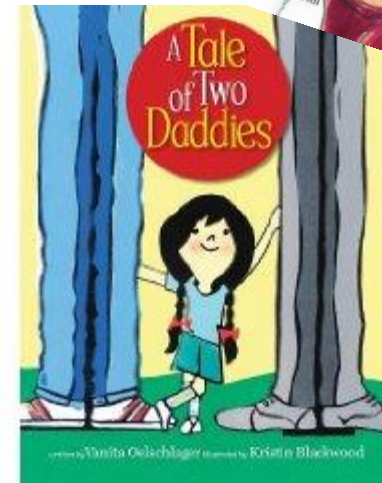
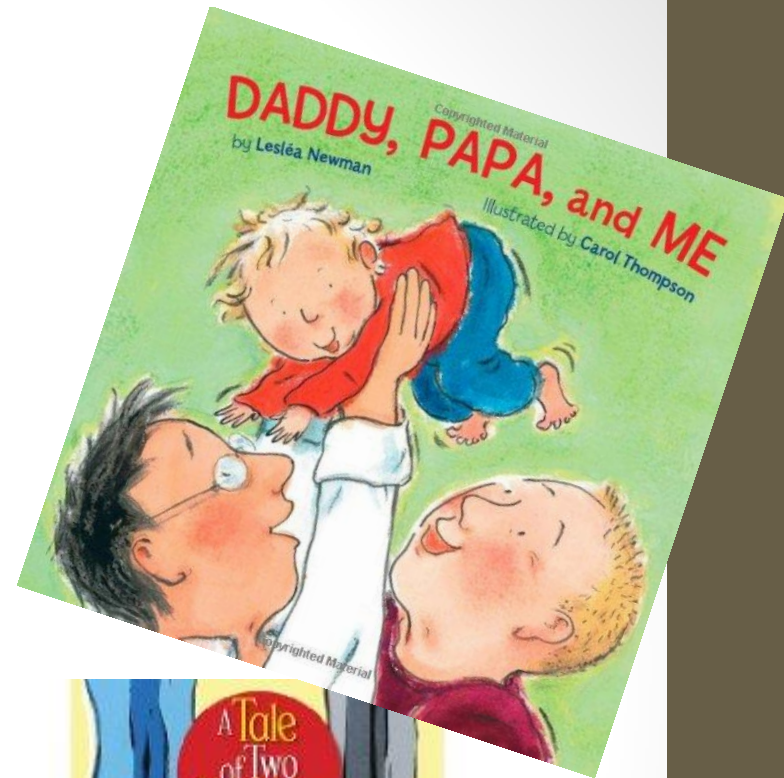


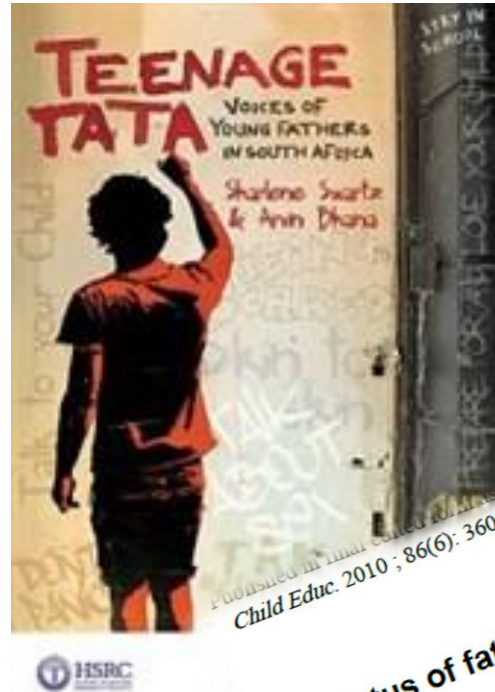
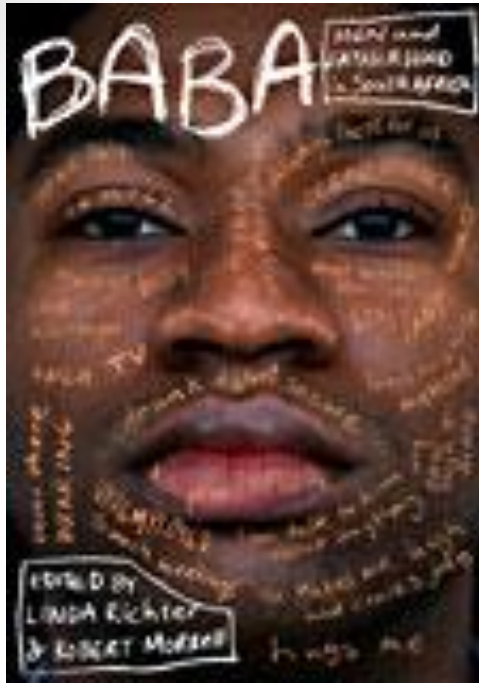
Queer(ing) fatherhood

Extending South African research on
fatherhood



Tracy Morison; Ingrid Lynch; Vasu Reddy

Past SA research



Published in *Child Education*
Child Educ. 2010 ; 86(6): 360–365. doi:10.1080/00094056.2010.10523170.

The status of fatherhood and fathering in South Africa

Linda Richter, PhD*,
Human Sciences Research Council and the University of the Witwatersrand
Jeremiah Chikovore, PhD, and
Human Sciences Research Council
Tawanda Makusha, MA
Human Sciences Research Council

estimates of fatherhood in South Africa, in the absence of formal measures
salient features of fatherhood in the country, particularly low
households, and it traces their roots in colonialism and
under which Black people were systematically

Journal of Gender Studies, 2013
Vol. 22, No. 3, 255–267, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2012.708823>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Who needs a father? South African men reflect on being fathered

Lindsay Clowes^{a*} Kopano Ratele^{b,c} and Tamara Shefer^a

Our project

- 1. Analysis of representations** of gay men & fatherhood in mainstream SA media
- 2. Empirical work:** interviews with gay men about fatherhood (photo-voice)
- 3. Advocacy** component using photography



Representing queer fathers

The media “filter & frame everyday realities, through their singular and multiple representations, providing touchstones, references, for the conduct of everyday life, for the production and maintenance of common-sense”

(Silverstone, 1999 cited in Prinsloo, 2006, p. 132).

Jeanne Prinsloo (2006, p. 144): the media “could enable creative engagement with a broader repertoire of images. They could expand how we imagine the world, and how we envisage relating and caring...”.

Research questions

- How are queer fathers and their children rendered visible in contemporary mainstream media?
- What understandings of same-gendered parenting, and sexualities more generally, are constructed in mainstream media reports about same-gendered parenting and/or gay fatherhood?

CHILDREN raised by gay couples will suffer serious problems in later life, a major new study into parenting has found. The biggest investigation into same-sex parenting to be published in Europe claims that children brought up by gay couples are more likely to experiment with homosexual behaviour and be confused about their sexuality.

There is 'proof' that gay parents are bad for children, writes Rachel Ellis

SHOULD GAYS BE ALLOWED TO ADOPT?

The Star P..... Datum 2010

Becoming a parent against all the odds

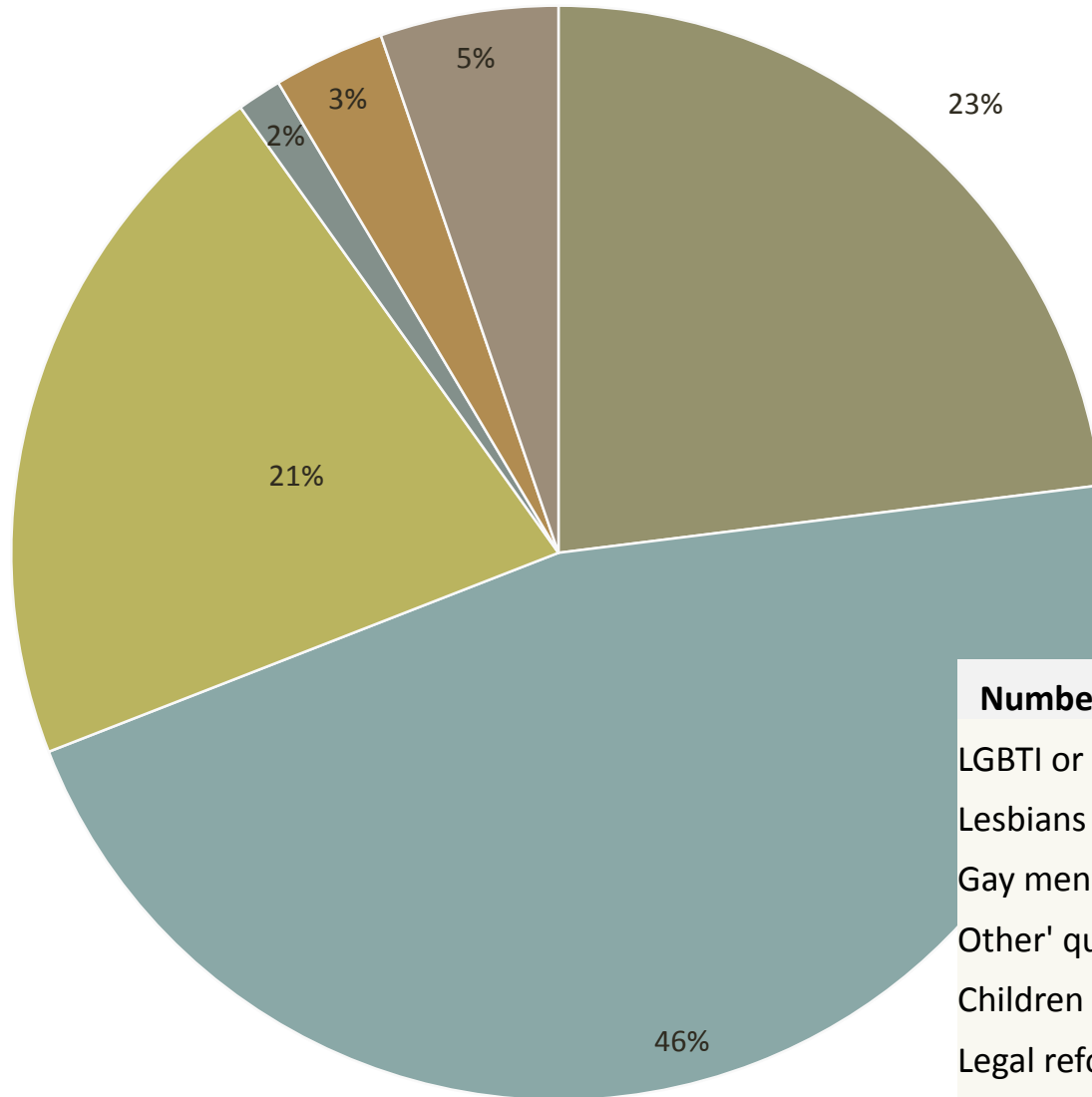
Perfectly capable parents are being rejected for one or other reason and the children are left in institutions or foster care

Content analysis – overview of data

Epoch	1985 - 1993 (Pre-democracy) 1994 - 2001 (Pre-civil rights) 2002 - 2005 (Adoption legal) 2006 - present (Marriage legal)
Type	News - commentary/story Magazine article Letter; opinion editorial
Language	English Afrikaans
Tone	Against queer parenting; negative Pro queer parenting; positive Neutral; balanced; ambiguous Sympathetic
Topic	General queer marriage and family Adoption or foster care ART (Surrogacy; IVF) Parenting, child development and homosexuality; effects on children Testimonies/experiences of parents and/or their kids Struggle stories (custody struggles; legal battles; rights) Child abuse/harm/murder; bad parenting
Focus	LGBTI or Gay and Lesbian Lesbians and/or their children Gay men and/or their children 'Other' queers Children (general) Legal reforms in general

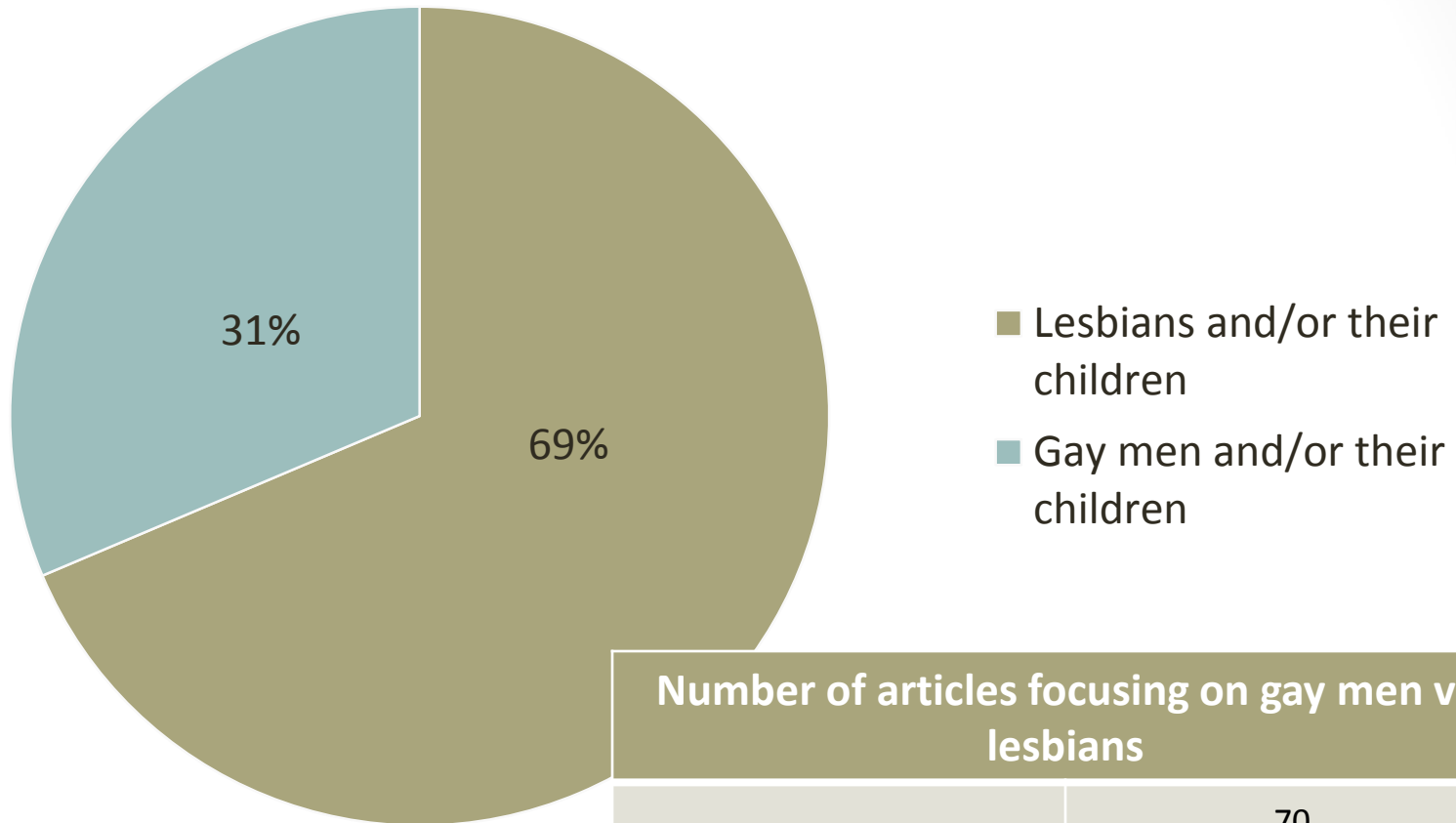
MAIN FOCUS OF ARTICLE

- LGBTI or Gay and Lesbian
- Lesbians and/or their children
- Gay men and/or their children
- Other' queers (BTI)
- Children (general)
- Legal reforms in general



Number of articles by main focus	
LGBTI or Gay and Lesbian	35
Lesbians and/or their children	70
Gay men and/or their children	32
Other' queers (BTI)	2
Children (general)	5
Legal reforms in general	8
	<hr/>
	152

Proportion of articles focusing on gay men vs lesbians



Number of articles focusing on gay men vs lesbians	
Lesbians and/or their children	70
Gay men and/or their children	32

Critical Thematic Analysis

- Focus on articles about **gay fathers** & with clear focus on **same-gendered families** in general (n = 65)
- Braun & Clarke's (2006 & 2013) **6-phase approach to TA**
 1. Familiarisation with data
 2. Generation of initial codes
 3. Generating themes
 4. Reviewing potential themes
 5. Defining and naming themes
 6. Presenting themes (writing up)
- **Critical** orientation to the data, **social constructionist** theoretical perspective
- **Discursive reading**

Preliminary findings:

DE-GENDERING OR RE-GENDERING PARENTHOOD

“Gender makes a family”

...the presiding officer of the Meyerton Children’s Court, which has to confirm the adoption, had a problem. He said he was disinclined to grant the adoption as doubt existed in his mind whether it was in the **best interests of the child** to be with a gay couple. The magistrate also said that he had never encountered such a case before. The magistrate said he wanted an expert to address him on the **implications** the adoption by gay parents would have on the child and whether “he too, would **become gay**”. The magistrate also wanted to know **how the child would address his new parents**, whether he would call them “mom and dad”, before he made a decision (Venter, 2012, IOL)

The overwhelming evidence is that same-sex parenting is **bad for kids**. This book will come as a devastating blow to those who think that any combination of adults can make good parents. The research is crystal clear: children **need a male and a female role model in a permanent relationship** (Ellis, 2002, Daily News)

(Not) real parents

Muslim leader Moulana Ismail Abdul Razack said adoption, as defined in the South African statutes, was not acceptable to Muslims. "There is no stopping anyone from caring for children and giving them love. "But to go through a process where, in Western law, those children have their identities altered from that of their biological parents is simply not acceptable. "To take someone's child and then claim parenthood, changing their names and calling them your own is absurd," said Moulana Razack. (Khan, 2002, IOL News)

But although same-sex couples have every right to their lifestyles and will have to pass scrutiny as desirable parents, some will argue in good faith that being brought up in a same-sex family is against the natural order of things. Certainly, mere observation and the biological methods devised by nature (or whatever) for the preservation of species suggest that instructing children that same-sex matrimony is the same as that of heterosexuals flies in the face of reason. (Mulholland, 2012, Bussiness Day)

“Love makes a family”

Myths about gay dads: Gay dads do not have maternal instinct and basic parenting skills. They are inferior parents: Parenting skills are not determined by gender or sexual orientation. **All children need love, stability and structure and the ability to give this is not determined by your gender or sexual orientation.** Research shows that gay parents do not differ much from heterosexual parents. It also shows that gay fathers are at least equal to heterosexual fathers as far as the quality of parenting concerns [...] Parents' sexual orientation has a very small impact on children, says Maree. "In fact, the effect is so small that it can be seen as negligible." If two gay dads raise their children in a stable home in which the children **are loved and feel secure**, there is no reason why the children will suffer any emotional or social damage simply because their parents are gay men. "

(Anonymous, 2008, Beeld)

Implications

- Broadening cultural images of what it means to be a gay man
- Reworking of traditional constructions of masculinity
- expand the possibilities for caregiving & allow for more equity in hetero caregiving arrangements
- Stretch bounds of what counts as a family
- Allow for social changes (e.g. parental leave for men & custody)
- New ways of thinking about legislation & social policies to reflect changing families

The model of the emotionally connected, nurturing father ... is relevant to all families because it illustrates how fathers can become a significant emotional resource in family life. ...this model of fathering has the added advantage of presenting children with multiple attachment figures. This family structure in which couples share power and primary attachment status contrasts with the power dynamics in heterosexual couples with traditional gender roles that too often keep women in an inferior position and men more peripherally involved with or emotionally distant from their children. This model has benefits for both men and women. It would shift the unfair burden of the second shift and decrease the high levels of stress and depression in working mothers. It would also create the opportunity for deeper emotional bonds between men and their children leading to the rewards that emotionally intimate relationships offer. In addition, the openness to difference could serve as a positive model for our multiracial, multicultural society

(Schracher et al., 2005, pp. 48 – 49).

Limits to de-gendering arguments

- Romantizes
- Steers attention away from the institutional, ideological & material validation & support bestowed on heterosexual nuclear families (HNFs)
- helps to extend rights within the status quo, but provides little resistance to dominance of HNF
- Do not offer significant resistance to the heteronorm
- little opportunity for long-term social change