

The Paradox of the Lesbian Worker

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Common sense might suggest that lesbian workers are doubly disadvantaged due to their gender and their stigmatized sexual orientation. But empirical research documents that lesbian workers earn more than their heterosexual women peers. This article considers two reasons for the economic advantage of lesbian workers. First, because lesbians must provide for themselves and their children, they may pursue nontraditional, higher-paying jobs and show increased work motivation. Second, stereotypes may depict lesbians, including lesbian mothers, as competent and committed workers. A review of available research is augmented with data from a study of 162 college students. Results indicate that motherhood detracts from the perceived work commitment and competence of heterosexual mothers but not lesbian mothers. Directions for future research are considered.

Common sense might suggest that if women workers are disadvantaged due to their gender, then lesbian women workers would be doubly disadvantaged due to their gender and their stigmatized sexual orientation. While intuitively plausible, as will be discussed, available research does not support this double jeopardy prediction. Instead, the studies reviewed below find that lesbians earn wages that are as high or higher than heterosexual women in the American labor force. We propose that the key to understanding this seeming paradox of the lesbian worker concerns expectations held both by lesbians and by heterosexuals about lesbians' financial self-sufficiency and motherhood. Further, because the family lives of lesbians contrast markedly with those of heterosexual women, lesbians provide a unique window on factors shaping the experiences of heterosexual mothers in the work force.

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We begin with a brief overview of the conceptual framework, some of it still untested, which guided our approach to understanding the experiences of working mothers. Traditionally, we would argue, heterosexual women's role as mother has had two major implications: first, that a woman is married to a man who is the primary family breadwinner and, second, that the woman has major homemaking and childcare responsibilities. Both these factors—the presence of a male provider and the expectation of strong family obligations—shape stereotypes about working mothers. We suggest that heterosexual mothers are viewed as less desirable workers because they are believed to be less committed to work and burdened by juggling competing responsibilities. These elements of traditional marital roles may also influence heterosexual women's own job planning and motivation by reducing the woman's need to be financially self-supporting. Not surprisingly, unmarried heterosexual college women with more traditional attitudes about gender roles are more likely to select such conventionally feminine college majors as nursing and education, less likely to seek graduate education, and hope to marry at a younger age than women with less traditional attitudes (e.g., Peplau, Hill, & Rubin, 1993). These traditional young women also anticipate taking time off from paid work to care for their young children. In contrast, expectations for lesbian women are quite different (Dunne, 1997; Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995). To define oneself as a lesbian in modern society requires a woman to be financially self-supporting, a factor that may affect both the lesbian's own commitment to paid employment and heterosexuals' stereotypes of lesbian workers. Further, for lesbians, as for heterosexual men, parenthood may increase the importance of paid employment, since lesbian mothers must support their children as well as themselves.

In the following sections, we review available research about lesbian workers. We begin with studies comparing the wages of lesbian and heterosexual women workers to demonstrate that, on average, lesbians earn more. We then consider how lesbians' own expectations about economic self-sufficiency and motherhood may affect their career-decision-making and job commitment. Next we consider how heterosexuals' stereotypes about lesbians may affect lesbians' experiences in the work place. We also present data from a new empirical study investigating heterosexuals' stereotypes of lesbian workers who do and do not have a child.

Comparing the Wages of Lesbian and Heterosexual Women

There is no question that lesbians are vulnerable to discrimination on the job (e.g., Lubensky, Holland, Wiethoff, & Crosby, 2004). Although federal law prohibits discrimination based on gender, there is no comparable protection for sexual orientation. In many states, it is legal to deny a job or to fire a person for being or being perceived to be gay or lesbian. Many lesbian workers report having experienced work-related discrimination at least once in their life (see reviews by Badgett, 2001; Croteau, 1996). In a recent national survey of lesbians and gay

men (Kaiser Foundation, 2001), 18% reported discrimination in applying for or keeping a job. In addition, 30% of respondents said that their sexual orientation had influenced their decision to take or not to take a particular job, and 62% said it affected where they chose to live. Of course, women's success in the workplace is affected not only by the potential barriers of prejudice and discrimination, but also by their own resilience and resourcefulness.

What are the facts about sexual orientation and women's income? Data from the U.S. Census and other large national data sets provide the most comprehensive information currently available. Because lesbian and heterosexual women may differ in other job-relevant characteristics, income comparisons are typically restricted to full-time workers and control for age, education, urban residence, geographical location, and race. Sometimes additional controls are included for use of English, broad occupational categories, etc. The specific controls used vary from study to study. (For a discussion of methodological issues in this research, see Badgett, 2001 and Black, Makar, Sanders, & Taylor, 2003. For a discussion of domestic partner benefits and other factors beyond wages that may differentially advantage heterosexual workers more than lesbians, see Badgett, 2001.)

On average, lesbians earn more than heterosexual women with similar jobs and qualifications. In an analysis of data from the General Social Survey from 1991–1996, Berg and Lien (2002) found that lesbian workers earned 30% more than comparable heterosexual women workers. In an analysis of 1990 Census data (Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor, 2000), lesbian women with partners earned more than married women at all ages and levels of education. For example, among college-educated women ages 35–44 working full-time, lesbian women earned approximately \$7,000 more than married women. Preliminary analyses of data from the 2000 Census data also show lesbian workers earning more than women who are married or living with a male partner (Human Rights Campaign, 2003). Black and associates (2000, p. 152) concluded that, “lesbian women earn substantially more than married women [and] generally earn more than single women and heterosexually partnered women.” Reviewing her own empirical analyses and available research, Badgett (2001, pp. 45–46) came to a more cautious conclusion, noting that the average lesbian woman's earnings “appear to be no lower than those of comparable heterosexual women.” Why do lesbians have higher average wages than heterosexual women? One important factor concerns women's decision-making about jobs and motherhood.

Lesbians' Decisions About Jobs and Motherhood

Sexual orientation can affect an individual's career decision making in various ways. The decision to live as a lesbian is accompanied by an expectation that a woman will be financially self-supporting (e.g., Morgan & Brown, 1991). Recognizing that she will not have a male to provide for her and her children may

spur lesbians to pursue higher education, to develop marketable skills, to seek better paying jobs, and to move up the career ladder. Further, to the extent that lesbians have different interests and less traditional views about women's roles than their heterosexual peers, they may pursue career paths that lead to better paying jobs. Equally important, whereas marriage and motherhood may diminish the work commitment of heterosexual women, adult love relationships and motherhood may not have the same impact on lesbians. We examine each of these issues below.

Education

One of the most striking characteristics of American lesbians is their relatively high level of education. To be sure, lesbians can be found among all educational levels from high school dropouts to PhDs, but they are disproportionately represented at the upper end. In an analysis of data from the General Social Survey (Black et al., 2000), 39% of lesbians had a college degree or higher compared to 22% of married women. Indeed, lesbians' educational attainment surpassed that of heterosexual men; only 27% of married men had a college degree or higher. In another national study, only 0.4% of women with a high school degree identified as lesbian, compared to 1.2% of women with some college and 3.6% of college graduates (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). On the basis of education alone, we might expect that lesbians would have higher incomes than their heterosexual peers. Since most analyses that compare the wages of lesbians and heterosexuals control for education, they actually mask this educational advantage for lesbians.

Work Commitment

Whether from love of their job or economic necessity, most lesbians work full-time. In preliminary data from the 2000 Census (Human Rights Campaign, 2003), 69% of lesbians with partners worked full-time compared to only 47% of married women and 74% of married men. The necessity of providing for oneself and one's family is a common theme in lesbians' descriptions of their lives, and one that increases women's investment in work-related skills and their commitment to paid employment. A lesbian from a working-class background explained, "There was a time when I think it sort of dawned on me, that I was going to have to support myself and I'd better start getting my act together and start to do it" (cited in Dunne, 1997, p. 211). At the other end of the economic spectrum, a lesbian business executive commented, "My theory is that in a corporate environment, the percentage of lesbians versus heterosexual women is probably higher the higher you go, because lesbians don't opt out" (cited in Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995, p. 376). In short, when women must be financially independent, they may resemble

heterosexual men in their commitment to work. Indeed, Klawitter and Flatt (1998, p. 676) reported that most of the differences in earnings between lesbian and heterosexual women “reflect differences in hours and weeks of work.”

Occupational Choice

Compared to heterosexual women, “lesbians . . . are less likely to make vocational and life choices based on accommodating men or conforming to traditional gender roles. . . . Thus lesbians’ liberal gender roles might permit them considerable flexibility in career choice” (Fassinger, 1996, pp. 164–165). Although lesbians can undoubtedly be found across the occupational spectrum, available evidence shows that lesbians are more likely than heterosexual women to choose nontraditional jobs in male-dominated fields (Croteau, Anderson, Distefano, & Kampa-Kokesch, 2000; Dunne, 1997). For instance, lesbians are more likely than heterosexual women to serve in the military (Black et al., 2000). In two recent studies, Lippa (2002) found that, compared to heterosexual women, lesbians showed significantly more interest in traditionally masculine occupations (e.g., carpenter, engineer) and less interest in traditionally feminine occupations (e.g., beauty consultant, flight attendant). In Dunne’s (1997) British study, lesbians from working class backgrounds tended to pursue male-dominant manual jobs, rather than lower paying forms of “women’s work.” Although these women reported many difficulties making it in a man’s world, they also reported benefits of being lesbian. According to Dunne (1997, p. 156):

Some found that being a lesbian was a distinct advantage in a male environment. They felt that they did not have to deal with the same amount of sexual advances and harassment as their female colleagues in clerical and secretarial jobs. They generally reported feeling very comfortable with their male co-workers and interacted with them as friends.

Systematic investigations of sexual orientation and women’s occupational choices are not currently available, but, to the extent that lesbians avoid low-paying, traditionally feminine jobs, they may enhance their economic prospects.

Partners

Establishing a long-term relationship is an important goal for many lesbians. In a national survey (Kaiser Foundation, 2001), 74% of lesbians said that if they could legally marry someone of the same sex, they would like to do so some day. Studies find that many lesbians are currently in a romantic relationship. A large-scale survey of predominantly white lesbians found that 65% of women were currently in a primary same-sex relationship (Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001). A recent survey of more than 2600 African American lesbians found that 41% of women were in a committed relationship (Battle, Cohen, Warren, Ferguson, &

Audam, 2002). The 2000 U.S. Census and other national surveys provide information about the percentage of lesbian and gay adults who live together with a same-sex partner (e.g., Black et al., 2000; Human Rights Campaign, 2001; Kaiser Foundation, 2001). The best estimate is that about 40–45% of lesbians currently live together with a same-sex partner. Many other committed couples may maintain separate households.

The impact of a partnered relationship on work commitment may differ markedly for lesbian and heterosexual women. For heterosexual women, marriage can offer economic security that reduces the woman's need for full-time paid employment. The experiences of lesbian women are quite different (see reviews by Patterson, 2000; Peplau & Spalding, 2000). One of the most striking characteristics of contemporary lesbian couples is the emphasis women give to equal sharing of financial responsibilities. In their large scale investigation of heterosexual, lesbian, and gay couples, Blumstein and Schwartz (1983, p. 109) found that, "most lesbians stress the importance of [financial] independence and economic self-sufficiency for themselves as well as for their partners." Lesbian couples were less likely than other couples to pool their financial resources. Further, even though lesbians often earn more than heterosexual women, lesbian couples are financially disadvantaged by their gender. Lesbians earn less, on average, than heterosexual men and lesbian couples earn less than heterosexual married couples (see reviews by Badgett, 1998; Klawitter & Flatt, 1998). As a result, being in a committed relationship may not diminish a lesbian woman's need for full-time employment.

Another difference between lesbian and heterosexual relationships concerns housework. Heterosexual marriage has traditionally created a "second shift" for employed women, who shoulder the majority of housework even when working full-time for pay (e.g., Coltrane, 2000). In contrast, empirical investigations of lesbian couples have found a pattern of relatively equal work sharing at home. For example, Kurdek (1993) compared the allocation of household labor (e.g., cooking, shopping, cleaning) in cohabiting lesbian couples and heterosexual married couples, none of whom had children. Among heterosexual couples, the wives did most of the housework. Among lesbian couples, partners shared tasks so that each woman performed an equal amount of work. Put in other terms, whereas a woman who decides to live with a man usually increases her domestic responsibilities, a woman who decides to live with another woman may experience a reduction in housework. The net result is that marriage may decrease the time available to heterosexual women to devote to their paid job. Same-sex relationships may not have the same impact on lesbian workers.

Finally, we can speculate that for women who want to pursue demanding careers, lesbian relationships may offer potential benefits. To the extent that women serve as the socioemotional experts at home, they may be better able to provide support and comfort that enable partners to overcome work-related stress. British lesbians interviewed by Dunne (1997) emphasized that their partner fully supported

their career and noted that a flexible division of housework made coordination more manageable. One woman explained,

My impression is that most men come home from work and expect things to be done for them, so I wouldn't be able to devote myself as much to my work. . . . I would either have to have a less stressful job, or I think the relationship might suffer. (p. 216)

Relocation for a new job provides another example. In traditional heterosexual couples, it is assumed that the wife will move to advance her husband's career. Lesbians may be more likely to seek job options that maximize both partners' careers, for instance by taking turns in relocation (Fassinger, 1996).

In sum, because lesbians typically value financial independence and assume they must be economically self-sufficient, partner relationships may have less impact on lesbians' work commitment than marriage has on the work orientation of heterosexual women.

Motherhood

Although lesbians are less likely than heterosexual women to be mothers, a significant percentage of lesbians do have children (Morris, Balsam, & Rothblum, 2002). In the past, most became parents while in a heterosexual relationship. Today, however, many lesbians are choosing to have children, either alone or with a same-sex partner. Based on U.S. Census data, Black et al. (2000) estimated that 22% of partnered lesbians have children present in the home. A large-scale survey of African American lesbians found similar results: 25% of women said they lived with children (Battle et al., 2002). These percentages compare to 59% of married heterosexuals who had one or more children at home (Black et al., 2000). Discussions of a contemporary gay baby boom (e.g., Johnson & O'Connor, 2002) suggest that there may be an increased interest in parenthood among younger lesbians. In a recent national poll, 49% of lesbians who were not parents said they would like to have or adopt children (Kaiser Foundation, 2001). It is also noteworthy that lesbians are much less likely than their heterosexual peers to have their educational or work plans interrupted by unplanned pregnancies. In a large but non-representative sample, Morris et al. (2002) found no differences in level of education and employment of lesbians who did versus did not have children.

How does motherhood or the desire to be a mother affect lesbians' attitudes toward paid employment? Empirical evidence on this point is currently lacking. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to expect that motherhood does not decrease women's commitment to work to the same extent for heterosexuals and lesbians. Both divorced lesbian moms and lesbians who choose to have children are likely to shoulder the financial responsibility for their children—to be in the provider role. Consequently, reducing work hours or seeking a less demanding position may not be viable options for many lesbian mothers.

Lesbian mothers in partnered relationships may feel less economic pressure than single lesbian mothers, especially if their partner is an active co-parent. Nonetheless, there are probably very few full-time, stay-at-home lesbian mothers. The ability of lesbian mothers to continue their paid employment may be enhanced by shared parenting with a partner (e.g., Tasker, 2002). Comparative studies of lesbian and heterosexual couples raising children show a more equal division of childcare among lesbian couples. In an illustrative study, Chan, Brooks, Raboy, and Patterson (1998) compared 30 lesbian couples and 16 heterosexual couples, all of whom became parents using anonymous donor insemination and had one child in elementary school. In this highly educated sample, both lesbian and heterosexual couples reported a relatively equal division of paid employment and housework. However, lesbian couples reported sharing childcare more equally than did heterosexual parents. A pattern of relatively equal sharing at home does not eliminate the challenges women face in juggling work and family life, but may reduce the burden. Additional studies of how lesbian individuals and couples juggle work and family would be especially valuable.

In summary, lesbians know that they must be economically self-sufficient and that, if they become mothers, they must be the family provider. A committed relationship with another woman may ease the burdens of homemaking and motherhood for some lesbians, but does not typically reduce the necessity of paid employment. Consequently the career choices and work commitment of lesbians may more closely resemble that of heterosexual men than of heterosexual women which, in turn, may help to explain lesbians' greater income than heterosexual women.

Heterosexuals' Stereotypes About Lesbian Workers

The work experiences of lesbians are also influenced by the attitudes of others in the workplace—co-workers, customers, and, most notably, those in authority positions. Although heterosexuals' attitudes about homosexuality have become more tolerant in the past 30 years, sexual prejudice and discrimination continue (Herek, 2000). Results of a recent national survey (Kaiser Foundation, 2001) are informative. Half of Americans (51%) agreed that homosexual behavior is morally wrong. At the same time, a majority (76%) approved of laws to protect gays and lesbians from prejudice and discrimination in job opportunities. Most Americans approved, also, of laws and policies to provide domestic partner benefits for gays and lesbians in the areas of inheritance rights (73% approval), health insurance (70%), and social security benefits (68%). Further, 78% of the general public said they would be comfortable working with someone who is gay or lesbian. Despite the tolerant views of many Americans, a sizeable minority does not support gay rights in employment and would not be comfortable working with a gay or

lesbian person. The average lesbian worker is thus likely to encounter prejudiced individuals in the workplace, at least on occasion.

As other articles in this issue have documented, stereotypes may be a particularly important source of bias against women workers (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, this issue; Fuegen, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, this issue). Gender stereotypes often depict women as lacking the personal qualities needed for occupational success and lacking strong work commitment, particularly if they are mothers. These stereotypes may not be applied to lesbian women. As Badgett (1996, p. 43) noted,

Lesbians disclosing their sexual orientation could conceivably benefit by removing employers' fears or prejudices about their likelihood of marrying and quitting to raise a family. . . . While seeing this marriage effect as a lesbian "advantage" may seem far-fetched, it at least suggests that relative to heterosexual women, disclosure as a lesbian might not make her as vulnerable as a gay man is relative to heterosexual men.

This theme was echoed by a lesbian graduate of the Harvard Business School who observed that "to most people, being a lesbian means you are focused on your career, not your husband and children, and you have a strong, aggressive style—just like other top executives" (cited in Friskopp & Silverstein, p. 375).

Although limited, available research on heterosexuals' stereotypes corroborates this view. The dominant stereotype is that homosexuals do not conform to traditional gender standards and that lesbians are "masculine" (Kite, 1994; Kite & Deaux, 1987; Simon, 1998). Thus lesbians as a group tend to be rated more highly than heterosexual women on independence, assertiveness, competitiveness, and self-confidence—qualities that might be viewed as valuable for many occupational roles. Further, lesbians are seldom assumed to be mothers (Kite & Deaux, 1987). These stereotypes may, at times, benefit lesbian workers. In a British study (Dunne, 1997, pp. 156–157), some lesbians in male-dominated manual trades found that their bosses took a greater interest in them once they disclosed being lesbian.

In these cases, the sexist attitudes of bosses, informed by stereotypical understandings of women and lesbians, acted in the lesbian worker's favour. Typically, they saw their lesbian employees as 'serious' workers, unlikely to leave to get married or have children.

Systematic research assessing heterosexuals' stereotypes of lesbians, including stereotypes about lesbian workers and lesbian mothers, would be valuable. To date, only one study has investigated this issue. Horvath and Ryan (2003) asked college students to evaluate resumes of applicants for a gender-neutral job as a technical writer. Resumes varied systematically in the gender and sexual orientation of the applicants. Overall, students rated lesbian applicants more positively than heterosexual women applicants, but less favorably than heterosexual men. These findings show the interactive effects of gender and sexual orientation. Lesbians were rated lower than heterosexual men (and equivalent to gay men), but higher than heterosexual women.

Stereotypes of Lesbian Working Moms: An Initial Study

As a first step toward understanding how stereotypes of mothers may affect the work experiences of lesbians, we extended the research of Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (this issue) on heterosexual mothers to include lesbians. Cuddy et al. asked participants to read brief descriptions of women and men professionals employed by a major consulting firm, McKinsey and Company. Each participant read profiles of several professionals, including men and women described either as a parent or with no parental status mentioned. Cuddy et al. found that the heterosexual woman with no parental status mentioned was perceived as the most competent. This may not be surprising, given the high-status professional setting used in their study. Participants may have assumed that in the competitive, male-dominated context of McKinsey, a woman consultant must have been more competent than most men just to get hired. Cuddy et al. also found that when parental status was added to the picture, the results looked quite different: heterosexual mothers, but not fathers, experienced a significant drop in their perceived competence. In our research, we predicted that unlike heterosexual women, lesbian moms would not be rated lower in work competence than lesbian non-moms. In other words, stereotypes of lesbians' work-related attributes would be unaffected by motherhood.

Method

Participants were heterosexual undergraduates (162 women, 22 men) enrolled in a large upper-division psychology course. (Participants who identified as gay, lesbian, or transgender were not included in these analyses.) Participants ranged in age from 18 to 46 ($M = 21.8$, $Mdn = 21$) and were ethnically diverse (20% Asian American, 4% African American, 39% Caucasian, 20% Latina, 9% Middle Eastern, and 8% Other).

Adapting the methodology used by Cuddy et al. (this issue), participants were told that they would be completing an impression formation task in which they would read short one-paragraph profiles of two consultants working for McKinsey and Company and then provide their first impressions of each consultant. The first profile in the packet was a filler used to substantiate the cover story. The second profile contained the critical variables. The description of this consultant varied sex (man or woman) and parental status (parenthood not mentioned or new baby mentioned). In addition, the description also varied the consultant's sexual orientation. Six profiles were created: heterosexual male, heterosexual male parent, heterosexual female, heterosexual female parent, lesbian, and lesbian parent. Sexual orientation was varied as follows:

Kate is 32 years old and is heterosexual.

Kate is 32 years old and is lesbian.

Dan is 32 years old and is heterosexual.

The parenthood condition added another sentence:

- She and her husband, John, recently had their first baby.
- She and her partner, Susan, recently had their first baby.
- He and his wife, Susan, recently had their first baby.

Profiles of a gay male and a gay male parent were not included.

After reading each profile, participants used a 7-point Likert scale to rate the consultant on a series of 24 adjectives. Following Cuddy et al., four adjectives measured warmth (good-natured, sincere, warm, and trustworthy) and four measured competence (capable, efficient, organized, and skillful). In our sample, these items produced highly reliable scales of perceived warmth ($\alpha = .84$), and perceived competence ($\alpha = .83$). In addition, we added three adjectives to measure family orientation (domestic, nurturant, and family oriented) and four to measure career orientation (ambitious, committed to work, work oriented, and competitive). These items produced highly reliable scales of perceived family orientation ($\alpha = .88$) and perceived career orientation ($\alpha = .82$). The remaining nine adjectives were fillers. Only ratings of the second profile were analyzed.

Results

This study assessed stereotypes of heterosexual women, lesbian women, and heterosexual men. Because stereotypes of gay men were not assessed, data were analyzed using 2 (parental status) X 3 (group) ANOVAs to compare heterosexual men, heterosexual women, and lesbian women who were described as parents or non-parents. Additional analyses found no main effects or interactions for participant gender; this variable will not be discussed further. Because different patterns were predicted for the four dependent variables of perceived warmth, perceived family orientation, perceived competence, and perceived career orientation, separate analyses were conducted for each variable. Following the omnibus ANOVAs, one-way contrast tests were conducted to examine more focused hypotheses. The mean ratings on perceived warmth, family orientation, competence, and work orientation for each type of professional are presented in Table 1 and are discussed in detail below.

Table 1. Mean Trait Ratings by Condition

	Heterosexual Woman		Heterosexual Man		Lesbian Woman	
	No Child	With Child	No Child	With Child	No Child	With Child
Warmth	4.61	5.23	4.51	5.20	4.56	5.13
Family Orientation	4.08	5.65	3.95	5.55	3.90	5.40
Competence	5.72	5.42	5.19	5.45	5.52	5.60
Career Orientation	5.58	4.95	4.94	5.22	5.34	5.34

Note. Maximum score = 7.

Perceived warmth. A 2 (parental status) X 3 (group) ANOVA was conducted with perceived warmth as the dependent variable. There was no significant main effect of group, nor was there a significant interaction between group and parental status. However, in line with findings by Cuddy et al. (this issue), there was a main effect of parental status such that parents were seen as warmer than non-parents, $F(1, 178) = 26.67, p = .000$. This was true for all three groups: simple effects tests revealed that the heterosexual mom was perceived as warmer than the heterosexual non-mom, $t(62) = 3.23, p < .01$, the heterosexual dad was perceived as warmer than the heterosexual non-dad, $t(59) = 3.22, p < .01$, and the lesbian mom was perceived as warmer than the lesbian non-mom, $t(57) = 2.53, p = .01$.

Perceived family orientation. A 2 (parental status) X 3 (group) ANOVA was conducted with perceived family orientation as the dependent variable. There was no significant main effect of group nor was there a significant interaction between group and parental status. As expected, there was a main effect of parental status such that parents were perceived as more family oriented than non-parents, $F(1, 178) = 110.80, p = .000$. Once again, this finding held constant across all three groups: heterosexual mom vs. non-mom, $t(62) = 6.16, p = .000$; heterosexual dad vs. non-dad, $t(59) = 6.65, p = .000$; and lesbian mom vs. non-mom, $t(57) = 5.50, p = .000$.

Taken together, the results for perceived warmth and perceived family orientation revealed no evidence that lesbian mothers are perceived as less caring or involved than their heterosexual counterparts.

Perceived competence. Cuddy et al. (this issue) found that the heterosexual woman with no parental status mentioned was perceived as the most competent worker. They found, also, that when parental status was made salient, heterosexual women, but not men, were rated significantly lower in perceived competence. We predicted that unlike heterosexual women, a lesbian mother would not be rated lower in competence or work orientation than a lesbian non-mother.

Replicating results reported by Cuddy et al. (this issue), the heterosexual woman with no parental status mentioned was rated higher on competence than any other target (see Table 1 for means). The 2 (parental status) X 3 (group) ANOVA revealed no main effects for either parental status or group. In line with the results reported by Cuddy et al. (this issue), our analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction between parental status and group on perceived competence, $F(2, 178) = 2.22, p < .15$; however, more focused contrast tests revealed a more detailed story. Three sets of contrasts were conducted to test the interaction between parental status and group on perceived competence. In each contrast, one group (e.g., heterosexual women) was set to zero so that the comparison was only between the other two groups (e.g., heterosexual men vs. lesbian women). Essentially, this is the same as a 2 (parental status) X 2 (group) ANOVA in which only those cases

relevant to the comparison at hand are selected. A one-way contrast is a more appropriate test, however, because it uses a standard error that accounts for the fact that there were additional cells in the overall design.

Replicating Cuddy et al. (this issue), a one-way contrast test comparing heterosexual men and heterosexual women revealed a significant parental status X group interaction, $t(178) = 2.06$, $p < .05$. Specifically, whereas heterosexual women dropped in perceived competence when presented as a parent versus non-parent, heterosexual men increased in competence when presented as a parent versus non-parent. Further, as predicted, there was no significant interaction when comparing heterosexual men and lesbian women, $t(178) = .64$, $p = .5$. In other words, parental status did not affect participants' perceptions of competence for lesbians or heterosexual men. Finally, also in line with our prediction, comparisons between heterosexual women and lesbian women revealed a marginally significant parental status X group interaction, $t(178) = 1.40$, $p = .17$. Though this result was only marginally significant, a look at the means in Table 1 shows that while heterosexual women dropped in perceived competence when presented as a mother versus non-mother, lesbian women did not.

Perceived career orientation. The pattern of results for perceived career orientation mirrored that for perceived competence, although the effects were stronger. Once again, the heterosexual woman worker with no parental status mentioned received the highest ratings for perceived career orientation. The 2 (parental status) X 3 (group) ANOVA revealed no main effects for either parental status or group. The interaction between parental status and group on perceived career orientation was highly significant, $F(2, 178) = 4.99$, $p < .01$.

A one-way contrast comparing heterosexual men and heterosexual women revealed a significant parental status X group interaction, $t(178) = 3.08$, $p < .005$. Whereas heterosexual women dropped in perceived career orientation when presented as a parent versus non-parent, heterosexual men increased in perceived career orientation when presented as a parent versus non-parent. Further, when comparing heterosexual men and lesbian women, no significant interaction was found $t(178) = .92$, $p > .1$. Finally, comparisons between heterosexual women and lesbian women revealed a significant interaction, $t(178) = 2.13$, $p < .05$. Inspection of the mean scores in Table 1 shows that while the heterosexual women dropped in perceived career orientation when presented as a mother versus non-mother, the lesbian women did not.

Discussion

Consistent with our predictions, lesbian and heterosexual women workers were viewed differently. In the highly competitive setting of a major consulting firm, women workers were assumed to be competent and career-oriented.

However, when motherhood was added to the equation, the stereotypes of lesbians and heterosexuals diverged. Heterosexual moms were rated significantly lower in competence and career orientation than non-moms. In contrast, perceptions of lesbians' competence and work-orientation were not diminished by motherhood. It is also of interest that lesbians were seen as similar to heterosexuals in their personal warmth and family orientation—with the addition of parenthood increasing perceived warmth and family focus for all groups.

Additional studies investigating stereotypes of lesbian workers and mothers would be valuable to determine the replicability and generalizability of our findings. Research on stereotypes of women workers and mothers in different types of jobs would be particularly informative. Research on gender bias in evaluations of women and men workers (reviewed by Heilman, 2001, and Matlin, 2004) shows that characteristics of the job make a difference: women tend to be evaluated less favorably for traditionally masculine jobs (e.g., security guard) and men tend to be evaluated less favorably for traditionally feminine jobs (e.g., daycare worker). The perceived match between the person and the job may also affect evaluations of lesbians and gay men. In a 2001 Gallup Poll, Americans were asked if homosexuals should be hired for each of several occupations (Newport, 2002). Beliefs that homosexuals should be hired ranged from a high of 90% for salesperson to 75% for doctor, 70% for the armed forces, 54% for clergy, and 54% for elementary school teacher. Unfortunately, the poll did not distinguish between attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.

Concluding Comments

Although lesbians are unquestionably vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination on the job, they nonetheless are overrepresented among America's most highly educated and better paid women workers. We have analyzed two factors that contribute to this pattern. First, lesbians' work lives are influenced by the necessity of being financially self-sufficient. This fact may affect many aspects of women's occupational decision making, from the decision to pursue advanced education or to train for a higher paying nontraditional occupation to the decision to work long hours and strive for job advancement. Whereas the demands of motherhood and the availability of a male breadwinner sometimes lessen heterosexual women's work commitment, the opposite is true for lesbians. A lesbian woman contemplating having or adopting a baby knows that she will be the primary breadwinner. Even when a lesbian mother has a lesbian co-parent, the personal value placed on financial independence coupled with economic necessity encourage continued work commitment.

Second, heterosexuals' stereotypes may, to some degree, mirror these social realities. Results from our empirical investigation of stereotypes of lesbian mothers are consistent with this possibility. Heterosexuals may stereotype heterosexual

mothers as less work oriented than non-mothers in part because they assume that these working moms have a male breadwinner to lean on and that working moms carry major domestic responsibilities at home. In contrast, heterosexuals' stereotypes of lesbians may be different. Like their heterosexual male counterparts, lesbians may be seen as more work oriented and, if they are parents, as having additional financial responsibilities because of being the family provider. Consequently, lesbians, including lesbian moms, may typically be viewed as competent workers.

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