process connects closely to the main thesis argument.

The relationship of Max and Patrick's narrative to the theme of innovation lies in its attention to possibilities for sperm donation and shared parenting arrangements between gay men and lesbians as creative solutions to same-sex couple family formation and maintenance (Dempsey, 2012a). These kinds of arrangements are sometimes problematic if incompatible expectations about family form and adult-child relationships and roles arise, particularly in respect of paternal involvement (Dempsey, 2012a; Scholz & Riggs, 2013). Given the divergent expectations Max and the women initially brought to bear on

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[169] Manny was the only heterosexual donor in this study who could, in theory, rely on the presence of a women in his home (Barbara) to perform feminine labour for him. Other heterosexual donors were either single or did not provide care of children in their homes.

[170] Nate and Guy enjoyed caring for Moana in their home during day time visits but were joined by Ngaire and Mia for an overnight "practice run" when Moana was 12 months old to learn "the overnight things" from them. A second practice run followed the first, after which the men were deemed sufficiently experienced to have Moana stay one night a week without her mothers. In a study by Mallon (2004), a gay couple went one step further, hiring a registered nurse to teach them caring practices. The couple explains, "So we hired a nurse, an R.N., to help us and to teach us about diapering, about taking a baby's temperature, giving an infant a bath—all of the things that we thought we probably needed to know" (p. 64).

reproductive negotiations—and the expectations of Patrick as *a spare wheel* to these negotiations—it could reasonably be expected that conflict may have emerged as they navigated the realities of everyday living in such a family. On the contrary, however, both the men and the women reported a high level of satisfaction in their innovative multi-parent, cross-residential model of family and the relationships and roles taken up with Elliot despite the fact that aspects of their lived family and parenting practices deviated significantly from what was imagined prior to his conception. As Nicole said: "It's certainly changed heaps—so much from the beginning. This is nothing at all—I don't think any of us thought it was going to be [like this]." In invoking a discourse of paternal choice, the men's acceptance of their status as subordinate actors to the women resonates with the thesis theme of convention, but it may also go some way to explaining the success of their arrangements. The women's preparedness to let go of their nuclear family aspirations to let the men 'in' was likely a further contributing factor. In Patrick's words, what emerged was "the most remarkable situation where … we get to live that life, we get to be parents."

Concluding discussion

The compulsion for individuals to construct and manage their own lives as a result of processes of individualisation can be applied to fatherhood/parenthood. For the three sets of gay couples featured in this chapter, fatherhood/parenthood is a reflexive project of the self (Giddens, 1991). Following Beck-Gernsheim (2002), such projects require continual planning, effort and optimization, points discussed in Chapter 3. The couples' narratives, underpinned by the neoliberal agendas of freedom, agency and choice, are illustrative of this planning, effort and optimization. While their stories could be read as examples of a desire to live life as unfettered agentic subjects navigating competing choices about who can be a father, a mother, or a parent, this reading is insufficient for understanding the complexities of their actual fathering/parenting negotiations. While agency and choice do play an important role in these negotiations, their stories provide convincing examples of the ways agency and choice are characterised by relationality and attentiveness to others from within the context of particular constraints. This finding extends on the

currently limited body of knowledge about lesbian known donor reproduction from the perspectives of gay known donors, through explicit attention to the interrelationships between agency, choice, relationality and constraint—areas as yet unexplored.

Kole and Fraser and Wilson and Johan exercised agency in planning for fatherhood/parenthood by deliberately seeking out lesbian couples with whom they could form sperm donation and shared parenting arrangements. Their stories suggest they understood they had the freedom and choice to become fathers/parents within their same-sex relationships, in a historical context that has only recently recognised this as a possibility for gay men. In the third couple, Max, who donated for a lesbian couple at their request, also exercised agency in becoming a father/parent. Controlling the circumstances in which this came about, Max expected the women to respond positively to his long-term view of the project of himself as a father/parent as a condition of donating, despite that not having been their original plan. His (then) new partner Patrick gradually adopted the same long-term view. This required some adjustment on Patrick's part, given his initial assumption that donating and fathering were separate social practices. While known donor-child relationships and roles may be mediated and controlled by mothers, who typically determine the extent to which relationships and roles develop (at least until their children reach an age where they can direct these themselves) (Hertz, 2002),[171] the picture appears more complex for the men in this chapter. Their exercise of agency extends to the strategic adoption or acceptance of a subordinate status relative to the lesbian couples they imagine or actually collaborate with prior to or following the conception and birth of children, because this works for them.

Wilson and Johan and Max and Patrick draw on a discourse of paternal choice and established patterns for non-resident fathers/parents in the divorce or separation context as key resources shaping their stories. Vivian and Moira and

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[171] Maternal gatekeeping is a theme in the literature relevant to opposite sex couples who have conceived through heterosexual sex (see for example, Doucet, 2007; Schoppe-Sullivan, Altenburger, Lee, Bower, & Dush, 2015; Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, Mangelsdorf, & Sokolowski, 2008).

Nicole and Jeannie assign particular father-child relationships and roles to them, including non-resident father/parent with part time participation in care and decision-making practices. Although this could be read as a strategy by female parents to bring the men under the women's direction, the men embrace their subordinate status. The women's residential primary parenthood is useful to the men because it allows them to achieve their preferred form of fatherhood/parenthood. In this *remarkable situation*, they *get to live that life ... to be parents*, by choosing parenting as a supplement to their social and working lives, rather than as a central focus. Because the men intend to or actually outsource childcare to the women the majority of the time, they can experience the rewards of parenting without the mundane daily grind mothers often experience. In this way, they are implicated in homonormative processes of normalisation that duplicate traditional gendered parenting in heterosexual households, while also engaging in innovative cross-household multi-parenting. Moreover, the men can avoid the financial outlay made by the gay couples in Berkowitz's (2011) study, whose two parent models of family exclusive of mothers frequently saw them outsource childcare to paid female nannies. They can also avoid the breadwinner obligations of traditional heterosexual male parents.

Kole and Fraser's preference for a form of fatherhood/parenthood inclusive of much of this daily grind rejects a discourse of paternal choice and divorced *weekend dads* as resources in their stories. In their case, a lesbian couple willing to share parenting equitably with them will allow them to fulfill this aspiration. Regardless of this aspiration, they are prepared to embrace a subordinate status relative to a lesbian couple, because a lesbian couple will also be useful to them as female parents. Wishing to protect their children from the *big issue* of *the missing parent*, female parents will function as protective factors in their future children's lives, protecting them against loss and harm. Like the lesbian couples in the previous two chapters, in keeping with the neoliberal context, they orientate towards the future by weighing up the possible consequences of their choices—the consequences of *the missing parent*. And, like those couples, they use their narrative to construct certain sorts of personally responsible parenting

selves and identities, by taking their future children's needs into account. They too are self-regulating subjects, with their internalisation of particular norms similarly speaking to normalisation processes and neoliberal governance. But, rather than internalising norms underpinning public narratives such as the 'children are damaged without a father' story, the 'hurt of a missing father' story, or stories about the importance of access to knowledge about paternal origins, Kole and Fraser have internalised parallel norms relative to mothers. These norms, which include the heternormative expectation of opposite sex parents, are important resources for them.

The couples' narratives perform identity work. They illustrate what kinds of fathers/parents the couples imagine they will become or believe themselves to be and what matters to them at particular moments in time. Their stories construct them as new fathers who are the ideological equivalent of the mothers, even where they are not expected to be or actually are their equivalent in practical terms. Power et al. (2012) suggest that where gay fathers have regular contact with their children, but don't reside with them or participate in day-to-day care, "'Fatherhood' may be about identifying as a father – or the status of fatherhood – rather than the actual role that is played in the care of children" (p. 151). As these authors acknowledge, the different processes used to confer the status of 'father' within gay and lesbian communities warrants further research.

The couples' stories also construct them as creative inventors. As creative inventors, and consistent with the entrepreneurial neoliberal ethos mentioned in Chapter 5, they manage their lives with the same kinds of initiative and risk noted there. In particular, they reconfigure notions of what it means to be a father/parent in several ways. Firstly, all three couples separate biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood from the doing of fathering/parenting through reflexive negotiation of expected or actual levels of involvement with children. Secondly, two couples disrupt both the assumption that a female body is a prerequisite for mothering and dominant hegemonic masculinities that position fathers/parents in traditional ways. As Stacey (2006) found, "Gay fatherhood … represents terrain more akin to motherhood than to dominant forms of heterosexual paternity" (p. 48). Other studies of gay fatherhood make similar points (see for

example, Berkowitz, 2011; Pannozzo, 2014; Schacher et al., 2005). In particular, Berkowitz (2011) argues gay fathers' cross-identification with mothering in their stories about the meaning of fatherhood can be understood in relation to the limited discourses at their disposal within a gendered social-cultural context that upholds motherhood as an ideal. Finally, each of the couples disconnects fathering, mothering and joint residence. 'Home', for their planned and actual children, can be described as "a shifting, transitory, and de-centred place" (S. M. Park, 2009, p. 320), attached to relationships, rather than places (Donovan, 2000).

The men's recourse to the narrative resources mentioned in this discussion supports the identity work the stories accomplish. While they exercise agency and choice about how to be a father/parent and strategically adopt or accept a subordinate status relative to the lesbian couples, their fatherhood/parenthood as a project of the self is simultaneously expanded and curtailed by these resources. The men reconfigure notions of what it means to be a father/parent, even as they reinforce traditional meanings, with this reinforcement lending their subordinate status an inevitable quality. Following Duncan (2011), they make pragmatic decisions, as couples, and in conjunction with reproductive partners, consciously or unconsciously drawing from existing traditions "to 'patch' or 'piece together' responses to changing situations" (p. 9). In sum, they narrate their self-as-father and self-as-parent identities through an existing mix of heteronormative tropes; for this reason, their narratives reflect the dominant social order. But, their self and identity construction work does challenge this order at times.

The next chapter is the final chapter in this thesis. I revisit core themes and the thesis argument that participants are innovative (in conformity and through constraint), further unpacking this trope using the metaphor of bricolage. The chapter also addresses the broader significance of my findings and possibilities for further research.

Chapter 8: A bricolage project: "There is just this mix of innovation and tradition, which is very cool"

> Kinship in the age of assisted conception has turned out to be a more thought-provoking subject than one could ever have imagined. (J. Edwards et al., 1999, p. 1)

> Bricoleurs understand that social structures do not determine individual subjectivity but constrain it in remarkably intricate ways. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008, p. 426)

Introduction

This thesis contributes to knowledge about the new familial forms that are generated through lesbian known donor reproduction in New Zealand. The key argument is that study participants are engaged in crafting innovative family relationships and forms of relatedness but that this innovation involves using a range of conventional kinship strategies and is shaped by the constraints of homonormative understandings of family life. The tension between innovation and convention is evident across the diverse family-building stories reviewed in the three findings chapters and intersects with the themes of narrative self and identity construction.

A major contribution of the thesis is to document the significant variety in the way lesbian parents who seek a known donor negotiate the position of these donors, and sometimes their partners, in relation to prospective or actual children. This variety ranges from known donors (and possibly partners) as involved fathers or involved fathers/parents who may care for children in their own homes to known donors (and possibly partners) who are not defined as family and have very limited access to or interaction with children whose conception they have facilitated. The theme of variety in this thesis indicates some measure of agency in the context of constraint, points developed shortly.

In this chapter, I summarise insights that arise from the key argument with reference to the metaphor of bricolage. I discuss the risks of lesbian known donor reproduction and some of the ways putting innovation and convention to work responds to these risks from within a context that is influenced by

neoliberal homonormativity politics. I look at how my earlier discussion of narrativity and the construction of selves and identities relates to the family narratives highlighted in the findings chapters. A case for the wider relational significance of openness in assisted reproduction in both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies is made. I also discuss some of the ways relational possibilities are foreclosed, how they might be opened up, and what this would mean in the case of multi-parent models of family. The relevance of this for sociological analysis of intimacy, reproductive relationships and cross-household parenting that is not specific to couples with same-sex partners are considered. The chapter concludes with comment on the contributions and challenges of this research and some suggestions for future research directions.

Innovation (in conformity and through constraint)

The participants in this study are frequently innovative in their adroit navigation of conventional kinship, including the constraints that neoliberal conditions can impose on the crafting of new family forms. In the participants' negotiation of new social spaces, they do social change by inventing family relationships and forms of relatedness out of what they already know in situated circumstances, working things out as they go, using the available resources and what is of use to them to create the kinds of families they believe are possible and desirable. In drawing from the key cultural resources of whakapapa and whānau and an imaginative and enterprising combination of old and new ideas about families, mothers, fathers and parents in their stories, they piece together the old and the new in novel ways.

Practices of bricolage: Linking agency and structure

As indicated at the start of this thesis, in the process of stitching the old and the new together, the participants engage in practices of bricolage. Like the bricoleur, they must "make do with 'whatever is at hand'" using bricoles—or odds and ends—collected or kept (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 11). As a metaphor, bricolage speaks to the ways the participants are innovative (in conformity and

through constraint).[172] Innovation is possible and can occur, but it occurs within the context of conformity and constraint. For the participants, social life is a process of constant invention and improvisation within this context. Their stories illustrate the messy contingencies of the everyday making up of their lives as they go along. For example, Abigail and Victoria, whose story features in Chapter 6, are making up the kind of family life they imagine for themselves, by figuring out the 'right' forms of relatedness for Rory as they proceed with their plans to conceive a child with his sperm. They use what they know, what makes sense to them, and what is available to work with in their efforts to establish 'proper' modes of relating. This includes old ideas about couples as parents, biogenetic connectedness and family resemblance, which they cobble together with newer ideas about social parenting and new legislative resources for formalising non-birth mother parenthood.

More specifically, bricolage speaks to the interrelationship between agency and structure that the agency-structure debate emphasises (see for example, Giddens, 1984). The participants' exercise of agency occurs within the context of social structures (or social systems) as socially patterned arrangements, including established institutions and traditions, which create possibilities for action but also restrict action (Gauntlett, 2008). Their agency is always restricted because of what is actually available for them to explore, play around with and cobble together. Abigail and Victoria are agentic in their efforts to activate lesbian parenthood but how they might achieve this is prescribed by a neoliberal homonormative social structure and processes of normalisation, which shape what they can cobble together. A heteronormative model of family is what they know; they plan a conventional family form for this reason. As mentioned in

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[172] Early in the research process, I turned to the metaphor of the palimpsest to conceptualise the participants' reformulation or re-writing of old ideas in new ways. According to Davies (2000), this metaphor is one that "is derived from the image of writing on parchment, writing that was only partially erased to make ways for new writing, each previous writing, therefore, bumping into and shaping the reading of the new layer of writing" (p. 138). In my initial analysis, the participants' re-writing of old ideas existed in palimpsest with the writing of new versions of these ideas. While this metaphor remains salient, much later in the process the metaphor of bricolage took its place, for the ways in which it captures the active, agential process of stitching together the old with the new, rather than a simple re-writing of the old.

Chapter 1, sometimes 'going along' with convention is useful because it reduces the social energy that the negotiation of new circumstances requires (Duncan, 2011).

Duncan (2011) maintains, "Bricolage describes how people actually link structure and agency through their actions" (p. 1). A recurring theme in this thesis, the bricolage-like mix of the old and the new demonstrates the skilful ways the participants use available tools to build creative lives. As Sonia said when her interview began to draw to a close, "This mix ... is very cool."[173]

Putting innovation to work

For the lesbian couples in this study, putting innovation to work can be understood as a creative response to the dilemma of how to form a family and become parents from within the context of a same-sex relationship while providing children with a father or access to information about their paternal origins. When reflecting on this dilemma, Moira commented: "I think we're really unique in the way we're building our family. Because it's taking so much more effort for us—we can't do it as freely [as heterosexuals]. We have to plan and think about things quite carefully." Similarly, for the known donors and their partners, putting innovation to work is a creative response to the quandary gay men can face when they want to contribute to a child's conception and upbringing in some capacity but lack ready access to the means of reproduction—women's bodies. Putting innovation to work allows them to reassert their role in reproduction when negotiating with lesbians. This reassertion occurs from within a historical context that has only recently moved away from a focus on lesbians' reproductive rights as a challenge to patriarchal relations to a focus on gay men's own reproductive needs (Riggs, 2008a; Van Reyk, 1995). Max's story exemplifies these points; mindful he might not ever have the opportunity to become a father/parent, he had concluded he would provide sperm for a lesbian couple should he be asked to do so but also that

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[173] Sonia's stories about her plans to have a child with her best friend Bryson are introduced across several footnotes, in both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

donating would be conditional on his being involved in the parenting of any child.

As noted in Chapter 1, this thesis provides evidence of differences, complexities and nuances in participant openness to innovate and take risks. Both the lesbian couples, and the known donors and their partners, are differently invested in their reproductive projects and this is reflected in their openness to innovate and the kinds of risks they are willing to take. For example, when Deena and Manny first explored entering a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement together, their partners, Mere and Barbara, were particularly open to innovation. Because Mere and Barbara were already mothers/parents to adult children, their identities as parents could be distinguished from Deena and Manny's plans to have a child. They also had less to lose if things did not go according to plan.

For the participating lesbian couples, lesbian known donor reproduction is a risky business. The couples risk their mothering selves and identities. They must manage the difference in status between the partner who anticipates having or already has a biogenetic relationship to a child and the partner without this connection. This difference in status can be a source of friction for some couples (Glazer, 2001; Pelka, 2009), something that was implied in Paige and Ada's separation narrative. Because each (fertile) partner has the reproductive potential to be their child's birth mother, and each has been socialised to believe motherhood is something she is inherently suited to (Crawford, 2014; Sullivan, 2004), each expects a primary mother-child bond. This bond can become contested as the mothers 'compete' for maternal status (Glazer, 2001; S. M. Park, 2013). Similarly, the difference in status between the non-birth mother who has no biogenetic relationship to a child and the known donor who does must also be managed between the couple, and between the couple and the donor, particularly in the face of concerns that he may be considered to be more

important than her (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014).[174] Even in cases of familial donation, he is the conduit that links the non-birth mother's genes to the child.

The couples risk irrevocably altering pre-existing relationships with known donors and in some cases wider family members who are related to their donors. While Victoria was confident her pre-existing relationship with her cousin Rory would weather his role as a donor for the child she was planning with Abigail, she was worried about what this arrangement would mean for relationships between his mother—her aunt—and her own mother. As she said: "His mum is the oldest sister. That's the main person that we're concerned about…. She'll feel like she is the grandmother and that will make my mum feel, I think, I mean I know my mum's got feelings around that."

Newly formed relationships with previously unknown donors can also be a risk for couples if divergent expectations of the reproductive partnership surface, despite careful planning and discussion. Donors might change the agreed conditions of their sperm donation or change their minds about being a donor altogether. Because the demands of recruiting donors and the time this can take is frequently challenging, compromises that were previously considered to be unacceptable can be struck to avoid jeopardising proceeding with a particular donor. Nicole and Jeannie agreed to Max's conditions for participation in the life of their planned child even though an involved father and additional parent had not been part of their plans. Accommodation to his desire to be a father and not just a donor allowed them to progress with conception attempts in a context of previous failed clinic-based attempts.

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[174] Family and friends had sometimes positioned Timothy (introduced in a footnote in Chapter 5) as more important than Eileen, because of her status as a non-birth mother to Amelia and Quentin, the children her partner Sylvie had conceived following his donation of sperm. Timothy thought his relationship with Sylvie was "a lot more civil or normal so to speak", in comparison to his relationship with Eileen, which had been marked by ongoing tension since 11-year-old Amelia's birth. He attributed this tension to the fact that he and Sylvie had a biogenetic connection to the children, whereas Eileen did not. As he said: "It [the tension] is sort of down to the fact that you, as the father and the birth mother, do have a rather sort of special connection and bond in the form of this baby. You're obviously sort of relating to the baby and through the baby to its mother, and so there is a degree of I suppose threat [to the non-birth mother]."

The intrusion of the known donor into the dynamics of couples' intimate relationships and/or their parenting relationships are further risks. Polly and Esther's appreciation for the respect Keane showed for their intimate relationship indicates they were aware that this might not have been the case. The insertion of the donor, and potentially a partner, into coupled parenting relationships risks the possibility of parenting without third or fourth party interference (see for example, Donovan & Wilson, 2008; Hayman et al., 2014; Kranz & Daniluk, 2006; Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014). Couples risk losing the daily care of their planned and actual children should donors want to provide some care in their own homes. But they also risk their children's standard of care, both when the children spend short periods of time in donors' homes and if they stay overnight. When Nicole and Jeannie first allowed Elliot to spend time in Max and Patrick's home without them, they were taken aback on his return to their home to realise his nappy had not been changed as frequently as expected.

Finally, if the couples fail to consider the best interests of children in the matter of a father or to make provision for normative childhoods for them, they risk being considered irresponsible parents, with irresponsibility understood as a source of social ill under neoliberal conditions (Duggan, 2003). Yet paradoxically, they also risk not reproducing conventional nuclear family parenting when they negotiate the expectations of known donors with respect to their status of fathers/parents, even when these donors are not the primary parents. The familial configuration for the couple's children becomes less conventional and more innovative when donors are actually involved in some parenting tasks and especially if parenting occurs across households, as illustrated by Polly and Esther's story and Deena, Mere, Manny and Barbara's story in Chapter 5.

Putting convention to work

Putting innovation to work is closely tied to putting convention to work. As a resource, putting convention to work supported the lesbian couples in this study to manage these and other risks as they move into unknown social territory. These couples are charting this territory, which is shaped by homonormative processes of normalisation, through their experimentation within a context with a lot of unpredictability. In this uncertain context, utilising established

heterosexual kinship conventions and constructing donors as supplementary or subordinate actors becomes a way of exerting control as the couples seek to form and organise acceptable family lives, while simultaneously saving social energy and seeking social legitimation. Duncan (2011) suggests that the conservation of social energy is linked to social legitimation:

> People need existing reference points to make sense of their adaptive behaviours, both to themselves and to others. It is far easier if what they are doing is generally accepted as a 'right' and 'sensible' way of doing things, even better if the new adaption appears 'legitimate' or even 'natural.' Bricolage, then, can become part of the 'naturalisation' of social life. (p. 8)

As argued in Chapter 2, the couples' commitment to coupledom as the proper basis for intimacy and primary motherhood/parenthood, in combination with household arrangements and use of a known donor willing to either be a father or accessible as a future source of information about paternal origins, highlights the legitimacy of their families. For some couples, distinguishing between donors as fathers but not parents, or locating donors as family friends whose connection to the child is not necessarily public but can be 'known' and communicated to the child in the future is particularly important, because this further reinforces family legitimacy. "Bricolage" therefore, "is not just about adapting from existing practices to create something new, but about successful institutionalisation and social reproduction of this new practice over time" (Duncan, 2011, p. 9).

Consistent with the findings of Heaphy et al. (2013), in choosing to put convention to work, these couples, like the couples in their study, are not 'unreflexively' pursuing conventional scripts. Rather, they actively script convention through their narratives. As illustrated in Chapter 6, Genevieve was highly reflexive in her scripting of convention, articulating a desire for a traditional family. While the couples' visibility as intending or established two-mother/parent families structurally challenges conventionally patterned families, by and large they reframe heterosexual kinship conventions, rather than transforming them. Following Hertz (2002), they might be "agents in their own lives" but they "lack sufficient power to transform the two-parent heterosexual family by themselves" (p. 2).

Putting convention to work is also a resource for known donors and their partners, who similarly actively script convention in their strategic adoption or acceptance of a subordinate status relative to the lesbian couples, a recurring theme in their narratives. The convention that mothers are more significant to a child's upbringing than fathers and the conventions that pattern gendered heterosexual parenting scripts were generally accepted by them. None of the donors or their partners suggested they should provide the primary residential care of their planned or actual children in place of the lesbian couples, even where they had initiated the process of becoming fathers themselves, although Kole and Fraser aspired to an equitable shared parenting arrangement. In effect, these particular conventions, which were underpinned by a discourse of paternal choice and reinforced through divorce or separation patterns for non-resident fathers/parents, serve to support the kinds of fatherhood/parenthood the men imagine or have already established for themselves. In most cases, the forms of fatherhood/parenthood they choose allow them to limit traditionally feminized childrearing and domestic tasks to varying extents thereby reifying the existing gender order. At the same time, the men's acceptance of these conventions also empowers the lesbian couples in negotiations about their positioning in children's lives.

'Both and' or 'either or'?

The findings of this study raise questions about the extent to which reliance on a singular conceptual framework in accounting for narratives about lesbian and gay family lives in New Zealand is of continuing use. Weston's (1991) 'families of choice' framing that depicts lesbians and gay men as relationally innovative is now dated. While this framing drew attention to lesbian and gay agency in family-building activities, it has subsequently been criticised on the grounds that 'choice', in family formation, is rarely fully 'free' despite neoliberal agendas that suggest otherwise (Heaphy, 2016). The more recent Heaphy et al. (2013) mainstreaming of same-sex intimate relations framing that depicts lesbians and gay men as relationally conventional provides a much needed contemporary perspective on lesbian and gay family life. While both these framings have something to offer, the relationally innovative/relationally conventional

dichotomy that is set up fails to explain the variety of ways in which the lesbian, gay and heterosexual participants in this study put *both* innovation and convention—or the old and the new—to work.

In attending to the details of the interrelationships between innovation and convention, the bricolage-framing put forward in this thesis offers something more. It explains the participants' constant inventiveness—their stitching of the old and the new together as they adapt and improvise in their construction of particular selves, identities, family relationships and different forms of relatedness. At the same time, it speaks to the exercise of agency—but not at the expense of a consideration of structural constraints. Finally, it also illustrates the ongoing salience of *both* the old and the new and the need to be attentive to and explicit about both.

Both the bricolage-framing appealed to in this thesis and the notion that lesbian known donor familial configurations are created through bricolage-like processes extends on the current global knowledge about these family forms. This is another major contribution of this thesis, besides the documentation of significant variety in the negotiation of the position of known donors already mentioned and other contributions outlined later in this chapter. To reiterate a point made at the start of this thesis, the participants in this study inhabit a complex, negotiated space. Neither bold new postmodern family forms nor sites of social normalisation, the emerging or existing familial configurations documented here are consistently 'both and' with respect to innovation and convention, rather than 'either or.'

Narratives, selves and identities

In Chapter 2, my discussion of narrativity included the place of public narratives as resources for people's stories about self, other and experience—stories that are assembled from these and other kinds of resources. But this discussion also drew attention to the ways in which story is used by people to construct particular selves and identities, a process illustrated by the narratives of family formation and practice highlighted and analysed in the findings chapters. As mentioned earlier, the themes of self and identity construction across these

narratives of family formation and practice intersect with the tension between innovation and convention. The participants use their stories to identify, construct and perform themselves as particular kinds of people—mothers, fathers, parents, uncles or friends—but they also construct and perform themselves in particular kinds of ways. Sometimes, they construct and perform themselves as innovators. Polly and Esther's sense of themselves as innovators, reflected in their commitment to a non-traditional tri-parenting alliance, provides a salient example. And sometimes, like Polly and Esther, they construct and perform themselves as reflective, personally responsible adults who sought to provide their planned or actual children with the security of conventional family and parenting models through—amongst other things—the provision of a father.

The participants' active and shifting self and identity construction also provides examples of relational becoming in lesbian known donor reproduction. This was another focus for the discussion on narrativity in Chapter 2, which I extended on with reference to social connectivity and the role of interactional processes in Chapter 3. While the participants' stories accomplish certain sorts of selves and identities as they negotiate how they want to be known in the act of telling stories to me, my (future) anticipated research audience and other members of their familial configurations, their selves and identities are always relative to these others, determined relationally.

The design of this research and commitment to narrative facilitated my collection, interpretation and narration of storied material—including my analysis of the themes of self and identity construction summarised here—and the subsequent production of stories in this thesis about lesbian known donor reproduction. But the research design and attention to narrative has also allowed me to make an important methodological contribution with respect to the problem of capturing whole stories. I discuss my solution to this problem later in this chapter.

The relational significance of openness in assisted reproduction

In a social context where reproductive technologies contribute to an ever more intricate relational panorama, new ways of negotiating relatedness becomes particularly salient for both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies. When known donors provide sperm, eggs or embryos to prospective parents, or when surrogates provide womb services to them, these recipients, and any children subsequently born, must manage and integrate the known donor or surrogate identity into the life of the family in some way. Exploring relational possibilities between all of the parties concerned could be expected to contribute to this process. Considering different ways of defining who counts as kin and who and what might define a mother, a father, or a parent could also be expected to make a useful contribution.

Similarly, where knowable donors provide sperm, eggs or embryos to prospective parents, these recipients must make decisions about how the story of the knowable donor will be developed and shared with the children that result. Research evidence discussed in Chapter 6 attests to the ways both recipients and their children can form imaginary or enigmatic relationships to anonymous sperm donors, a finding applicable to knowable donors of sperm, eggs and embryos. As observed in Chapter 1, the openness policy in New Zealand that led to the legal provision for knowable donors through the mechanism of the HART Act 2004 as the only legal alternative to a known donor did not occur in a social cultural vacuum. Upholding the Treaty of Waitangi required any new developments in assisted reproductive technologies to preserve the rights of Treaty partners. In line with the significance attributed to whakapapa, this included the right to known genetic origins. Thus the Treaty provides background context for the emergence of knowable donors as a method for securing this right in donor conception through the identity release provisions of this act. The act itself potentially signals a shift towards the more open, extended family structure noted within traditional Māori concepts of family formation in contemporary legal understandings of family in New Zealand society (Legge et al., 2006).

Preparedness to address actual relational possibilities between recipients, their children and knowable donors of sperm, eggs and embryos, rather than imaginary or enigmatic relationships, will become increasingly important as the first wave of children born after the HART Act 2004 became operational in 2005 reach maturity. Now in middle childhood, these children can currently request non-identifying information about their sperm, egg or embryo donors from the HART register (or Fertility Associates), but because their parents/guardians can request identifying information up until the children reach 18 years of age, the potential exists for them to learn the identity of their donors at any time before then. When they are 18 years old, children can directly request identifying information themselves and their parents/guardians lose their entitlement to request this.[175] [176]

When this first wave of children does reach 18 years of age, they can also request identifying information about other people conceived by the same donor if those people have given consent. Meanwhile, and up until this time, their parents/guardians can request this information (S. Allan, 2017; Fertility Associates, n.d.). Little is known about whether parents/guardians are choosing to request this information and if they have, whether they have subsequently connected with other parents/guardians and their children, or of the implications of this possibility in New Zealand. As Legge et al. (2006) suggested a decade ago, these potential areas for future inquiry will make for interesting research:

> The really interesting research will begin appearing in the future as the number of people compelled to be identified through the HART Register

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[175] In some circumstances, identifying information may be released to children when they reach 16 or 17 years old, at the discretion of the Family Court.

[176] Even the children resulting from anonymous sperm, egg or embryo donation prior to the act may now access information about their donors, if those donors have consented to Fertility Associates acting as a donor linking service. The Fertility Associate's website includes a section on donor linking. It states: "You may have been an egg, sperm or embryo donor with Fertility Associates in the past and lost contact with us. Now is a great time to reconnect and let us know where you are. If you're interested in hearing about the outcome of your donation or if the children or families you have donated to have any questions or requests, we can contact you. We have a lot of experience helping donors, children and families swap information, which can range from the briefest of details to people meeting. It's simple to take that first step – just fill in the form below."

increases. Which New Zealanders will take up this new expanded family information and under what circumstances? Most particularly, what will be the nature of the kinship connections (if any) between people identified as biological kin through the register? (p. 23)

The relatively new sperm, egg and embryo donor linking services connecting donors and donor offspring in some other countries has recently expanded in the United States to include services that facilitate the kinds of donor-linked family connections the HART Act 2004 foreshadows in New Zealand. These services connect mutually consenting donor-linked families—families who have either used the same knowable sperm donor or the same anonymous sperm donor (Goldberg & Scheib, 2016). These newer services have emerged in response to the needs of such donor-linked families (Goldberg & Scheib, 2015a). The parents and/or children of these families have been sharing donor identification numbers on the internet to find one another for some time (J. Edwards, 2013). In this context, preparedness to address actual relational possibilities between members of these families also becomes increasingly important. Goldberg and Scheib (2016) found that the parents of donor-linked families constructed relationships within them as family relations, friendships or acquaintanceships and, where traditional lexicon failed, as 'unique' and 'special' (for similar findings see also, Freeman, Jadva, Kramer, & Golombok, 2009; Hertz, Nelson, & Kramer, 2017; Scheib & Ruby, 2008). Parents and their children are particularly interested in donor-linked genetic half-sibling relationships, regardless of whether or not they are socially activated (J. Edwards, 2013; Hertz et al., 2017). 'Diblings', J. Edwards (2013) observes, has evolved as "a distinct and distinctive category of kin" (p. 286) that is separate from other forms of half or step-siblings.[177]

In the current context, we can expect that growing numbers of donor sperm, donor egg, donor embryo and surrogate born children will hear and tell stories about relationships with known donors and surrogates, or stories about learning the identity of or meeting knowable donors or members of donor-linked families.

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[177] The postscript to this thesis introduces the two diblings that resulted from Johan's respective donation of sperm to Vivian and Moira and a second lesbian couple.

As a consequence, parents will increasingly feel pressured to be open to the relational possibilities these forms of assisted reproduction can generate, including new categories of relations or those "we do not yet have names for" (Silva & Smart, 1999, p. 10). These are relatively new issues for heterosexual couples who have historically hidden infertility and not disclosed assisted conception methods. Lesbians using known or knowable donors to form two-mother models of family have considerable experience with these issues, because they cannot otherwise easily explain their family form. The active negotiation by these couples of their relationships to known or knowable donors is highly relevant in the New Zealand context for a range of parents and children conceived through assisted reproduction. Access to their stories, and those of their children, may go some way towards addressing the challenges Gibbs and Scherman (2013) suggest the emphasis on openness in New Zealand has brought. As they state: "Openness, while beneficial to the offspring, may be quite challenging for donors and/or parents of donor conceived children. Unfortunately, very little research currently exists that can guide either the practitioners or parents facing this challenge" (p. 21).

The stories of the lesbian couples in this study demonstrate the complexities of making families through lesbian known donor reproduction. But they also demonstrate new ways of anticipating or practising family relationships, different forms of relatedness, and processes of kin differentiation, connection and disconnection through negotiation with known donors and sometimes their partners. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the variety with which the couples negotiate and activate these relationships and forms of relatedness is a theme in this thesis that suggests some measure of agency in the context of constraint. What we learn from the collective stories of the couples, donors and partners is that the donor, and possibly his partner, can always be known in some capacity—a father/parent, a father, an uncle, a friend, or something else altogether. We learn that agency, choice and personal responsibility have a part to play in decisions about how to go about incorporating donors and partners into the family lives of children and that these agendas can contribute to family innovation or more conventional family forms. Finally, we learn that there are

ways to manage fears and tensions about biogenetic and social connections and primary parenting relationships, which are effective for respectful, reciprocal and caring adult-adult and adult-child relationships. The participants in this study demonstrate a range of ways to move through these challenges. In a context where changing legislation is generating a new social territory, their familial configurations contribute important insights into how these new social spaces can be navigated.

Foreclosing or opening up relational possibilities

Social recognition of the relational possibilities that can be generated through assisted reproduction is a challenging task in neoliberal homonormative climates. Prevailing processes of normalisation foreclose critique of existing assisted reproductive practices that uphold heteronormative family models, the law governing these practices, and kinship norms beyond the assisted reproductive context. Within and outside this context, these processes marginalise the plurality of forms of kinship already in existence and forms of relatedness deviating from the norm, while simultaneously constructing the good sexual citizen subject. They have an impact on the development of diverse adult-adult and adult-child relational interconnections, dependencies and care arrangements that potentially expand relational possibilities beyond those currently available in either context.

With respect to the care of children, Hood (2002) observes that in a biogenetic culture of kinship, the mapping of biogenetic motherhood/fatherhood on to social parenthood means there can only ever be a single mother and a single father who together become the parents of a child. Although a biogenetic culture of kinship continues to prevail, practices like adoption have constituted major challenges to biogenetic models of parenting for some time. More recent challenges include those that arise out of heterosexual donor insemination, egg donation and lesbian and gay family formation. These types of challenges have seen the emergence of social cultures of kinship that focus on social parenting. This focus has the potential to facilitate polymaternalism, polypaternalism and polyparentalism or multiple kinds of mothers, fathers and parents. Freed from the "master narrative Mother/Father [which] constructs parenting as both

genetic and exclusive" (Hood, 2002, p. 35), social cultures of kinship allow room for new carers to "enter the scene" (p. 35). Such cultures support existing forms of kinship plurality. Importantly, they also have the potential to support future relational possibilities.

The lesbian known donor familial configurations in this study usually included two kinds of mothers, one or two kinds of fathers and two or more kinds of parents. Some familial configurations also included particular kinds of uncles and friends. A social culture of kinship would allow for a new, broader set of kinship possibilities in addition to these kin categories to emerge (Hood, 2002). Social and formal recognition of a plurality of relational possibilities would go some way towards supporting diverse affective arrangements where adults and children's lives are interconnected in complex, non-traditional ways (Duggan, 2011/2012).

Multi-parent models of family

In the case of intentional multi-parent models of family, social and formal recognition of third or more parents, regardless of these parents' sexual identity, would reflect the reality of parenting and care arrangements for both adults and children.

Some known donors in this study, like Keane and Johan, planned to actively contribute to parenting or were already parenting as part of intentional lesbian and gay multi-parent models of family. However, they did not expect to be or were not legal parents, even where this was their preference. Where this was the case, these donors' planned or actual parenting participation remained largely reliant on the willingness of the lesbian parenting couples to honour pre-conception plans, with both partners in the couple expecting to secure or having already secured legal parenthood for themselves through the provisions of the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, Part 2.[178] Donor-child relationships

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[178] Chapter 2 introduces the details of this act. Polly and Esther's narrative in Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the implications of the act.

therefore contained an element of insecurity (for similar findings see also, Gunn & Surtees, 2009).

The current legal context in New Zealand is complex in its recognition of the partners of birth mothers in same-sex relationships as legal parents while persisting with the assumption that there can only be two legal parents. Currently, known donors to lesbian couples can mitigate the insecurity of their position in two key ways. As discussed in Chapter 5, donors can come to a formal agreement with the legal parents of a child about involvement and then seek a consent order that reflects some or all of the conditions of the agreement under the Care of Children Act 2004. Or, as some of the donors in this study planned to do, or had done, they can apply to the Family Court to become an additional guardian under the same act.[179]

Despite the progressive nature of New Zealand law with respect to relationship and parenting recognition, rules determining parental status fall short in lesbian and gay multiple parenting projects (Gunn & Surtees, 2009; Legge et al., 2006; Surtees, 2011). While these projects have primarily been associated with lesbians and gay men, the rules determining parental status also fall short for heterosexuals engaging in such projects. For example, problems could arise for heterosexual parents utilising donated gametes if they wished to foster a parenting relationship between the woman who provided eggs to a birth mother that subsequently allowed the birth mother to conceive and the resulting child, or between a woman acting as a surrogate and the resulting child.

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[179] Known donors can also seek to adopt the children conceived with their sperm. Adoption transfers legal parenthood, but because it also extinguishes the rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the other parent(s), it is unlikely to be pursued (Gunn & Surtees, 2009). In an exception in this study, Anton (introduced in a footnote in Chapter 7) pursued adoption of his son Levi. Anton is Levi's biogenetic father; he provided the sperm for the surrogate he and his partner Tremain had commissioned to conceive and carry Levi for them. In law, Anton was initially framed as a known donor, although he did not think of himself in this way. As a known donor, his legal parenthood was extinguished on the birth of Levi, which meant the boy had only one legal parent—the surrogate, his biogenetic mother. When Anton went on to successfully adopt Levi, the surrogate's parenthood was transferred to him via this process, the only mechanism available to him for gaining legal parenthood. Tremain, Levi's social father/parent, anticipated becoming a court-appointed additional guardian to him. He could not adopt Levi, because adoption only ever transfers existing parenthood from one person to another and no other person had legal parenthood of him that could be relinquished.

A recent study by Jadva, Freeman, Tranfield, and Golombok (2015) found that with the increasing use of reproductive technologies and the profusion of diverse family forms, a growing number of single heterosexuals are choosing to form elective co-parenting arrangements with other single heterosexuals with the aim of having and raising children together. This new phenomenon, which they attribute to the rise of co-parenting connection websites which facilitate contact between people who have not previously met and who share this aim, was not always confined to arrangements between two single parents, but also included arrangements between partnered parents. This resulted in multiple adults collectively raising a child in much the same way as occurs in lesbian and gay or heterosexual multiple parenting projects. Because co-parenting websites make elective co-parenting readily accessible to significant numbers of people in ways not possible prior to the internet, the findings of their study indicates further work in this area is needed in order to develop understanding about this phenomenon (see also, Ravelingien, Provoost, & Pennings, 2016). Similarly, because both lesbian and gay and heterosexual multiple parenting projects are relatively rare and under researched (for the former, see Goldberg, 2010; Power, Perlesz, Brown, et al., 2010), longitudinal work could inquire into how the kinds of multi-parent relationships and arrangements envisaged in the planning stages materalise and whether or not they are maintained in the long term.

The stories of the three sets of gay couples in Chapter 7 suggest that there are benefits to multi-parenting projects for parents and children. The couples were all willing to navigate the logistical and legal dimensions inherent to these projects, in a context where assumptions that a child will have only two parents continues to prevail. In New Zealand, the kinds of complex situations emerging from such projects could be resolved if legal provisions were made for more than two parents to be identified in law, subject to the wishes of the parties concerned (Gunn & Surtees, 2009; Law Commission, 2005). Commentators in varied international contexts have made similar recommendations (see for example,

Bartlett, 1984; Dietz & Wallbank, 2015; Polikoff, 1990; Ryan-Flood, 2009).[180] Importantly, this would readdress the problems parents without legal status can face, as well as disadvantages to children, including the loss of rights that would otherwise flow from these parents, such as citizenship and inheritance. Significantly, access to these parents could not be denied to children as can sometimes occur when conflict between parents with and without this status occurs, despite previously agreed plans for the ongoing active involvement of all parents (Gunn & Surtees, 2009). Currently, the situation in New Zealand remains unsettled and unsatisfactory with the political climate less receptive to the need to respond to the issues these projects raise (Kelly & Surtees, 2013).

Contributions and challenges

As the first study of its kind in New Zealand, this thesis contributes to sociological knowledge about intimate life. More specifically, it contributes to sociological knowledge about the problem of how to view relatedness in lesbian known donor reproduction, from the perspectives of lesbians, known donors, and known donor partners. Following Berkowitz (2011), bringing the stories of lesbians, known donors, and known donor partners into dialogue with theories and scholarship on same-sex and heterosexual intimacies and families in this thesis facilitates subtle, nuanced distinctions in understandings about these core areas of sociological inquiry.

Moreover, as the first study of its kind in New Zealand, this thesis attests to the influence of cultural context on lesbian known donor reproduction, a point previously made with reference to Ryan-Flood's (2005) research. The ways in which whakapapa was used by some Māori and Pākeha participants in this study, as a key cultural resource for their stories about the choice to use a known donor and why this mattered to them, speaks directly to the influence of culture. The same can also be said in relation to Māori and Pākeha participants' use of whānau in stories about the kinds of familial configurations they planned to or

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[180] Several countries do now legislate for two plus parents, but these countries are in the minority (see for example, Dietz & Wallbank, 2015; Swennen & Croce, 2015).

had already formed. As a familiar part of everyday lexicon in New Zealand, this resource was also readily available for and used by several immigrant participants.

The different familial configurations in this study provide examples of a view of family based in networks of relationships. This is a view that has come about through changes such as increasing separation, divorce and repartnering, points that were first made in Chapter 1. The illustration of the wide-ranging use of divorce discourse by participants in the study is another key contribution of this thesis that draws attention to some of the ways the normalisation of divorce influences contemporary families. Resonating with Stacey's (1996) notion of the divorce extended family, divorce discourse was used in relation to maintaining open family boundaries and embracing a diverse relationship base for children. But it was also used to frame participant understandings about cross-residential parenting arrangements, including the possibilities and demands of co-parenting. Because these (and other) uses of this discourse have not been previously identified in research into lesbian known donor reproduction, this study further extends the existing global knowledge about lesbian known donor family forms.

The contribution of this thesis is not just in the area of theorising, analysing and extending the sociological literature on intimacies, family figurations and family practices. It also contributes to models of how personal narrative and attempts to tell stories about selves and identities can generate insights into the complexity of what is often framed as agency-structure, as discussed in this chapter.

Methodologically, the research strategy and the commitment to narrative inquiry and context is another contribution. Although Leggo (2004) insists narrative inquiry never enables us to capture the whole story, others claim this form of inquiry attempts to do this (Webster & Mertova, 2007). A challenge in this thesis has been capturing whole stories. My solution is the identification of particular narratives about specific familial configurations. This has enabled me to maintain the capacity to tell whole stories—or at least stories that preserve the

rich detail found in long sequences. It has also enabled me to tell these stories with different voices. In retaining the complexity of participant stories about selves and identities and the negotiation of social relationships and kinship boundary definition, this solution proved valuable. But because telling whole stories was not enough, another challenge was how I might best consider these in relation to other stories and the wider context.

In this thesis I have demonstrated how in the body of a single thesis, it is possible to tell whole stories while drawing on, as context, a wider range of interview material in footnotes set within a broader context of—in this case—narrative, neoliberal homonormativity politics, processes of normalisation and legislation. The analytic strategy of contextualising the core narratives through footnoting fragments of stories relating to other participants in this study and the extensive use of relevant literature has accomplished this. Cobley (2014) states, "Even the most 'simple' of stories is embedded in a network of relations that is sometimes astounding in its complexity" (p. 2). Using whole stories, story fragments and literature has allowed me to attend to some of these relations by connecting biography with context.

Further research directions

This study attempts to fill a gap in knowledge about lesbian known donor reproduction. As a small, qualitative study it is inevitably limited. More research in the area with more people is needed. Such research needs to be attuned to the levels of variety noted in this study, including the openness to innovate and take risks as well as the degree of conformity to dominant models of parenting and family life. I have identified several possible directions for further research specific to lesbians becoming parents through negotiating relationships with known donors. Consistent with my earlier point that new ways of negotiating relatedness is pertinent for both same-sex and heterosexual intimacies in a context where reproductive technologies contribute to an increasingly intricate relational landscape, I have also identified several broader directions for further research.

What the known donors and some of their partners in this study have to say about their position and place in the lives of future and current children indicates more research is needed to explore ways to incorporate them, including possible frameworks or exemplars for achieving this. While we know something about this from the perspective of the lesbian couples, this study indicates we need to hear more from donors and their partners. This is especially so, given the ways they are positioned as adjuncts to prospective and established lesbian parents. Investigating scenarios for how these donors and their partners can develop an appropriate standard of care when they are not primary parents will also be important.

Moreover, we need to hear from children. The literature addresses lesbian parents' perceptions about how their children construct and make sense of their relationships to known donors but not whether children themselves agree with their parents' perceptions (Goldberg & Scheib, 2016). To date, what children say about these relationships remains an under researched area that warrants further attention (but see Goldberg & Allen, 2013; Tasker & Granville, 2011). Goldberg and Allen's (2013) study of young adults who were raised by lesbian parents found that as children move into adolescence they become more active in negotiating these relationships. How all of the parties concerned experience relational transitions over time will also be a fruitful area for further research.

Another area where research is needed relates to the legislative context addressed in this thesis. As the legislative provisions for same-sex marriage and legal parenthood for non-birth mothers in New Zealand continues to bed down, research exploring how these provisions influence lesbian family relationships and practices and parenting discourses will help inform future policy directions. How have formalising couple relationships, and legal parenthood for non-birth mothers (and non-birth mothers' increased visibility), been productive and problematic in lesbian parented families?

This study highlights the need to research the processes of separation used by lesbian couples. Inquiring into the before and after patterns of birth mothers/non-birth mothers' involvement in day-to-day care of children

conceived through known donor insemination and work outside the home arrangements will be useful. Nina and Ellen and Paige and Ada's divergent separation arrangements[181] suggests understanding more about the range of arrangements possible post separation is needed. Comparing arrangements where couples accessed legal resources to support their couple relationship and the non-birth mother parent-child relationship prior to separation and where they did not (either because they chose not to or because they were not available to them at that time) would also be interesting.

Finally, broader directions for further research that is not exclusive to lesbians becoming parents through negotiating relationships with known donors could include research into multi-household parenting. For example, the households of heterosexual parents, where the cross-residential care of children is shared with others who have biogenetic or social parent relationships with those children. Questions that could usefully be asked include how do parents in a variety of households of parents rear children across households? What understandings of parenting are used? What conceptions of biogenetic and social parenting are used? And, how is conventional thinking and innovation combined?

The familial future: On the cusp

In this thesis, I achieve my overall aim of exploring the contours of lesbian known donor reproduction through a detailed analysis of the negotiation of the place of known donors in the family lives of the children whose conception they expect to or have facilitated. Broadening the inclusion criteria from a focus on lesbians and gay men who were planning to or had already created a family and become parents together to incorporate heterosexual men and their partners and a range of social identity and role possibilities besides 'father' and 'parent' contributed to realising the study aim. With little empirical attention to date on the social ramifications of the increasing trend for lesbians and heterosexuals to use known donors in New Zealand, documenting and making accessible new

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[181] Nina and Ellen's separation arrangements feature in a footnote in Chapter 5 (their familial configuration is introduced in an earlier footnote in that chapter). Paige and Ada's separation arrangements are covered in their narrative in Chapter 5.

possibilities for family relationships and practices of relevance for all is important.

Legge et al. (2006) state:

> In the New Zealand situation, the continued use of assisted reproductive technology within a liberal social environment has resulted in a broadening out of the traditional nuclear concept of family to new, wider, post-ART family formations and their recognition in the national legislature and government bureaucracy. The moral and symbolic reign of the orthodox nuclear family over the contemporary experience of choice and individualism in kinship connections may be reaching its abdication point in contemporary New Zealand society. (p. 24)

With the continued use of assisted reproductive technology set to increase, more people, regardless of sexual identity, will face a complex familial future as a result of unconventional pathways to conception. The stories of the women and men in this thesis are on the cusp of new public narratives; theirs are narratives that could become valuable resources for prospective parents at this particular 'abdication point', as they navigate the uncertainties and challenges of these pathways and their consequences.

Postscript

Lydia and Roslyn

Lydia and Roslyn's daughter Lola, who was conceived with Curtis' sperm, was born some eight months after their interview. Lola was given both women's last names, hyphenated.

Abigail and Victoria

Several months after their interview, Abigail and Victoria began a year of unsuccessful clinic-based insemination attempts using Rory's sperm, before turning to IVF. Jonas was eventually conceived by this method with the same source of sperm. Nearly two years later, Elsa was born. Although the women originally planned for Victoria to carry their second child, which would have necessitated a new source of sperm, Abigail carried this child, who was also conceived with Rory's sperm. The women were considering whether or not to have a third child.

Kole and Fraser

Two months after their interview, Kole and Fraser reported that the lesbian couple they messaged after reading their online profile, and who they were waiting to hear from at the time of the interview, had responded to them. The men liked Stella and Renee and were engaged in discussion about the possibility of forming a reproductive relationship with them.

One month later, I interviewed Stella and Renee. They had been together for more than four years and were civil union partners. Describing themselves as older prospective mothers/parents, they planned to each birth a child, with Stella to conceive first. They had spent some years searching for suitable known donors and negotiated with at least six men, before Kole and Fraser messaged them. Stella recalled their first meeting with the men over coffee: "They were very nervous.… We really liked them. They were so sweet.… We said: 'don't worry, we like you! We really like you.' So that was nice." Over the course of several meetings, the two sets of couples reached a sperm donation and shared

parenting agreement which would distribute parenting across the couples' homes. Practical details remained a work in progress.

Like Kole and Fraser, Stella and Renee saw advantages in distributed parenting. As Renee said: "We really like having four people involved and also to share, really, the work, not only the pleasure but the work. You know?" They also believed a number of dedicated adults in children's lives would be an advantage for them, another perspective matching that of the men's. At the time of the women's interview, they were about a month out from their first insemination attempt. Projecting ahead to the conception of their first born, Stella reports she said to "the boys": "We should not lose the sense of the miracle and humour in this … Two gay couples, having a baby."

Wilson and Johan

In the years following the interview held with Wilson, Vivian and Moira, both sets of couples shared their conception journey through occasional emails. This was a journey that began with home-based inseminations as planned, but became progressively more medicalised in response to Vivian's unexpected difficulties in conceiving. Having successfully navigated sensitivities about the significance of biogenetic fatherhood/parenthood to Wilson, in response to the likelihood his reduced sperm motility would make it difficult for him to achieve this form of connectedness with the couples' planned child, this was a disappointing set back. As Vivian noted:

> We've spent so many years not having heterosexual sex that when we inseminated we thought it would work straight away. I think heterosexual couples who start trying after years of using contraception are also shocked if they have problems conceiving … infertility seems to be a new problem of our generation.

Following a year of home-based inseminations and six months of clinic-based intra-uterine inseminations with daily hormone injections, Vivian and Moira turned to IVF. Meanwhile, Johan reported, "I am doing everything possible to make the swimmers fit and nimble." After nine cycles of IVF treatment, Vivian conceived Marlon.

Reflecting on his and Johan's involvement with Marlon a year after his birth, Wilson said:

> I cannot say that the arrangement we have could be determined as co-parenting. Vivian and Moira are the primary parents, and we visit on average once a week as part of his routine, mostly in his home setting. This may look different from what we originally expressed in our interview.

He then went on to share a "surprise development"—*a little girl called Lizzy*.[182] Johan explained:

> After Marlon was born, I had some sperm left in storage … After I heard that a lot of male donors specifically exclude lesbians and single women, I made sure I donated to one such. As a result, I now have a second child, a little girl called Lizzy…. Although [it is] not the same relationship as with Marlon, it's lovely to have a little girl too.

Like the men's arrangements with Vivian and Moira, which *look[ed] different* to the arrangements that had been imagined pre-conception (something Vivian and Moira had separately indicated), the men's arrangements with Lizzy's lesbian parents looked different to what had been imagined. Drawing attention to the difference between aspirations and practices, lesbian known donor reproductive agreements made pre-conception are sometimes perceived of as static (Dempsey, 2012a). Wilson and Johan's experience suggests that relationships and roles will need to be negotiated in an ongoing way in response to the reality of life with young children.

Max and Patrick

Max and Patrick became fathers/parents to a second child some two years after their interview. During the interview, the men had spoken about the possibilities of becoming fathers/parents to another child—a brother or sister for Elliot—an option they welcomed. Nicole and Jeannie however, had some reservations. Jeannie laughingly reported the men had been putting "the hard word on." The men eventually brought the women around to their point of view and Gabrielle

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[182] Lizzy is a 'dibling' to Marlon. See Chapter 8 for a discussion of diblings.

was subsequently born. Max provided the sperm for her conception and Nicole conceived and carried her.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics approval

Human Ethics Committee

Tel: +64 3 364 2241, Fax: +64 3 364 2856, Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Ref: HEC 2009/158

6 November 2009

Nicola Surtees
School of Maori, Social & Cultural Studies in Education
College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Nicola

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal "Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children" has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 4 November 2009.
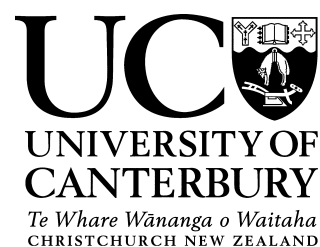
Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair, Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 2: Recruitment advertisement template

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Lesbians and gay men creating family together

My name is Nicola Surtees and I am studying towards a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) at the University of Canterbury. My doctoral study will investigate the intended and actual parenting of lesbians and gay men who have teamed up to produce and raise children together. I hope this study will increase knowledge about family and parenting possibilities of relevance to all people in an increasingly complex society, not just those who identify as lesbian or gay. I am currently recruiting for participants in this study across two categories:

Potential co-parents of prospective families
Self-identified lesbians and gay men over the age of 18 who consider themselves to be potential co-parents actively planning to create family with other lesbians or gay men in the immediate future. Members of such a prospective family might, for example, include two intending lesbian mothers and an intending gay father who will act as a donor. Or, it might include an intending lesbian surrogate and a gay couple who are planning to parent with one another. Please note however, there is no restriction on the shape prospective families might take.
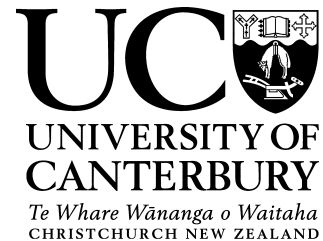
Co-parents of existing families
Self-identified lesbians and gay men over the age of 18 who together conceived and now co-parent children, either within a single household or across households.

If you are lesbian or gay and either planning to create a family in this way, or currently co-parenting, and want to find out more about this study please contact me. I would like to talk to you about what participation will involve and will not assume that such contact involves a commitment to be part of this study.

Nicola Surtees
Lecturer
University of Canterbury
College of Education
School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 3: Information sheet for potential co-parents of prospective families[183]

April 2010

Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children

Kia ora,

My name is Nicola Surtees and I am a lecturer at the University of Canterbury in the School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education, College of Education. I am studying towards a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) at the University in the School of Social and Political Sciences under the supervision of Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis and Dr Kathleen Quinlivan. My doctoral study will investigate the intended and actual parenting of lesbians and gay men who have teamed up to produce and raise children together. I hope this study will increase knowledge about family and parenting possibilities of relevance to all people in an increasingly complex society, not just those who identify as lesbian or gay.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. In order to do so, you will need to self-identify as either lesbian or gay, be over the age of 18 and consider yourself a potential co-parent who is actively planning to create a family together with other lesbians or gay men. Members of such a prospective family might, for example, include two intending lesbian mothers and an intending gay father who will act as a donor. Or, it might include an intending lesbian surrogate and a gay couple, all of who wish to parent with one another. Please note however, there is no restriction on the shape *your* prospective family might take. Participation will include one group interview with other members of your prospective family and one individual interview. This information sheet contains details about these interviews.

Ideally, the group interview will include all members of your prospective family but the choice about who is present will be left to you and your prospective family. In the group interview, you will be asked general questions about the

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[183] Original information sheet for potential co-parents of prospective families submitted to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

sorts of family you are hoping to create together, how you came to be planning for parenthood and your planning processes. However, your perspectives will play a large role in determining the direction of the interview.

Individual interviews with as many of the members of your prospective family as possible will follow the group interview. A range of topics will be explored in these interviews including the understanding you have about family and their relationships to your plans, as well as similarities and differences in perceptions between all those concerned. Again, your perspectives will play a large role in determining the direction of the interview.

Both the group interview and individual interviews will last from one to one and a half hours and will be held during 2010 in settings of your choice (or, for Christchurch based participants, if preferred, in a meeting room at the University of Canterbury). All interviews will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and I will later transcribe this data. You will receive a hard copy of the transcript and will be invited to comment on it if you wish to, to assist in the accurate recording of the interview.

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data will be securely stored in a password protected computer or locked office for five years following the study with access restricted to my supervisors and myself. Please also note your real name and other identifying information about you and your prospective family will not be used in the study or related publications or presentations.

Participation in the study is voluntary. If you or members of your prospective family do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study and/or to withdraw information or data at any time up until the final draft findings stage. If you find you would like support as a result of participation, you could contact Rainbow Families New Zealand, an organisation that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered parents, prospective parents and their children. You can find them at: www.rainbowfamiliesnz.org.

All information provided in the course of this study will be used in my doctoral research and related publications and presentations. You and your prospective family will have access to the end result of this study, the thesis.

If you and other members of your prospective family would like to participate, please complete an individual consent form (attached) and return to me by 30 April 2010. If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact one of my supervisors or me:

Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis   Dr Kathleen Quinlivan
University of Canterbury   University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences   College of Education
Private Bag 4800   Educational Studies and Human
Christchurch 8140   Development
03 364 2987 ext 6878   Private Bag 4800
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   Christchurch 8140

03 364 2987 ext 4829
kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. Complaints may be addressed to:

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

Thank you for considering the invitation to participate in this study.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Surtees
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Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 4: Consent form for potential co-parents of prospective families[184]

Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children

The researcher, Nicola Surtees, lecturer at the University of Canterbury in the School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education and doctoral student in the School of Social and Political Sciences, has explained the nature of this research project to me. I have read the provided information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I agree to participate.

I understand that all information provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors, and that the data gathered will be stored securely for five years following the project.

I understand that my real name or other identifying information about my prospective family and me will not be used in the project or related publications or presentations.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw myself, information about myself, or my data, at any time up until the final draft findings stage.

If I have any questions or concerns about the research project I will contact Nicola Surtees or either of her academic supervisors at the University of Canterbury:

Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis   Dr Kathleen Quinlivan
03 364 2987 ext 6878   03 364 2987 ext 4829
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

If I have a complaint about the project I will address this to:

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

---

[184] Original consent form for potential co-parents of prospective families submitted to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:
Date:
Signature:
Contact phone number:
Contact email address:
Contact address:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided by 9 July 2010 to:

Nicola Surtees
University of Canterbury
College of Education
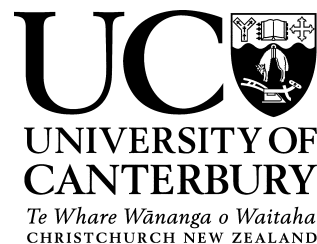School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 5: Information sheet for co-parents of existing families[185]

April 2010

Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children

Kia ora,

My name is Nicola Surtees and I am a lecturer at the University of Canterbury in the School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education, College of Education. I am studying towards a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) at the University in the School of Social and Political Sciences under the supervision of Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis and Dr Kathleen Quinlivan. My doctoral study will investigate the intended and actual parenting of lesbians and gay men who have teamed up to produce and raise children together. I hope this study will increase knowledge about family and parenting possibilities of relevance to all people in an increasingly complex society, not just those who identify as lesbian or gay.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I would like to talk to people over the age of 18 and part of a family group made up of one or more self-identified lesbians and one or more self-identified gay men who have teamed up to conceive and co-parent children. They may live together or in different households. Participation will involve one group interview with other members of your family and one individual interview. This information sheet contains details about these interviews.

Ideally, the group interview will involve all members of your family including any dependent children under the age of 18, but the choice about who is present will be left to you and your family. The group interview will be very informal and will focus on how you planned to become parents, the relationship between what was planned and what actually happens, and the practicalities of day-to-day management of arrangements. I would like to hear your stories about how you became parents and what you do as parents. If any children are present, they will be encouraged to join in the discussion, but will not be pressured to say anything

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[185] Original information sheet for co-parents of existing families submitted to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

if they don't want to do so. Children will also be provided with an array of art resources with which to draw pictures and diagrams about their family (and anything else they want to draw). If children are not present, I will ask you to talk to them about drawing a picture or diagram of your family to give to me at a later point. I will give you art resources to take home for this purpose.

Individual interviews with as many of the adult members of your family as possible will follow the group interview. A range of topics will be explored in these interviews including what understandings you have about family and your individual story as a parent. Your perspectives will play a large role in determining the direction of the interview.

Both the group interview and individual interviews will last from one to one and a half hours and will be held sometime during 2010 in settings of your choice (or, for Christchurch based participants, in a meeting room at the University of Canterbury). All interviews will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and I will later transcribe this data. You will receive a hard copy of the transcript and will be invited to comment on it if you wish to, to assist in the accurate recording of the interview.

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data will be securely stored in a password protected computer or locked office for five years following the study with access restricted to my supervisors and myself. Please also note that your real name and other identifying information about you and your family will not be used in the study or related publications or presentations.

Participation in the study is voluntary. If you or members of your family do participate, each of you (including children) has the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study and/or to withdraw information or data at any time up until the final draft findings stage. If you find you would like support as a result of participation, you could contact Rainbow Families New Zealand, an organisation that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered parents, prospective parents and their children. You can find them at: www.rainbowfamiliesnz.org.

All information provided in the course of this study will be used in my doctoral research and related publications and presentations. You and your family will have access to the end result of this study, the thesis.

Consent procedures for adult members of your family
All adult members of your family who wish to participate in this study will need to complete an individual consent form.

Consent procedures for children in your family
A legal parent or guardian for children in your family will need to complete a separate consent form giving permission for the participation of your children in the study. Children's participation in the study is limited; consent is necessary for the inclusion of their verbal contributions to group interviews and/or inclusion of their illustrations as study data.

Children will have the opportunity to read or have a parent or guardian read them a child-friendly version of this information sheet and to sign their own consent forms. Where children agree to participate they can sign, or be supported by a parent or guardian to sign (or in some way mark), a consent form. This step will be dependent on the age and ability of individual children.

The children's information sheet and both sets of consent forms are attached. If you and other members of your family would like to participate, please complete the appropriate consent form and return to me by 30 April 2010. If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact one of my supervisors or me:

Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2987 ext 6878
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz

Dr Kathleen Quinlivan
University of Canterbury
College of Education
Educational Studies and Human Development
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2987 ext 4829
kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. Complaints may be addressed to:

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

Thank you for considering the invitation to participate in this study.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Surtees
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03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 6: Consent form for co-parents of existing families[186]

Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children

The researcher, Nicola Surtees, lecturer at the University of Canterbury in the School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education and doctoral student in the School of Social and Political Sciences, has explained the nature of this research project to me. I have read the provided information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I agree to participate.

I understand that all information provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors, and that the data gathered will be stored securely for five years following the project.

I understand that my real name or other identifying information about my family and me will not be used in the project or related publications or presentations.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw myself, information about myself, or my data, at any time up until the final draft findings stage.

If I have any questions or concerns about the research project I will contact Nicola Surtees or either of her academic supervisors at the University of Canterbury:

Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis   Dr Kathleen Quinlivan
03 364 2987 ext 6878   03 364 2987 ext 4829
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

If I have a complaint about the project I will address this to:

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

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[186] Original consent form for co-parents of existing families submitted to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:
Date:
Signature:
Contact phone number:
Contact email address:
Contact address:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided by 30 April 2010 to:

Nicola Surtees
University of Canterbury
College of Education
School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 7: Prospective family constellation make up at time of interview

Family constellation make up	Lesbian couple	Single lesbian	Gay couple	Heterosexual couple	Single gay man	Single heterosexual man
Two inclusive of a lesbian couple & a gay couple	Vivian & Moira		Wilson & Johan[i]			
	Renee & Stella		Kole & Fraser			
Two inclusive of a lesbian couple & a heterosexual couple	Reese & Simone			Jake & Lavinia[ii]		
	Lydia & Roslyn			Curtis & Claire[iii]		
Two inclusive of a lesbian couple & a single gay man	Esther & Polly				Keane[iv]	
	Asha & Tracy				Kieran	
A lesbian couple & a single heterosexual man	Abigail & Victoria					Rory[v]
A single lesbian & a gay couple		Sonia	Bryson & Zack[vi]			
A gay couple & a heterosexual couple			Anton & Tremain	Kay & Robert[vii]		

[i] Johan had planned to be part of the interview held with Vivian, Moira and Wilson but on the scheduled day was unexpectedly called away on a work matter at short notice. Because he reviewed and made comment on the interview transcript, he has been included in the total number of research participants.

[ii] Jake and Lavinia were not interviewed. Reese and Simone hoped Jake would be prepared to be a donor for them and thought that Lavinia would support him in this role, but at the time of their interview they had not actually talked to them about this possibility.

[iii] Curtis and Claire were not interviewed, because it was impractical to include them in the timetable for interviews.

[iv] Keane was not interviewed, because he was overseas during the period interviews were conducted.

[v] Rory was not interviewed. Abigail and Victoria chose not to talk to him about possible participation in the research, because they considered this an additional demand on him, which they were reluctant to make.

[vi] Zack was not interviewed. According to Bryson, Zack was supportive of Bryson's plan to be a donor for Sonia, but he saw no real reason to ask him to participate.

[vii] Kay and Robert were not interviewed. Anton and Tremain preferred they not be approached about this possibility, because there was some tension in their relationship with the couple.

Appendix 8: Existing family constellation make up at time of interview

Family constellation make up	Lesbian couple	New partners of original lesbian couple	Gay couple	Heterosexual couple	Single gay man	Single heterosexual man	Donor conceived children
Five inclusive of a lesbian couple & a gay couple	Ngaire & Mia[i]		Nate & Guy				Marama (3) Ani (4 months)
	Nicole & Jeannie		Max & Patrick				Elliot (3)
	Alice & Melanie		Mason & Hayden[ii]				Briony (2)
	Sylvie & Eileen[iii]		Timothy & Hunter[iv]				Quentin (9) Amelia (7)
	Genevieve & Lynley		Pascal & Shamus				Henry (4)
One inclusive of a lesbian couple & a heterosexual couple	Deena & Mere			Manny & Barbara			Hine (10 weeks)
Two inclusive of a lesbian couple & a single gay man	Myra & Sally				Declan		Harry (2) Jack (1 week pre-birth)
	Freida & Norma				Granger		Faith (2) Reuben (2)
A lesbian couple & a single heterosexual man	Tessa & Felicity					Noah	Phoebe (5) Gretel (3)
A lesbian couple, a gay couple & a single heterosexual man	Fern & Emma		Logan & Bernard			Issac[v]	Hugo (19) Giles (7)
A lesbian couple, their new partners & a single gay man	Nina & Ellen[vi]	Imogen[vii] Pierce[viii]			Sean		Holly (7) Campbell (6)
A lesbian couple, their new partners, a single gay man & a single heterosexual man	Paige & Ada	Dale Esme[ix]			Harlow	Lance[x]	Isla (12) Elodie (8)

[i] Ngaire and Mia were one of only two sets of lesbian couples across the existing family constellations who were not interviewed. Nate and Guy were prepared to pass on information about the research to the women, but their geographic location made interviewing them impractical.

[ii] Hayden was not interviewed. Alice, Melanie and Mason did not invite him to join the interview, presumably because he became Mason's partner some time after Briony had been conceived and born.

[iii] Sylvie and Eileen, the second lesbian couple across the existing family constellations not interviewed, were overseas during the period interviews were conducted.

[iv] Hunter was not interviewed because Timothy chose not to invite him to join the interview.

[v] Issac was not interviewed because it was impractical to include him in the timetable for interviews.

[vi] Ellen was not interviewed. She was separated from Nina, who was unwilling to pass on information about the research to her.

[vii] Imogen, Nina's new partner, was not interviewed because she lived overseas.

[viii] Pierce, Ellen's new partner, was not interviewed for the same reason that Ellen was not interviewed.

[ix] Esme, Ada's new partner, was not invited to the interview by Ada, presumably because their relationship was relatively new at the time.

[x] Lance was not interviewed because of geographic location.

Appendix 9: Participant biographies for prospective family constellations at time of interview[187]

Wilson, Johan, Vivian and Moira

Wilson is 34 years old and was born and raised in North America. He and Johan, who is 32 years old and was born and raised in Southern Europe, have been a couple for four and a half years. The men married overseas before settling in New Zealand. They live in their own home in a large suburb in a city.

Wilson and Johan met Moira and Vivian on the internet after both sets of couples had turned to a lesbian and gay social networking site in order to find reproductive partners. The women, who are both 37 years old, have been together 12 years and share an inner city suburban home in the same city as the men.

The couples have agreed to enter a sperm donation and shared parenting arrangement. While they expect to be jointly acknowledged as their planned child's parents, only the women will have legal parenthood. The women's home will be the child's primary residence.

Kole, Fraser, Stella and Renee

Kole and Fraser are partners of nine years. They live together in a waterfront suburb in a large city. Kole is 32 years old and Fraser is a year younger. Both men were born and grew up in the same Eastern European country. They are pleased to have settled in New Zealand, because they believe it will be possible for them to become fathers/parents in this country, something they did not consider possible in their previously conservative, communist context. Kole and Fraser would like to form a family with a lesbian couple and are looking for a couple who are willing to co-parent future children in an equal share arrangement. While this is their first preference, they are open to other co-parenting arrangements. They are waiting for a response to a message they sent to Stella

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[187] An asterisk indentifies non-participating members of particular family constellations.

and Renee, whose address they accessed via the women's profile on a co-parenting website where the women were advertising for a sperm donor.

Civil union partners Stella, 39, and Renee, 33, are living in a small community close to the city Kole and Fraser live in but Stella grew up in Eastern Europe and Renee in Western Europe. Together four and a half years, the women were interviewed three months after Kole and Fraser, who they had recently met. Stella and Renee are planning to each conceive a child through donor insemination using sperm from one of the men with Stella to conceive the first child and Renee the second. The two sets of couples are expecting to be jointly acknowledged as parents of their planned children and intend to parent together across households. Decisions about actual legal parenthood and possibilities for court-appointed additional guardianship are under discussion.

Reese, Simone, Jake* and Lavinia*

Close friends since their early teen years and partners of one year, Reese and Simone, both 25, live together in their suburban city flat. Reese and Simone want to have a family with one or more children conceived through donor insemination. The couple hopes that their friend Jake will be their donor, but are yet to approach him about this possibility. They think that their intention to be their child's legal parents and to share the central parenting relationship from within a single residence could be hard on Jake, because Jake and his partner Lavinia would also like to have their own children. Reese and Simone imagine it might be best if Jake and Lavinia have at least one child of their own, before Jake donates for them. If Jake does donate for them, they are uncertain about the role he and Lavinia might have with their child.

Lydia, Roslyn, Curtis* and Claire*

Lydia, 31, and her partner of 13 years, Roslyn, 37, celebrated their civil union six months ago in their suburban flat in close proximity to the city centre. The couple is hoping Lydia might be pregnant after a recent insemination attempt using sperm donated by Roslyn's youngest brother Curtis. Curtis is married to Claire; they have their own children. Curtis agreed to donate for Lydia and Roslyn after Claire talked to him about this possibility. They knew Lydia and

Roslyn were discouraged about the lack of readily available knowable donors at their fertility service provider.

The two sets of couples are close. They underwent counseling through a fertility service provider prior to inseminating and as part of that process clarified relationships and roles. Lydia and Roslyn will be their child's legal parents and will share the central parenting relationship in their home. Curtis and Claire will be the child's uncle and aunt.

Esther, Polly and Keane*

Esther, 33, and her partner of four and a half years, Polly, almost 37, live in a harbourside suburb of a city. The women discussed having children together through donor insemination early in their relationship. Both wanted a donor willing to be a known, involved father. Thirty-eight year old Keane, a single gay man, eventually became their donor.

Esther and Polly met Keane at a social event. A friendship developed; over time, the women began to consider whether he might be the right person to form a reproductive relationship with—a relationship encompassing a tri-parenting alliance. Keane took some time to consider their invitation before agreeing. Polly is now five months pregnant. Keane has moved a considerable distance away as required for his job but is working towards a return to the same city as the women in order to uphold his commitment to the tri-parenting alliance.

As stipulated in an agreement drawn up prior to conception, Esther and Polly will be the child's legal parents and Keane, her or his court-appointed additional guardian. The agreement also outlines the three adults' intent to share parenting although the child is expected to live primarily with the women. A second child, with Esther as the birth mother, is planned for the future.

Asha, Tracey and Kieran

Asha and Tracey are 32 and 26 years old. Their donor is Kieran, a 36-year-old single gay man. The women recently celebrated their first civil union anniversary. A couple for three years, they live in a flat in an area of high density

housing in a residential suburb of a large city. Kieran's home is in a different suburb in the same city.

Asha, Tracey and Kieran formed their reproductive relationship after Kieran responded to the women's advertisement for a sperm donor on the internet. He had always had an interest in acting as a donor and having recently separated from his long-term partner, felt free to pursue this. Their mutual desires are well matched. The women want a father or uncle figure in the life of any child conceived with Kieran's help, while he does not want any rights or responsibilities in relation to a child. Asha is to conceive the child once health checks are completed with both women expecting to be the child's legal parents and to share the central parenting relationship in their home. Tracey, subject to Kieran's continued agreement, hopes to conceive a second child sometime after the first.

Abigail, Victoria and Rory*

Partners of 18 months, Abigail, 27, and Victoria, 28, are planning their civil union and want to form a family together. Anticipating joint legal parenthood of their future children, the women expect to share the central parenting relationship from within a single household. They live in an inner city apartment in a large city.

Rory is a heterosexual single man and Victoria's cousin. He has agreed to act as a sperm donor for them with Abigail to conceive the women's first child in the near future. Their choice of Rory as their donor reflects Victoria's desire for biogenetic connectedness between herself, as the intending non-birth mother, and the child. While the women expect some involvement from Rory, the form this might take is not clear. Given his home is in a distant city, some practical constraints on involvement are likely. The two women hope Victoria will conceive a second child using a different donor at a later point.

Sonia, Bryson and Zack*

Close friends of eight years, 27-year-old Sonia, a single lesbian, and 29-year-old Bryson, a partnered gay man, plan to conceive, become legal parents to and parent children together in the coming years. Donor insemination is their

expected method of achieving conception, however the details of the actual parenting of any children, has not been discussed in depth. They live close to one another in the central business district of a large city; both imagine this proximity will facilitate parenting, but they are also wondering about sharing a single home with their future child.

Sonia hopes for an intimate relationship with another woman—ideally, she would like to have a partner who shares her desire for a child. Bryson's partner of four years, Zack, is aware of Bryson and Sonia's plans. He will be supportive when the time comes to set their plans in motion.

Anton, Tremain, Kay* and Robert*

Anton, 30, and Tremain, 32, partners of five and a half years had a civil union very recently. The men live together in their large family home in the suburbs of a city. Using sperm provided by Anton and with the assistance of surrogate mother, Kay, the men are expecting a son in a month's time—his impending birth represents the fulfillment of a long held dream, not without obstacles, to become full-time parents. Kay, a first time surrogate, contacted the men about carrying a child for them having accessed their profile on a New Zealand surrogacy site. She and her husband Robert, who is supportive of the surrogacy arrangement, already have their own young child and live in a city several hours distant.

As a sperm donor, Anton has no legal rights for the child so plans are in place for him to adopt his biogenetic son at which point Kay's rights will be extinguished. With joint adoption by the men not an option, Tremain expects to become a court-appointed additional guardian. The men will facilitate contact between their son, and Kay and her family, in his early years, and he will be supported to maintain a relationship with them in the future should he wish to pursue this.

Appendix 10: Participant biographies for existing family constellations at time of interview[188]

Nate, Guy, Ngaire and Mia**

Nate and Guy, 42 and 46 respectively, have been together 11 years. They were introduced to and formed a reproductive relationship with Ngaire, 36, and Mia, 55, through an acquaintance, when the two sets of couples were living in the same region. Subsequently, the men shifted to a distant city.

Nate and Guy are known as fathers to the two children born as a result of the reproductive relationship. The children, Marama and Ani, are both under five years. Nate acted as sperm donor and Ngaire conceived through insemination. While Nate has a biogenetic relationship to the girls, neither he nor Guy is a legal parent to them. Ngaire, as birth mother, is. The men are unsure whether Mia is listed on their birth certificates as a second legal parent. The girls live in their mothers' home and are parented by them. Prior to the men re-locating they actively contributed to the parenting of Marama, including weekly overnight care. Ani was born after their shift away. Visits between homes have since become important.

Other children significant to this family constellation are Nate's teenagers from a previous heterosexual relationship, Darren, 19, and Jessica, 16, who he co-parents with Guy, and Mia's four older children, also from a previous heterosexual relationship.

Max, Patrick, Nicole and Jeannie

Partners of 14 years, Nicole, 39, and Jeannie, 42, are planning their civil union. Max, 36, and Patrick, 29, had a civil union three years into their five-year relationship.

The two sets of couples formed a reproductive relationship after Nicole and Jeannie, discouraged by the stress, cost and lack of success of clinic-based

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[188] An asterisk indentifies non-participating members of particular family constellations.

inseminations with an unknown donor, decided to try home-based inseminations with a known donor. Nicole asked long-term friend Patrick if he knew of anyone who might be willing to donate sperm. Patrick suggested Max. Subsequently, Max was introduced to the women. Together, the four adults explored how they might accommodate the women's desire to share the central parenting of any child out of the reproductive relationship from within their home, Max's wish to be a legal parent and take up a fathering role of any such child, and possible roles for Patrick.

In time, three-year-old Elliot was born. Nicole, as Elliot's birth mother, is a legal parent to him. Max, in keeping with his wish, is named as his second legal parent. Neither Jeannie nor Patrick, as the boy's non-birth mother and social father respectively, have a legal relationship with him although Jeannie expects to pursue becoming a court-appointed additional guardian at some point.

Nicole, Jeannie, Max and Patrick live in a large city but some distance apart: the women in a village to the north of the city and the men in a southern suburb. Elliot lives with his mothers but spends every second weekend in the home of his fathers.

Alice, Melanie, Mason and Hayden*

New civil union partners Melanie, 30, and Alice, 37, have been a couple for seven years. They live together with their two-year-old daughter Briony in a semi-rural suburb on the outskirts of a large city. Melanie, Briony's birth mother and legal parent, cares for her full-time while Alice, Briony's second legal parent, provides an income for the family.

Briony was conceived by donor insemination with the assistance of Melanie and Alice's friend Mason, 41. Mason is known as Briony's father and is a court-appointed additional guardian to her. He was single at the time of Briony's conception but by the time of her birth, had partnered with Hayden who subsequently became an uncle figure to her. The men regularly spend time with Briony both in their home in an inner residential suburb in the same city as the women or in the homes of Mason's parents and siblings.

Arrangements currently in place for Briony are expected to continue for Melanie, Alice and Mason's planned second baby.

Timothy, Hunter,* Sylvie* and Eileen*

Inspired by his partner Hunter's fatherhood through sperm donation, Timothy, 50, decided to become a donor on the basis that he would be known as a father. Together for 17 years, the men live in an established residential area in a city.

After an initial unsuccessful reproductive relationship with a woman who had advertised for a sperm donor in a newspaper, Timothy was eventually introduced to Sylvie, 42, and Eileen, 44, a couple of more than 15 years living in the same city. The three adults agreed to a reproductive relationship and following inseminations, Amelia, 11, and Quentin, 9, were conceived by Sylvie, their birth mother and legal parent. Eileen's legal relationship to Amelia and Quentin is as a court-appointed additional guardian. Timothy has no legal relationship with either child. He has a strong sense of commitment and responsibility to the children, who live with and are parented by their mothers. He spends time with them regularly, despite tension between the adults about how best to enact his fatherhood. Hunter has no particular role with the children.

Genevieve, Lynley, Pascal and Shamus

Genevieve and Lynley are 43 and 35-years-old respectively. A couple for 15 years, they had a civil union immediately after the Civil Union Act 2004 took effect. The women formed a reproductive relationship with their long-term friends Pascal, 45, and Shamus, 46. The men have been together about 10 years.

Genevieve and Lynley set the conditions for their reproductive relationship with Pascal and Shamus, which required both men to provide sperm for each home-based insemination attempt in an effort to distance them from claims to fathering or parenting rights. The conditions also limited the numbers of parents to two: the women would become legal parents and share the central parenting relationship from within the context of their cohabiting legally recognised relationship. In due course Henry, four-years-old, was conceived and born to Lynley.

Henry lives with and is parented by his mothers in their home in a semi-rural village, as expected. Lynley, his primary caregiver, works in a part time capacity outside the home while Genevieve is the main wage earner in the family. Pascal and Shamus see Henry from time to time; both hope for further contact with him over time. They live in a city some hours distant from the women.

Deena, Mere, Barbara and Manny

Deena, 41, and Mere, 60, a couple of two years standing, live together in the suburbs of a city. Deena's procreative partner, Manny, is 42, and coupled with Barbara, 48. Manny and Barbara share a home in a different suburb of the same city. Following several miscarriages, they accepted they would not be able to have a child together.

Deena and Manny met through a mutual friend at a time when both were exploring routes to parenthood. Mere, who has two adult children of her own, and Barbara, who has one adult child, were supportive of their partners establishing a reproductive relationship utilising home-based insemination in order to conceive and co-parent a child across their households. Subsequently, 10-week-old Hine was born.

Deena and Manny are Hine's legal parents. Hine lives with Deena and Mere but sees Manny and Barbara regularly. All four adults contribute in different ways to her care.

Myra, Sally and Declan

Forty-year-old Myra and her civil union partner Sally, 39, are a couple of 12 years standing. They live together in their suburban home in a large city with their son, two-year-old Harry. Myra, who conceived Harry via sperm donation following the formation of a reproductive relationship with Sally's friend Declan, is heavily pregnant with the three adults' second son, who was also conceived via insemination and has already been named Jack. The decision for Myra to carry and birth their children was strategic. Unlike Sally, Myra had some ambivalence about motherhood; the women assumed biogenetic relatedness to the children would enhance her ability to embrace this role. The women are Harry's legal

parents and Sally is his primary caregiver. The same arrangements are planned in respect of Jack.

Declan is 42. A single gay man living in an apartment in a mixed residential and commercial suburb in a different city to the women, the reproductive relationship between the three adults suits his needs. Declan has no wish for a legal relationship with either child. He enjoys seeing Harry every few months and anticipates that pattern will continue with Jack.

Freida, Norma and Granger

Following a reproductive relationship with a woman who proved unable to conceive, 54 year old Granger, a single gay man, was introduced by this same woman to Freida, 49, and Norma, 61. A couple of almost 20 years, Freida and Norma live in the same city as Granger and at the time of their introduction to him, were seeking a sperm donor willing to be an involved father to any future children. The three adults agreed to home-based inseminations on this understanding.

Twins Faith and Reuben, two years old, were subsequently conceived and born, but not without difficulty. Home-based inseminations had been unsuccessful. Eventually, Freida had IVF treatment using Granger's sperm to fertilise eggs that were donated by one of her family members.

Freida and Norma are Faith and Reuben's legal parents and they share the primary parenting of them. Granger is a testamentary guardian to the children.[189] He is an active father to them, providing care for them two half days a week, either in his home or in the women's home. He expects his contribution to care arrangements to increase over time.

Felicity, Tessa and Noah

Noah, a single heterosexual man, and partners of 11 years, Felicity and Tessa, were 66, 40 and 46 respectively. The three adults had formed a reproductive

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[189] Parents can appoint testamentary guardians through their wills. The person appointed automatically becomes a guardian when the parent dies.

relationship, instigated by the women, who knew Noah through their social networks. They wanted a sperm donor willing to be an involved father who would accommodate their desire to share the central parenting relationship from within their home in a seaside suburb of a satellite city. These plans came to fruition, with the conception and birth of Phoebe, five, and Gretel, three. Phoebe has one legal parent only: her birth mother Felicity. Neither Tessa nor Noah has a legal relationship to her. Gretel, however, has two legal parents as a result of legislative change that occurred prior to her birth: her birth mother Felicity and her non-birth mother Tessa. Noah has no legal relationship to her.

As expected, Phoebe and Gretel live with and are parented primarily by their mothers. Noah's involvement with the girls has evolved over time to the point where he recently shifted from a nearby city to the same area as the women and children to further facilitate his contribution to their care.

Fern, Emma, Logan, Bernard and Issac*

Fern and Emma are 49 and 52 years old. They have been a couple for 21 years and live in a coastal city suburb. Logan, a 43-year-old partnered gay man lives nearby. His partner of four and a half years, Bernard, 50, lives in a smaller inland city.

Fern, Emma and Logan formed a reproductive relationship following their introduction through a mutual friend. Fern and Emma were seeking a sperm donor willing to be an involved father. Logan was seeking to donate on condition of involvement. Seven-year-old Giles, born via insemination to Fern, was the result of this relationship. Fern is Giles' legal parent and Emma a court-appointed additional guardian. Logan has no legal relationship with him but is a testamentary guardian. Fern, Emma and Logan share the parenting of their son across homes. This is facilitated by Logan's deliberate proximity. Bernard also engages in some limited parenting practices on occasion.

This was Fern and Emma's second experience of forming a reproductive relationship. Many years previously, the women asked Fern's brother Issac to donate sperm to enable Emma to bear them a child on the understanding he would be positioned as an uncle. Hugo, 19, resulted. Emma is his legal parent and

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Fern a court-appointed additional guardian. Georgia, 24, a relative of Fern's, also lives with the women and their sons and has done so for many years.

Nina, Ellen,* Imogen,* Pierce,* and Sean

Sean, a single gay man, and Nina, a coupled lesbian, are 60 and 41 years old respectively. Together with Ellen, 41, a previous partner of Nina's, the three long-term friends formed a reproductive relationship.

Nina and Ellen instigated the relationship by inviting Sean to become a father via sperm donation to each of them. Sean accepted the invitation on their terms: he would be known as a father to any future children but would have no associated responsibilities or liabilities for them and the women would share the central parenting relationship from their home in a residential suburb of a large city. Subsequently, Nina conceived Holly, 7, and 18 months later, Ellen conceived Campbell, 6. Each birth mother is a legal parent to her own biogenetic child and a court-appointed additional guardian to her non-birth child. Sean has no legal relationship with either child but sees them regularly. His contact with them was made easier once he made the deliberate decision to relocate from a distant suburb in the same city as the women to a house in their neighbourhood, when the children were approximately 4 and 3.

When Nina and Ellen separated, Nina remained in the family home and Ellen moved to a house nearby with the children living alternate weeks with one mother, then the other. Nina's new partner, Imogen, and Ellen's new partner, Pierce, both have some involvement with the children.

Paige, Ada, Dale, Esme,* Harlow and Lance*

Harlow, a single gay man, and Paige, a coupled lesbian, are 56 and 48 years old respectively. Paige's previous partner, Ada, is 50. The three adults live in the same area and knew of one another but had not actually met prior to exploring the possibility of forming a reproductive relationship. The women initiated the relationship by inviting Harlow to become a father through sperm donation. Harlow accepted on the condition that his parenthood would be legally acknowledged. When eight-year-old Elodie arrived, Harlow, and Paige as her birth mother, became her legal parents. Ada, Elodie's non-birth mother, later

became a court-appointed additional guardian. As agreed, Harlow chooses his level of involvement with Elodie who lived with, and was primarily parented by the women until the time of their separation. Also living with the women and Elodie prior to the separation was Elodie's older sister Isla, 12. While Isla had a different known donor father, Lance, a partnered heterosexual man, the girls share the same birth mother, non-birth mother and court-appointed additional guardian.

Following the women's separation Elodie and Isla live with Paige in a small coastal town while Ada provides the girls with some part-time care from her new home nearby. Later, new partners were accommodated into existing arrangements. Paige's cohabiting partner of about three years, Dale, 46, is constituted as a third mother to both girls and Ada's non-cohabiting partner of six months, Esme, sees Elodie, in particular, regularly.

Appendix 11: Information sheet for children

Lesbian mothers, gay fathers and their children

Kia ora,

My name is Nicola Surtees. I work at the University of Canterbury as a lecturer. I am also a student there. As part of my assignment work, I am researching lesbian mothers, gay fathers and their children. I need some help with my research.

If you would like to help me, you would be part of an interview with me and other people in your family. At the interview, we will all talk about what it is like to be in your family. If you wanted to, you could share your ideas about this as well as draw me a picture or diagram about your family to take away.

I will be recording the interview with a digital voice recorder to help remind me of what you and everyone else says when I write my report. You and everyone else will have code names so no one else will know what you or others said.

If you don't want to come to the interview, you might like to make me a drawing anyway.

If you agree to take part in the research project, please sign the consent form. Your parents/guardians will need to sign a form too.

If you have any questions about this project, you can talk to your parents/guardians, my supervisors or me. My supervisors are helping me with the project. Here are their names, telephone numbers and email addresses.

Rosemary Du Plessis   Kathleen Quinlivan
03 364 2987 ext 6878   03 364 2987 ext 4829
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

If you are unhappy with what happens, you can tell Mike Grimshaw who also knows about this project. Mike's job is to make sure that projects like this are safe for everyone.

Mike Grimshaw
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

If you don't want to help me, or if you change your mind about sharing your ideas or drawings with me, all you have to do is say so. I won't mind.

Thank you for thinking about helping me.

Nicola Surtees
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 12: Consent form for children

Lesbian mothers, gay fathers and their children

I have read or heard information about the research project that Nicola Surtees, lecturer and student at the University of Canterbury, is doing.

I have talked to my parents/guardians about it.

I agree to be part of an interview with Nicola and other people in my family and to draw a picture or diagram about my family for her to keep.

I am happy for the interview to be recorded.

I understand I will have a code name.

I understand that I can change my mind about taking part and no one will mind.

I know that if I have any questions about the project that I can ask my parents/guardians, Nicola's supervisors, or Nicola.

Rosemary Du Plessis   Kathleen Quinlivan
03 364 2987 ext 6878   03 364 2987 ext 4829
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

If I want to complain about it, I'll tell Mike Grimshaw.

Michael Grimshaw
03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

By signing below, I agree to participate in the project.

Name:
Date:
Signature:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided by 31 March 2010

Nicola Surtees
University of Canterbury
College of Education
School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 13: Consent form for parent or guardian (on behalf of children)

Queer imaginings and diverse practices: Lesbians, gay men and their children

I give permission for my child[190] _____ to participate in this research project. The researcher, Nicola Surtees, lecturer at the University of Canterbury in the School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education and doctoral student in the School of Social and Political Sciences, has explained the nature of this research project to me. I have read the provided information sheet and understand what will be required of my child.

I have discussed the project with my child _____ and am happy that she/he understands what she/he will be asked to do and that she/he can withdraw her/himself, information about her/himself, or her/his data, at any time up until the final draft findings stage. I understand I can also withdraw her/him, information about her/him, or her/his data, at any time up until the final draft findings stage.

I understand that anything my child says during the interview with our family and/or draws during or after the interview will be treated as confidential by Nicola Surtees and her supervisors, and that the data gathered will be stored securely for five years following the project.

I understand that my child's real names or other identifying information about her/him or our family will not be used in the project or related publications or presentations and that any identifying biographical details will not be provided.

If I have any questions or concerns about the research project I will contact Nicola Surtees or either of her academic supervisors at the University of Canterbury:

Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis   Dr Kathleen Quinlivan
03 364 2987 ext 6878   03 364 2987 ext 4829
rosemary.duplessis@canterbury.ac.nz   kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

If I have a complaint about the project I will address this to:

Dr Michael Grimshaw
Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
School of Social and Political Sciences
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140

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[190] This form refers to 'my child.' If you wish to give permission for more than one child to participate in this research project, please record all of their names in the appropriate spaces.

03 364 2390 ext 6390
michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

By signing below, I agree for my child to participate in this research project.

Name:
Date:
Signature:
Contact phone number:
Contact email address:
Contact address:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided by 31 March 2010 to:

Nicola Surtees
University of Canterbury
College of Education
School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
03 345 8349
nicola.surtees@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 14: Interview guide: Prospective family constellations

Tell me about the sort of family you are imagining you will create together.	• What does it mean to you to plan for family in the ways that you are? • Who will be in your family? • How will you decide who belongs in your family? • How might you describe people who don't belong in your family but who will be central to its creation? • How will you describe your family to others? • What's it like, hoping and planning for family in the ways that you are?
How did you come to be planning for family and parenthood together?	• What motivated you to begin planning for family and parenthood? • What was/is most important for you, in choosing others to parent with? • How do you expect your future children to be conceived and why have you chosen this method? • Is a biological relationship with your future children important to you? Why/why not? • What planning and negotiation is necessary for you to achieve parenthood? • What impacts on your planning and negotiation?
How do you anticipate your family relationships and arrangements will actually work?	• What do you think you'll do, as parents? • How do you expect parenting labour to be divided between you and any other parents? • What household arrangements do you expect to have in place? • Will you have any formal agreements about family relationships and arrangements?
What are your thoughts about legal parenthood where children have more than two parents?	• Who will be your future children's legal parents? • How will you decide which parents will be legal parents? • How do you feel about the possibilities of being/not being a legal parent?
Your planned family relationships and arrangements are innovative. What are your thoughts about this?	• What do you draw on, in your imaginings of a different kind of family? • How are others responding to your plans? • What do you think helps or hinders the development of innovative family relationships and arrangements? • To what extent do you think innovative family relationships and arrangements are relevant

	to other families?
Demographics	• Age of prospective parents? • Length and status of couple relationships? • Ethnicity? • Employment?

Appendix 15: Interview guide: Existing family constellations

Tell me about your family.	• Who is in your family? • How do you describe your family to others? • How did you decide who belongs in your family? • How would you describe people who don't belong in your family but who were central to its creation? • How do you think your children would describe these same people? • What's it like living in your family?
How did you come to create family together and become parents in the ways that you have?	• What motivated you to create a family and become parents? • What was most important for you, in choosing others to parent with? • How were your children conceived and why did you choose this method? • Was a biological relationship with your children important to you? Why/why not? • What planning and negotiation was necessary prior to becoming parents? • What impacted on your planning and negotiation? • Is there a difference between what was planned and hoped for and what actually happens?
What can you tell me about your family relationships and arrangements?	• How would you describe your relationships with each other and your children? • What family arrangements do you have in place on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis? (E.g., who does what as parents, living arrangements etc). • Do you have any formal agreements about family relationships and arrangements and if so, have agreements changed over time?
What are your thoughts about legal parenthood where children have more than two parents?	• Who are your children's legal parents? • How did you decide which parents would be legal parents? • How do you feel about being/not being a legal parent? • Have your feelings about this remained the same or changed since your children have been born?
Your family relationships and arrangements are innovative. What are your thoughts about this?	• How did others respond to your initial plans and how do they respond to that innovation now? • What do you think helps or hinders the

	development of innovative family relationships and arrangements? • To what extent do you think innovative family relationships and arrangements are relevant to other families?
Demographics	• Age of parents and children? • Length and status of couple relationships? • Legal status of parent-child relationships? • Ethnicity? • Employment?

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