

A comparison of the content of the interviews of 30 lesbian and 30 traditional parents

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for

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Task definition

The scope of work undertaken for this project included 5 tasks.

1. Score 60 parent interviews for their developmental level.
2. Conduct an exhaustive concept analysis, employing six thematic categories, each of which will be further broken down into a number of more finely distinguished concepts.
 - a. discipline
 - b. praise/criticism
 - c. morality
 - d. concerns
 - e. role models, and
 - f. reflective judgment
3. Analyze and describe the distribution of these concepts across developmental (complexity) levels, and present these results in 12 tables (two for each thematic category—one for the quantitative results and one for the qualitative results). Each table will be accompanied by a narrative interpretation. The qualitative tables will include exemplars from the interviews as well as descriptions of reasoning at each developmental level we identify.
4. Compare the distribution of concepts and complexity levels in (1) lesbian vs. traditional households and (2) birth mother vs. other parent. Focus on the relative frequency and distribution of the six selected themes, providing appropriate tables and figures, statistical analyses, and a narrative description of the results.
5. Examine the relation between the developmental levels of sons and their parents.

We have been able to proceed as outlined above with a couple of exceptions. The content of the interviews dictated that we adopt a somewhat different set of thematic categories. Praise/criticism did not emerge as independent themes. Instead, we identified a broader theme we have called *parenting*, under which we include sub-themes of *discipline* and *parenting style*. These sub-themes refer to two aspects of parenting, the actions parents report taking to discipline their son, and their general approaches to parenting. Further, we identified two additional themes on which lesbian and traditional families performed differently. We call these *childcare and schooling* and *sleeping arrangements*.

This report documents patterns of performance in a set of interview texts. We offer no interpretation of these patterns.

About cognitive development

When we employ the term *development*, we are referring to an increase in the *complexity* and *integration* of thought¹. This perspective on cognitive development is embedded in a rich research tradition with its origins in the work of Baldwin, Piaget, and Werner². During the last 25 years, it

¹ In our academic work, we employ the technical term, *hierarchical complexity*, which refers to the way in which concepts, ideas, or ways of thinking observed at one developmental level provide the basis for new concepts, ideas, or ways of thinking at the subsequent developmental level. For example, it is necessary to understand addition and multiplication as independent ideas—as in $4 + 5 = 9$ and $4 \times 5 = 20$ —before it is possible to comprehend compound problems such as $(4 + 5) \times 3 = 27$. Similarly, we find that an understanding of the concept of *honor*—the quality of being honorable or having a good name—requires the comprehension of precursor concepts such as *fair*, *truthful*, and *loyal*. Developmental changes of this kind are referred to as *hierarchical integrations*. For further information about this construct, see:

Dawson, T. L. (in press). "A good education is..." *The development of evaluative thought across the life-span*. Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs.

² Baldwin, J. M. (1894). *The development of the child of the race* (Reprinted by Augustus M. Kelly, 1968 ed.). New York: MacMillan.

Gruber, H. E., & Vonèche, J. (1977). *The essential Piaget*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Werner, H. (1948). *Comparative psychology of mental development*. Chicago: Follett.

has become clear that developments in the complexity and integration of thought are not confined to childhood and adolescence. They can take place at almost any point in the life span, given an appropriately stimulating intellectual environment. This means that adult learning is much more than the accumulation of facts. It involves changes in the way we think—the same kind of changes that occur in childhood development. Given the complexity of problems faced in today's work environments and rapid changes in the world in which we live, this is good news.

One of the greatest advances in developmental science during the last few years is the development of a valid, reliable, and accurate domain- and content-independent measure of cognitive development³. We call this measure the Lectical™ Assessment System (LAS). This system can be employed in any knowledge domain to assess the developmental level (complexity level) of text performances such as interview responses and essays. We describe adult developmental levels and scoring procedures in Appendix B.

Developmental levels of parent interviews

Parent interviews were scored with the Lectical™ Assessment System. Twenty-eight interviews were scored at the abstract mappings (AM) level and 32 were scored at either the abstract systems or single principles levels (AS/SP). We do not differentiate in this analyses between the AS and SP performances because there were only three performances at SP—too few to be meaningfully analyzed separately. Table 1 shows the distribution of levels across conditions. There were no statistically significant differences in developmental level between groups. This means it is unlikely that developmental level explains any other differences between groups.

Table 1: Distribution of complexity levels across conditions

Complexity level	Lesbian parents	Traditional parents	Birth mothers	Other parents
AM	15	13	15	13
AM/AS	15	17	15	17

There were no statistically significant relationships between sons' developmental level and parents' developmental level.

Content analysis

The goal of the content analysis was to identify all of the distinct statements relevant to each theme that were made by each participant. We began coding by developing a list of the categories we expected to observe on each theme. Statements were coded into one of these categories if they met two criteria:

- a. A statement should be assigned an existing category if doing so will not require ignoring some aspect of its meaning.
- b. A statement should be assigned an existing category if it includes all aspects of the meaning present among the other statements assigned to that category.

A new category was created if a statement failed to meet these criteria. The analysis yielded 166 categories relevant to the selected themes.

³ Dawson, T. L. (2004a). Assessing intellectual development: Three approaches, one sequence. *Journal of Adult Development*, 11, 71-85.

Dawson, T. L. (2004b, 1/31/03). *The Lectical™ Assessment Manual*. Retrieved January, 2004, from <<http://www.lectica.info>>.

Dawson, T. L., & Gabrielian, S. (2003). Developing conceptions of authority and contract across the life-span: Two perspectives. *Developmental Review*, 23, 162-218.

Dawson, T. L., Xie, Y., & Wilson, M. (2003). Domain-general and domain-specific developmental assessments: Do they measure the same thing? *Cognitive Development*, 18, 61-78.

For the purposes of this analysis, we considered a category to be well-populated if 30% or more of the parents made statements that were coded into that category.

The remainder of this report documents the occurrence of these categories by (1) developmental level, (2) parent type (biological mother/other parent), and (3) family type (lesbian/traditional). The most populated and most differentially populated categories are listed in Appendix C. Numerous comments coded into these categories are included in a supplemental document:

<ParentExamples.xls>.

Distribution of themes and categories by developmental level

The interviews analyzed here were not originally intended to provide developmental information. Consequently, they were not probed to elicit justifications, and parents tended to list the *things* they were thinking about rather than describing *how* they were thinking about them. This made it difficult to score the interviews, and may have resulted in underestimates of the developmental capabilities of some parents. Despite this potential problem, the following analysis yields interesting information about the relative salience of different topics at different developmental levels

Reflective judgment

Although the original interviews were not designed to be assessments of parents' reflectivity *per se*, several parents spontaneously elaborated upon their decision-making processes, providing us with some insight into the processes and considerations that contributed to their decisions. Table 2 provides a list of these. Most categories are populated by individuals performing at both the AM and AS/SP levels. More than 30% of parents spontaneously reported (1) considering their experiences with their own parents when deciding what kind of parent to be; and (2) keeping their son's developmental level in mind when making decisions. (Throughout this document, categories in which 30% or more parents were represented are highlighted in red type.)

Table 2: Reflective judgment—Processes and considerations by complexity level

Category	AM n=28	%	AS/SP n=32	%	Total
Describes determining whether it is appropriate to step in and resolve a given conflict	3	10.71	0	0.00	3
Describes the importance of not being afraid to be unconventional	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports being introspective and self aware	0	0.00	1	3.57	1
Reports considering experience with own parents when deciding what kind of parent to be	12	42.86	15	53.57	27
Reports considering personalities of parents and children when making parenting decisions	0	0.00	1	3.57	1
Reports having to choose between priorities as a parent	1	3.57	4	14.29	5
Reports keeping son's developmental level in mind when making decisions	11	39.29	18	64.29	29
Reports making choices based on level of tolerance	1	3.57	3	10.71	4
Reports making decisions based on social pressure	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports making decisions based on son's needs/ personality	4	14.29	6	21.43	10
Reports seeking advice on discipline	7	25.00	6	21.43	13
Reports seeking advice on parenting	6	21.43	10	35.71	16
Column total	47		64		111

We also coded the topics of reflection referred to by the parents. These 84 topics are listed in Appendix A. Parents performing at AM made 105 statements (an average of 3.5 per parent) that were coded into one of these categories, whereas parents performing at AS/SP made 153 statements (an average of 5.1 per parent) that were coded into one of these categories, a pattern that is consistent with the overall tendency of individuals performing at higher levels to produce more ideas. Although parents performing at AM and AS/SP discussed many of the same issues and discussed similar processes and considerations, their reasoning was markedly different.

Table 3: Reflective judgment—Complexity level descriptions and examples

Complexity Level	Description	Examples
AM	<p>At this level reflective judgment concerning parenting involves considering strategies for dealing with particular issues, such as aspects of the child's personality or unique needs of the child. There are instances of reflection about nature/nurture issues, but rather than thinking about these in general terms, respondents performing at this level tend to describe particular cases. For example, issues of gender are discussed in terms of a son's personality traits and particular behaviors. Reflections about the type of parent the respondent would like to be are often lists of attributes or goals, without extended reflection upon why these are preferable.</p>	<p><i>Impact of experience with own parents on parenting choices:</i></p> <p>And I wanted him to have very much what my parents had given me, which was a happy home and sort of a spirit of adventure, and, and trips, and—whether it's trips in the city or trips other places, just kind of a, give him a sense of what's happening in the world. And a love of books and music and art and all the wonderful things that there are. And I hope to raise him with a social conscience on top of that, as he was clearly going to be lucky enough to live in a nice house, and have all the things that we have, probably similar to what my parents had. I just bought into what they believed and lived and kind of wanted to replicate it. [55]</p> <p><i>Considering son's developmental level:</i></p> <p>I know that there are you know, sort of stages, where, where all kids around that age go through certain things. I don't know if this is an age where kids go through bellowing like cows and melting down and stuff. [06]</p>
AS/SP	<p>At this level reflective judgment concerning parenting involves considering strategies for effectively actualizing goals and developmental objectives, such as the moral development of the child. Reflections on the nature/nurture debate are often cast in terms of considerations about gender, personality, and intelligence. Reflections about the type of parent the respondent would like to be often include reflections about personal beliefs, motivations, and commitments, which are distilled from experiences with parents they have known.</p>	<p><i>Impact of experience with own parents on parenting choices:</i></p> <p>Well, I really wanted a stable family unit. I think... it had a lot to do with how I grew up. My parents met very young but are still very together, still very in love with each other, and that was a good model. Especially I think, considering their parents, my parents really did a good job creating a strong relationship. They didn't have such good models for that themselves. [UM-HM...] And I saw the value in that, the consistency, the continuity. For all of the issues that my parents had around parenting, there were certain things that they really did have together. And I thought, as a couple, that's the kind of thing you can create. That's sort of the balance, where the kids know one parent has this set of beliefs, one parent has that set of beliefs, but somehow combined [they] can create a whole... I really wanted that in my home. [07]</p> <p><i>Considering son's developmental level:</i></p> <p>Now, developmentally—he's virtually seven; he's going to be seven in a few weeks. And, whereas, probably a year and a half ago people would have described [our son]—of course they'd say, great imagination, great power of concentration—but they would say he's very considerate. And I think consideration is part of fairness. But lately, it's incredible how [inconsiderate he is]. It's not a linear process. [07]</p>

Morality

Of the 36 moral categories, 5 occurred in more than 30% of the interviews. These were (1) reports teaching son about moral issues as they come up; (2) reports teaching son concern for others; (3) reports teaching son fairness; (4) reports teaching son right from wrong; (5) reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives/ feelings. Despite an overall trend for individuals performing at AS/SP to produce more comments overall (57% of comments) than those performing at AM (43% of comments), there were no statistically significant differences between AM and AS/AP interviews in any single category. As expected, however, there was a great deal of difference between the types of arguments produced at AM and AS/SP, as shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Morality—behaviors and concerns by complexity level

Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	Total
Describes balance as an aspect of morality	1	3.57	2	6.25	3
Describes fairness as doing to others what you would want done to you	6	21.43	4	12.50	10
Describes having a sense of humanity as an important aspect of morality	1	3.57	1	3.13	2
Describes honesty as an important aspect of morality	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Describes importance of good behavior in the home and the world	1	3.57	7	21.88	8
Describes morality as complex	0	0.00	2	6.25	2
Describes morality as of central importance	0	0.00	5	15.63	5
Describes self-sacrifice as an aspect of morality	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Describes the importance of moral context for teaching son	1	3.57	2	6.25	3
Discusses the importance of being a productive person	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discusses the importance of social justice	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discusses the importance of social responsibility	5	17.86	12	37.50	17
Discusses the importance of understanding the impact of one's actions	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports teaching son about homophobia	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports teaching son about moral issues as they come up	14	50.00	14	43.75	28
Reports teaching son about racism	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports teaching son about sexual equality	0	0.00	4	12.50	4
Reports teaching son about the importance of give and take	3	10.71	2	6.25	5
Reports teaching son concern for others	12	42.86	12	37.50	24
Reports teaching son fairness	10	35.71	15	46.88	25
Reports teaching son how privileged he is	1	3.57	2	6.25	3
Reports teaching son right from wrong	11	39.29	12	37.50	23
Reports teaching son that cheating is bad	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports teaching son that everyone should be respected	3	10.71	4	12.50	7
Reports teaching son that hitting is wrong	2	7.14	5	15.63	7
Reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives/ feelings	19	67.86	18	56.25	37
Reports teaching son that people are different	2	7.14	5	15.63	7
Reports teaching son that stealing is bad	3	10.71	1	3.13	4
Reports teaching son the concept of live and let live	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Reports teaching son to be considerate of others	6	21.43	9	28.13	15
Reports teaching son to be open-minded	2	7.14	6	18.75	8
Reports teaching son to stick to his morals even when other people have a lower standard	1	3.57	2	6.25	3
Reports that sharing has been an issue	9	32.14	7	21.88	16
Reports that son has lied	2	7.14	0	0.00	2

Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	Total
Reports that son is being raised with a religious morality	1	3.57	5	15.63	6
Reports that son learns about moral issues at school/ from peers/ from siblings	4	14.29	7	21.88	11
Column total	125		169		294

Table 5: Morality—Complexity level descriptions and examples

Complexity Level	Descriptions	Examples
AM	At this level conceptions of moral upbringing involve ideas about how to inculcate specific moral norms. Morality is seen as important for the child's immediate behavior and for the life the parent wants the child to live in the future. Moral issues in school and in the home are addressed, while broader social and political issues are not. Fairness is discussed relative to peer and sibling interaction, with an awareness that receiving equal treatment from adults provides a good example for children.	<p><i>Teaching son about moral issues as they come up:</i></p> <p>[COULD YOU GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES - RECENT EXAMPLES OF HOW YOU TAUGHT [YOUR SON] FAIRNESS?] Well, a lot of it is explaining why. And using examples of his own, like "do you remember when you really wanted (whatever)?" and how "you really wanted to play with (_____'s) new toy and he wouldn't share it with you. "Do you remember how that made you feel?" (_____) wants to play with your new toy, you know, you don't want (_____) to feel bad like you did. Things like that. [28]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son concern for others:</i></p> <p>[COULD YOU GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS YOU TEACH HIM ABOUT FAIRNESS AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS?] ...what we primarily did, what I primarily did was to say "this isn't fair to me," you know, "If you do this to me it hurts," "I wouldn't do that to you," [49].</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son fairness:</i></p> <p>When they worry about how many cookies they have as opposed to how many the little sister gets, or why this friend gets to watch T.V. all the time and he doesn't... and, whether it's fair or not is not, is something that the child may question, but I think it's... we admit that and say "I know you think it's not fair, but that's the rule." ...But I think the main thing that we are concerned with, in terms of fairness, is how they treat other people. [06]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son right from wrong:</i></p> <p>He does have some temperamental qualities that, relate to impulse control and just getting mad and blowing his top and being aggressive when things don't go his way, and so, we try to either remove the object that is the cause of concern or that he's demanding, or talk to him about how his actions make other people feel, and we try to stress the fact that using words is really the way to go. [45]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives/ feelings:</i></p> <p>And he didn't share very well. And still doesn't like to share around her. So in sort of fairness I'll say, well, now if Allie took this from you, that you were playing with, because it was hers, would you feel okay about that? You know, here you are playing with one of her things and she comes along and grabs it. Would you think that was fair, and how would you like that? Oh? No, I wouldn't like that. [05]</p>

Complexity Level	Descriptions	Examples
AS/SP	At this level conceptions of moral upbringing involve ideas about preparing son to be a socially responsible person. Raising a moral child is often seen as a primary function or goal of good parenting and its importance is tied to broader social and political issues. Moral issues in the school and at home are framed in terms of differences in context and social environment, each offering unique chances for moral education. Fairness is viewed not in terms of quantitative equality, but rather as a general disposition that can characterize a variety of interactions, communications, and relations.	<p><i>Teaching son about moral issues as they come up:</i></p> <p>...we discuss moral, ethical dilemmas with him as they come up. He's very aware of our concern, say, about the environment, about poverty, about race... sexism, anti-gay discrimination—so he's very aware of sociopolitical concerns we have.</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son concern for others:</i></p> <p>I think it would be an all-encompassing perspective on life, really, that would permeate everything from his interaction with us to his interactions with his siblings to his interactions with the kids at school. [01]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son fairness:</i></p> <p>You set up guidelines in your family for behavior, for expectations, and they're not only for the child but for the adults, too. And in trying to follow through on that, we would treat each other with respect and kindness. And that extends outward from our family, to our neighbors, friends. And then we tried to put son in ...association with other like-minded people of fairness on a more global kind of perspective, not only in our country but in the world, and I think in terms of the environment, and all that kind of stuff. [04]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son right from wrong:</i></p> <p>So we've been doing a lot of talking about, you know, listening to other people's feelings, and sometimes he is getting attention by being annoying. Which is pretty typical for a 7-year-old, I think. And we've just been talking about why is he not hearing the feedback that he gets from other kids about not liking his, his behavior. And why is it not fair for him to just do what he wants to do and what he feels like, and why is it not fair to other kids in the class for him to just act out what he wants to, and what impact does it have on his teacher. So that's kind of one we've been working on a lot lately. [34]</p>
		<p><i>Teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives/ feelings:</i></p> <p>So... in terms of teaching that I suppose you talk about it, you point out other people's feelings, other people's reactions, you try to imagine situations for him in which he would be the other person, take the other side... Grasp that, in terms of recognizing joy in other people and also recognizing pain. And, you know, books are full of that kind of thing, I, I find that fairy tales and stories are probably one of our best teaching tools. [46]</p>

Parenting style and discipline

Of the 42 parenting categories, only 2 occurred in more than 30% of the interviews. They were (1) reports talking through issues with son, and (2) reports trying to share parenting. Despite an overall trend for individuals performing at AS/SP to produce more comments overall (55% of total comments) than those performing at AM (45% of total comments), there were no statistically significant differences between AM and AS/AP interviews in any single category. There were, however, a few categories with fairly large differences that did not reach statistical significance (highlighted in red or black bold type). Despite the fact that there were no statistically significant differences between the discipline and styles discussed by parents, there was a great deal of

difference between the types of arguments produced at AM and AS/SP, as shown in Table 7. In particular, parents performing at AS/SP embedded their choices about parenting in a broader context than those performing at AM.

Table 6: Parenting—Discipline and style

Theme	Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	Total
Discipline	Reports using isolation as punishment	6	21.43	5	15.63	11
Discipline	Reports discouraging while encouraging	4	14.29	0	0.00	4
Discipline	Reports praising son	2	7.14	2	6.25	4
Discipline	Reports ignoring son's acting out	2	7.14	1	3.13	3
Discipline	Reports rewarding son for good behavior	2	7.14	1	3.13	3
Discipline	Reports telling son his method of dealing with people is bad	2	7.14	0	0.00	2
Discipline	Reports telling son to change his choice of language	2	7.14	0	0.00	2
Discipline	Reports determining punishment that suits crime	1	3.57	5	15.63	6
Discipline	Reports requiring son to apologize to people he has done wrong	1	3.57	3	9.38	4
Discipline	Reports shouting at son	1	3.57	1	3.13	2
Discipline	Reports holding back on allowance as punishment	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Discipline	Reports making son own up to his actions	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Discipline	Reports trying to help son out of tantrum by changing the subject	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Discipline	Reports grabbing son physically during arguments	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discipline	Reports having hit son when angry	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discipline	Reports having son choose his own punishment	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discipline	Reports letting son hit his sibling in order to keep the greater peace	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discipline	Reports showing son that he has angered parent	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Discipline	Reports using rewards to get son to behave	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Style	Reports talking through problems with son	17	60.71	19	59.38	36
Style	Describes the importance of strong/ clear guidelines	6	21.43	8	25.00	14
Style	Reports teaching son by setting an example	6	21.43	4	12.50	10
Style	Reports teaching son to express/ understand his feelings	5	17.86	12	37.50	17
Style	Reports teaching son how to solve his own problems	5	17.86	11	34.38	16
Style	Reports wanting to provide a consistent environment	5	17.86	9	28.13	14
Style	Reports creating lessons for son from everyday events	5	17.86	4	12.50	9
Style	Reports having a relaxed parenting style	4	14.29	6	18.75	10
Style	Reports trying to be fair with son	4	14.29	2	6.25	6
Style	Reports teaching son how to lose	3	10.71	2	6.25	5
Style	Reports teaching son that life is not always fair	3	10.71	1	3.13	4
Style	Reports being an indulgent parent	2	7.14	1	3.13	3
Style	Reports letting son win	2	7.14	1	3.13	3
Style	Reports compromising/ negotiating with son	1	3.57	6	18.75	7
Style	Reports not pushing son	1	3.57	2	6.25	3
Style	Reports being conscious of son's development	1	3.57	1	3.13	2
Style	Reports teaching son about rules	1	3.57	1	3.13	2
Style	Describes importance of knowing when to step back from a situation	1	3.57	0	0.00	1
Style	Reports being against spanking as a punishment	1	3.57	0	0.00	1

Theme	Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	Total
Style	Reports being a strict parent	0	0.00	2	6.25	2
Style	Reports treating son with respect	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Style	Reports trying to stay calm while dealing with son	0	0.00	1	3.13	1
Style	Reports trying to share parenting	17	60.71	22	68.75	39
Column total		116		140		256

Table 7: Parenting—Complexity level descriptions and examples

Complexity Level	Descriptions	Examples
AM	At this level reasoning about parenting focuses on categorizing types of interactions and administering lessons. Education is seen primarily as what happens at school, and peer interactions are discussed as they relate to the child's happiness or habits. Both are kept separate from concerns about what happens in the household. Discipline is discussed as necessary for correcting behavior and is often related to issues surrounding the inculcation of moral norms. The emotional life of the child is discussed in terms of tendencies and behaviors and classified as either positive or negative.	<p><i>Talking through issues with son:</i> COULD YOU JUST GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF A WAY THAT YOU'VE TAUGHT YOUR SON FAIRNESS AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS.] ... what I try to do is when something gets out of line with other kids, something's not going well, or if they're disagreeing, to try to just call a meeting, you know, say "it's now time for a meeting, everyone's got to sit over here and listen and talk to each other", which doesn't really work, but the teachers at Katherine Michael School do that, and it works. I don't know why it works for them and it doesn't work for me, but... Or I try to get him to just talk about how would you like this to happen to you? [13]</p> <p><i>Trying to share parenting:</i> I have ultimately had to be the lawmaker. Even though it wasn't a role that I thought I'd find myself in. And they do usually go to [biological mom] first. Which is surprising to me. Because I'm actually probably more gentle with them in some ways than she is, she's much more exacting in what she expects from them; we have a little bit of a traditional role reversal in that way. [57]</p>
AS/SP	At this level reasoning about parenting is guided by attempts to construct a systematic picture of the effects of interventions and the environment on the child's development. Education is conceived as a general process that transcends the boundaries of the school, involving formal and informal learning situations. Peer interactions are seen as an integral part of the child's development and are contrasted with parent child relations and sibling relations. The emotional life of the child is discussed as it manifests in behavior and as it is caused by or related to events, perceptions, and situations. Moral issues are conceived as being woven throughout the parent/child interaction. While particular norms are valued and their inculcation is desired, a more general orientation towards fairness or concern for others is the focus.	<p><i>Talking through issues with son:</i> I think the lessons come mostly about when he gets angry easily...about something someone did, so mostly I teach him how to recognize his own feelings, acknowledging that they were...you know, something that were acceptable and mostly accepting the anger, but then trying to work through that by saying, "What did you think about...did you think that our friend...what did you want to say? Did you said, did you not said...if you said it, do you think you understood what the other kid was thinking at that time? [03]</p> <p><i>Trying to share parenting:</i> ...I think we have such a good balance when things get really stressful. I think that's when we're the best, you know? In terms of really being... like when I've had it, [other parent] has no problem stepping in. And when she's had it, I can hear it. You know, and I'll just say, "Go."</p>

Role models

After examining the content of the role-model coding and the role model portion of the interviews, we have determined that it does not make sense to look at this content in developmental terms. This is because this portion of the interview contains very few arguments or justifications for choosing role models or determining the roles they ought to play. For developmental assessments to make sense, we need this kind of insight into the reasoning process.

Parental concerns

Of the 44 *concern* categories, 6 occurred in more than 30% of the interviews. Highlighted in red in Table 8, these were concerns about (1) having enough time for son, (2) having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent; (3) parenting a son; (4) raising a good/ moral/ not macho man; (5) son being psychologically healthy/ happy; and (6) son encountering prejudice. Two of these categories (2 & 3) and one other category (concern About finances) were observed statistically significantly more often in AS/SP performances than in AM performances. There were, however, a few categories with fairly large differences that did not reach statistical significance (highlighted in red or black bold type, without χ^2 values).

There was also a striking overall trend for individuals performing at AS/SP to produce more comments overall (67% of total comments) than those performing at AM (33% of total comments). In addition to the statistically significant differences between parents in three categories, there was a great deal of difference between the types of arguments produced at AM and AS/SP, as shown in Table 9. In particular, parents performing at AS/SP embedded their choices about parenting in a broader context than those performing at AM.

Table 8: Reported parental concerns by complexity level

Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	χ^2	Total
About being a good model/ setting a good example	2	7.14	3	10.71		5
About being ready/ not wanting to have children	2	7.14	7	25.00		9
About defined roles for parents	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
About finances	2	7.14	10	35.71	5.42	12
About having enough time for son	6	21.43	13	46.43		19
About having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent	3	10.71	16	57.14	10.65	19
About knowing how to raise a child	1	3.57	7	25.00		8
About parenting a girl	1	3.57	1	3.57		2
About parenting a son	7	25.00	18	64.29	6.00	25
About parents' differences/ disagreements	1	3.57	2	7.14		3
About possible genetic inheritance	2	7.14	3	10.71		5
About providing/ creating a good/ stable family	2	7.14	5	17.86		7
About raising a child in an unconventional way	6	21.43	9	32.14		15
About raising a good/ moral/ not macho man	10	35.71	14	50.00		24
About sibling rivalry	3	10.71	7	25.00		10
About son achieving things in his life/ having a good life	5	17.86	7	25.00		12
About son becoming an independent thinker	1	3.57	2	7.14		3
About son being intelligent	1	3.57	4	14.29		5
About son being a part of his culture	0	0.00	3	10.71		3
About son being an only child	1	3.57	0	0.00		1
About son being psychologically healthy/ happy	11	39.29	7	25.00		18
About son encountering prejudice	6	21.43	12	42.86		18
About son getting a good education	2	7.14	2	7.14		4
About son sharing the values of his parents	3	10.71	5	17.86		8

Category	AM	%	AS/SP	%	X ²	Total
About son's ability to be an individual	3	10.71	3	10.71		6
About special quality of father/son relationships	3	10.71	5	17.86		8
About teaching son to be financially independent	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
About the effects of son being biracial	1	3.57	0	0.00		1
About the importance of two parents	1	3.57	3	10.71		4
About the prevalence of father/son romanticism in the media	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
About what happens to kids if parents split up	0	0.00	2	7.14		2
About whether a child will strain the parents' relationship	2	7.14	5	17.86		7
No concerns about having a child	6	21.43	2	7.14		8
That parents are from different backgrounds	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
That son might not be an athletic person	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
That son will have to go through the same hardships as his parents	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
That son will have too easy a life	1	3.57	0	0.00		1
That son won't be able to be open with his parents	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
That son won't be special	0	0.00	2	7.14		2
That the son would have no father	1	3.57	3	10.71		4
That there might not be enough love for another child	1	3.57	2	7.14		3
That time to have a baby was running out	2	7.14	5	17.86		7
Wants kids because of the constant challenge	1	3.57	2	7.14		3
Wants kids because of the playing	0	0.00	1	3.57		1
	100		199			299

Table 9: Reasoning about parental concerns by complexity level

Complexity Level	Description	Examples
	At this level reasoning about parental concerns involves conceptions of parenthood that isolate reality distinct problem areas. Issues surrounding money, lifestyle, and logistics are kept distinct from issues involving the psychological life of the child and the child's experiences. Concerns about goals for the child's growth are generally couched in terms of particular traits and or capabilities that the parent sees as desirable, such as weather or not the child will be successful, kind, or macho. Concerns about the child experiencing difficulties, such as prejudice, are articulated via reflections upon particular instances involving	<p><i>Having enough time for son:</i></p> <p>We tend to have a few minutes in the morning and a few minutes at night where we have alone time. But then even on the weekends, it's very, very rare for me to be with [son] by himself. Or [other parent] to have [son] by himself. ... We've often talked about that, that we should try to figure out a way that each has some alone time with each child, but we haven't really been able to do that. [05]</p> <p><i>Having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent:</i></p> <p>I mean we knew some of the things that you give up when you have kids - the freedom to spontaneously go on vacation, or... I don't think we realized we'd miss brunch - Sunday brunch - as much as we do. [30121]</p>

Complexity Level	Description	Examples
	teasing, etc.	<p><i>Parenting a son:</i> [BUT IT SEEMS LIKE YOU HAVE VERY HIGH HOPES FOR [SON]] Yeah, I think he's bright and he's going to do really well. He's smart and he enjoys life. He's a fun little guy... I think it's great that he's going have those advantages. ...my only thing is that I don't want him to forget that he has advantages. That's the only part about it that bothers me. ...[I] really have high hopes that he is going see this and live with it and know about it and be a little more aware of it in the world. [66]</p> <p><i>Raising a good/ moral/ not macho man:</i> So, uh, you know, one of my greatest fears was that he would be a total jock, and that I wouldn't, you know, be able to support him in, you know, in what he, in the directions he was going in. And that didn't turn out to be true, and in fact, now I wish he was a little more athletic. So, you know, I think there was that fear. [52]</p> <p><i>Son being psychologically healthy/ happy:</i> I mean I hope that he is, that he feels good about himself, that's probably number one that I hope he feels good about himself and able to do what he wants to do. [47]</p> <p><i>Son encountering prejudice:</i> Thinking about raising a kid, too, as a lesbian couple. You wonder about how much flack the kid is going to take, and whether it's going to be very hard on him, being the child of lesbian parents. [33]</p>
	At this level reasoning about parental concerns involves conceptions encompassing problem areas in parenting, culture, education, and the child's psychology. Issues of money, lifestyle and logistics are related to broader concerns tied up with quality of education and childhood experiences. Concerns about goals for the child's growth are articulated as reflections on how to promote positive growth trajectories towards general capacities, typically moral. There is comfort with open-endedness and an awareness of contingency. Concerns about the child experiencing difficulties, such as prejudice, are often related to cultural issues and moral judgments.	<p><i>Having enough time for son:</i> It's the time issue. Because as an adult you have much less free time. And so that was not a reservation but just a caution thing in the back of my mind, you know, be prepared for that, that's going to be your reality, you've seen it in other friends, you know, and in your own life growing up. And, ah, it's proved to be true that there's a great deal of time spent, not particularly with son in enjoyment, but just in life support. More complicated. And that has proved to be true. [04]</p> <p><i>Having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent:</i> And I was always the person who, you know, the parties were at my house, and I sort of brought people together, and I like that role. Yet, I kind of hit a wall, you know, I couldn't do that and be a new mother and keep my job going, and find time at the end of the day for a relationship, you know, it just wasn't working. [07]</p>

Complexity Level	Description	Examples
		<p><i>Parenting a son:</i> I think I had this conviction, kind of a visceral conviction that boys have so much privilege in this society anyway, that they don't need the extra advantage of a mother who's, uhm, you know, trying to protect them from or help them overcome obstacles. Because it didn't seem to me that such a person would have obstacles. You know, now of course, I realize the other side of the coin: that privilege itself raises problems in terms of compassion for other people, and being integrated into the world and so on. [31]</p> <p><i>Raising a good/ moral/ not macho man:</i> My hopes were that he would evolve into a person who would on all levels be able to make his way well in the world. A person who would understand as well as anyone does, the ways the world works and how to survive in it physically, economically, intellectually, that he would evolve into a person who appreciates life and contributes to society as well as being a part of a, as well as being held up by it.</p> <p><i>Son being psychologically healthy/ happy:</i> That basic hope was to have a child in whom we could take pride and pleasure, I suppose, a child who would do well with life. And... uh, I should think we hoped for a child who would be bright and capable and full of joy and things like that. We hoped for the best person, the child would be the best person the child would develop to be. And we hoped negatively not to have a child who has problems, I suppose; not to have a child who is handicapped in some way, with burdens entering into life - life is burdensome enough. [46]</p> <p><i>Son encountering prejudice:</i> ...[Respect] came up in school quite a bit around the boys and the girls issue. And I always had him play with boys and girls. That was one thing that was really important to me, was that he not be a boys' boy, that way, but be able to communicate well with girls. And he saw, already in first grade that there was a lot of leaving the girls out of the athletic activities at school. And so we had big discussions about that. And he would actually refuse to play at times if they don't let the girls play. ...And kids ... did tease him extensively about his good [female] friend. ...We talk about sexual harassment, and leaving people out, but also in relation to women. [53]</p>

Distribution of themes and categories by parent type

Parent type did not have a large impact on the content of the interviews. For the most part, biological mothers and other parents spoke about the same kinds of things in approximately the same proportions. However, there were some notable exceptions, as shown in the tables and commentary below.

Reflective judgment

Biological mothers were statistically significantly more likely than other parents to report seeking advice on parenting.

Table 10: Reflective judgment by parent type

Category	Biological mother	Other parent	X ²	Total
Describes determining whether it is appropriate to step in and resolve a given conflict	3	0		3
Describes the importance of not being afraid to be unconventional	0	1		1
Reports being introspective and self-aware	1	0		1
Reports considering experience with own parents when deciding what kind of parent to be	12	15		27
Reports considering personalities of parents and children when making parenting decisions	0	1		1
Reports having to choose between priorities as a parent	2	3		5
Reports keeping son's developmental level in mind when making decisions	13	16		29
Reports making choices based on level of tolerance	1	3		4
Reports making decisions based on social pressure	1	0		1
Reports making decisions based upon son's needs	5	5		10
Reports seeking advice on discipline	9	4		13
Reports seeking advice on parenting	12	4	5.46	16
Column total	59	52		111

Morality

There were no statistically significant differences in reported moral considerations between biological mothers and other parents, although slightly more considerations were mentioned by biological mothers (an average of 5.2) than other parents (an average of 4.6).

Table 11: Reported moral considerations by parent type

Category	Biological mom	Other parent	Total
Describes balance as an aspect of morality	1	2	3
Describes fairness as doing to others what you would want done to you	5	5	10
Describes having a sense of humanity as an important aspect of morality	1	1	2
Describes honesty as an important aspect of morality	0	1	1
Describes importance of good behavior in the home and the world	5	3	8
Describes morality as complex	1	1	2
Describes morality as of central importance	2	3	5
Describes self-sacrifice as an aspect of morality	1	0	1
Describes the importance of moral context for teaching son	0	3	3

Category	Biological mom	Other parent	Total
Discusses the importance of being a productive person	0	1	1
Discusses the importance of social justice	0	1	1
Discusses the importance of social responsibility	9	8	17
Discusses the importance of understanding the impact of one's actions	1	0	1
Reports teaching son about homophobia	1	0	1
Reports teaching son about moral issues as they come up	14	14	28
Reports teaching son about racism	1	0	1
Reports teaching son about sexual equality	2	2	4
Reports teaching son about the importance of give and take	3	2	5
Reports teaching son concern for others	12	12	24
Reports teaching son fairness	14	11	25
Reports teaching son how privileged he is	2	1	3
Reports teaching son right from wrong	15	8	23
Reports teaching son that cheating is bad	1	0	1
Reports teaching son that everyone should be respected	5	2	7
Reports teaching son that hitting is wrong	5	2	7
Reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives and feelings	22	15	37
Reports teaching son that people are different	2	5	7
Reports teaching son that stealing is bad	2	2	4
Reports teaching son the concept of live and let live	0	1	1
Reports teaching son to be considerate of others	8	7	15
Reports teaching son to be open-minded	3	5	8
Reports teaching son to stick to his morals even when other people have a lower standard	2	1	3
Reports that sharing has been an issue	7	9	16
Reports that son has lied	1	1	2
Reports that son is being raised with a religious morality	2	4	6
Reports that son learns about moral issues at school/ from peers/ from siblings	6	5	11
Column total	156	138	294

Parenting style and discipline

There were no statistically significant differences in reported style and use of discipline between biological mothers and other parents.

Table 12: Parents' reported style and use of discipline by parent type

Theme	Category	Biological mother	Other parent	Total
Discipline	Reports determining punishment that suits crime	4	2	6
Discipline	Reports discouraging while encouraging	3	1	4
Discipline	Reports grabbing son physically during arguments	1	0	1
Discipline	Reports having hit son when angry	1	0	1
Discipline	Reports having son choose his own punishment	1	0	1
Discipline	Reports holding back on allowance as punishment	1	0	1
Discipline	Reports ignoring son's acting out	1	2	3
Discipline	Reports letting son hit his sibling in order to keep	0	1	1

	the greater peace			
Discipline	Reports making son own up to his actions	0	1	1
Discipline	Reports praising son	3	1	4
Discipline	Reports requiring son to apologize to people he has done wrong	3	1	4
Discipline	Reports rewarding son for good behavior	1	2	3
Discipline	Reports shouting at son	2	0	2
Discipline	Reports showing son that he has angered parent	0	1	1
Discipline	Reports telling son his method of dealing with people is bad	2	0	2
Discipline	Reports telling son to change his choice of language	1	1	2
Discipline	Reports trying to help son out of tantrum by changing the subject	1	0	1
Discipline	Reports using isolation as punishment	7	4	11
Discipline	Reports using rewards to get son to behave	1	0	1
Style	Describes importance of knowing when to step back from a situation	0	1	1
Style	Describes the importance of strong/ clear guidelines	8	6	14
Style	Reports being a strict parent	0	2	2
Style	Reports being against spanking as a punishment	1	0	1
Style	Reports being an indulgent parent	1	2	3
Style	Reports being conscious of son's development	1	1	2
Style	Reports compromising/ negotiating with son	3	4	7
Style	Reports creating lessons for son from everyday events	4	5	9
Style	Reports having a relaxed parenting style	4	6	10
Style	Reports letting son win	1	2	3
Style	Reports not pushing son	1	2	3
Style	Reports talking through problems with son	15	21	36
Style	Reports teaching son about rules	1	1	2
Style	Reports teaching son by setting an example	7	3	10
Style	Reports teaching son how to lose	3	2	5
Style	Reports teaching son how to solve his own problems	9	7	16
Style	Reports teaching son that life is not always fair	2	2	4
Style	Reports teaching son to express/ understand his feelings	8	9	17
Style	Reports treating son with respect	0	1	1
Style	Reports trying to be fair with son	3	3	6
Style	Reports trying to share parenting	21	18	39
Style	Reports trying to stay calm while dealing with son	1	0	1
Style	Reports wanting to provide a consistent environment	6	8	14
Column total		133	123	256

Role models

Interestingly, biological mothers were statistically significantly more likely than other parents to report (1) that a role model spends time playing with her son, and (2) that the role model is encouraging, nurturing, caring, or loving. Overall, more descriptions of relationships with role models were offered by biological mothers (an average of 3.9) than other parents (an average of 2.2).

Table 13: Parents' descriptions of son's relationships with role models by parent type

Category	Biological mom	Other parent	X ²	Total
Certain role models have little influence	3	2		5
Role model has had influence on son's thinking	9	5		14
Role model has influenced son's moral growth	6	5		11
Role model plays with son	20	9	8.08	29
Role model spends time doing physical activities with son	13	10		23
Role model teaches things/ shows things to son	9	4		13
Role models in son's life are good influences	13	7		20
Some of the models in son's life are not reliable/ not a good influence	3	1		4
Son has a love/hate relationship with someone close to him	0	1		1
Son is influenced by model's appearance	1	1		2
Son spends time with a person who has different values than parents	2	1		3
Son spends time with a role model who is critical of him	4	2		6
Son spends time with creative people	6	3		9
Son spends time with a role model who is encouraging/ nurturing/ caring/ loving	21	9	9.60	30
Son spends time with people of different ethnicities/ ses	2	3		5
Son spends time with people that have similar circumstances	1	0		1
Son spends time with someone who understands him/ with whom he is open/ who he trusts	3	2		5
Column total	116	65		181

Parental concerns

There were no statistically significant differences in concerns reported by biological mothers and other parents.

Table 14: Parents' descriptions of concerns by parent type

Category	Biological mom	Other parent	Total
About being a good model/ setting a good example	1	4	5
About being ready/ not wanting to have children	5	4	9
About defined roles for parents	0	1	1
About finances	7	5	12
About having enough time for son	11	8	19
About having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent	11	8	19
About knowing how to raise a child	3	5	8
About parenting a girl	0	2	2
About parenting a son	13	12	25
About parents' differences/ disagreements	1	2	3

About possible genetic inheritance	2	3	5
About providing/ creating a good/ stable family	3	4	7
About raising a child in an unconventional way	8	7	15
About raising a good/ moral/ not macho man	12	12	24
About sibling rivalry	6	4	10
About son achieving things in his life/ having a good life	5	7	12
About son becoming an independent thinker	2	1	3
About son being intelligent	0	5	5
About son being a part of his culture	0	3	3
About son being an only child	1	0	1
About son being psychologically healthy/ happy	9	9	18
About son encountering prejudice	9	9	18
About son getting a good education	2	2	4
About son sharing the values of his parents	4	4	8
About son's ability to be an individual	2	4	6
About special quality of father/son relationships	6	2	8
About teaching son to be financially independent	0	1	1
About the effects of son being biracial	0	1	1
About the importance of two parents	2	2	4
About the prevalence of father/son romanticism in the media	0	1	1
About what happens to kids if parents split up	0	2	2
About whether a child will strain the parents' relationship	4	3	7
No concerns about having a child	5	3	8
That parents are from different backgrounds	0	1	1
That son might not be an athletic person	0	1	1
That son will have to go through the same hardships as his parents	0	1	1
That son will have too easy a life	1	0	1
That son won't be able to be open with his parents	1	0	1
That son won't be special	1	1	2
That the son would have no father	2	2	4
That there might not be enough love for another child	2	1	3
That time to have a baby was running out	1	6	7
Wants kids because of the constant challenge/ learning	3	0	3
Wants kids because of the playing	1	0	1
Column total	146	153	299

Distribution of themes and categories by family type

Family type had an important impact on the content of the interviews. Although, for the most part, lesbian parents and traditional parents spoke about the same kinds of things, the proportions sometimes differed significantly. Overall, lesbian parents reported more considerations, suggesting greater reflectivity on the part of lesbian parents compared to traditional parents.

Reflective judgment

Lesbian parents were statistically significantly more likely to report seeking advice on discipline than traditional parents. There may also be a tendency for lesbian parents to seek more advice on parenting in general, though the difference does not reach statistical significance. Overall, slightly more processes and considerations were mentioned by lesbian parents (an average of 2.2) than traditional parents (an average of 1.5).

Table 15: Reflective judgment—Processes and considerations

Category	Lesbian	Traditional	χ^2	Total
Describes determining whether it is appropriate to step in and resolve a given conflict	3	0		3
Describes the importance of not being afraid to be unconventional	1	0		1
Reports being introspective and self-aware	1	0		1
Reports considering experience with own parents when deciding what kind of parent to be	11	16		27
Reports considering personalities of parents and children when making parenting decisions	1	0		1
Reports having to choose between priorities as a parent	4	1		5
Reports keeping son's developmental level in mind when making decisions	14	15		29
Reports making choices based on level of tolerance	4	0		4
Reports making decisions based on social pressure	1	0		1
Reports making decisions based on son's needs	5	5		10
Reports seeking advice on discipline	11	2	7.95	13
Reports seeking advice on parenting	11	5		16
Column total	67	44		111

Morality

Traditional parents were much more likely to report that their son learned about moral issues at school/ from peers/ from siblings than were lesbian parents. A number of other suggestive trends did not reach statistical significance. These were in the categories: (1) describes importance of good behavior in the home and the world; (2) reports teaching son concern for others; and (3) reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives and feelings.

Table 16: Reported moral considerations by family type

Concept	Lesbian	Traditional	Total
Describes balance as an aspect of morality	2	1	3
Describes fairness as doing to others what you would want done to you	7	3	10
Describes having a sense of humanity as an important aspect of morality	0	2	2
Describes honesty as an important aspect of morality	0	1	1
Describes importance of good behavior in the home and the world	6	2	8
Describes morality as complex	1	1	2
Describes morality as of central importance	4	1	5

Describes self-sacrifice as an aspect of morality	0	1	1
Describes the importance of being a productive person	1	0	1
Describes the importance of moral context for teaching son	3	0	3
Discusses the importance of social justice	1	0	1
Discusses the importance of social responsibility	9	8	17
Discusses the importance of understanding the impact of one's actions	0	1	1
Reports teaching son about homophobia	0	1	1
Reports teaching son about moral issues as they come up	14	14	28
Reports teaching son about racism	0	1	1
Reports teaching son about sexual equality	2	2	4
Reports teaching son about the importance of give and take	2	3	5
Reports teaching son concern for others	16	8	24
Reports teaching son fairness	14	11	25
Reports teaching son how privileged he is	1	2	3
Reports teaching son right from wrong	11	12	23
Reports teaching son that cheating is bad	0	1	1
Reports teaching son that everyone should be respected	4	3	7
Reports teaching son that hitting is wrong	2	5	7
Reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives and feelings	22	15	37
Reports teaching son that people are different	3	4	7
Reports teaching son that stealing is bad	4	0	4
Reports teaching son the concept of live and let live	1	0	1
Reports teaching son to be considerate of others	7	8	15
Reports teaching son to be open minded	5	3	8
Reports teaching son to stick to his morals even when others have a lower standard	0	3	3
Reports that sharing has been an issue	8	8	16
Reports that son has lied	2	0	2
Reports that son is being raised with a religious morality	1	5	6
Reports that son learns about moral issues at school/ from peers/ from siblings	0	11	11
Column total	153	141	294

Parenting style and discipline

Lesbian parents were statistically significantly more likely than traditional parents to: (1) describe the importance of strong/ clear guidelines; (2) report talking through problems with their son; (3) report teaching their son to express/ understand his feelings; and (4) report trying to share parenting. A number of other suggestive trends did not reach statistical significance. These were in the categories: (1) describes importance of good behavior in the home and the world; (2) reports teaching son concern for others; (3) reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives and feelings; and (4) reports teaching son how to solve his own problems. Overall, more aspects of discipline and style were mentioned by lesbian parents (an average of 5.5) than traditional parents (an average of 3.0).

Table 17: Parents' reported style and use of discipline by family type

Theme	Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
Discipline	Reports determining punishment that suits crime	3	3		6
Discipline	Reports discouraging while encouraging	3	1		4
Discipline	Reports grabbing son physically during	0	1		1

Theme	Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
	arguments				
Discipline	Reports having hit son when angry	0	1		1
Discipline	Reports having son choose his own punishment	0	1		1
Discipline	Reports holding back on allowance as punishment	1	0		1
Discipline	Reports ignoring son's acting out	1	2		3
Discipline	Reports letting son hit his sibling in order to keep the greater peace	0	1		1
Discipline	Reports making son own up to his actions	1	0		1
Discipline	Reports praising son	3	1		4
Discipline	Reports requiring son to apologize to people he has done wrong	4	0		4
Discipline	Reports rewarding son for good behavior	0	3		3
Discipline	Reports shouting at son	0	2		2
Discipline	Reports showing son that he has angered parent	0	1		1
Discipline	Reports telling son his method of dealing with people is bad	0	2		2
Discipline	Reports telling son to change his choice of language	1	1		2
Discipline	Reports trying to help son out of tantrum by changing the subject	0	1		1
Discipline	Reports using isolation as punishment	6	5		11
Discipline	Reports using rewards to get son to behave	1	0		1
Style	Describes importance of knowing when to step back from a situation	1	0		1
Style	Describes the importance of strong/ clear guidelines	11	3	4.36	14
Style	Reports being a strict parent	2	0		2
Style	Reports being against spanking as a punishment	1	0		1
Style	Reports being an indulgent parent	3	0		3
Style	Reports being conscious of son's development	2	0		2
Style	Reports compromising/ negotiating with son	6	1		7
Style	Reports creating lesson's for son from everyday events	7	2		9
Style	Reports having a relaxed parenting style	2	8		10
Style	Reports letting son win	2	1		3
Style	Reports not pushing son	0	3		3
Style	Reports talking through problems with son	28	8	27.78	36
Style	Reports teaching son about rules	1	1		2
Style	Reports teaching son by setting an example	7	3		10
Style	Reports teaching son how to lose	3	2		5
Style	Reports teaching son how to solve his own problems	11	5		16
Style	Reports teaching son that life is not always fair	4	0		4
Style	Reports teaching son to express/ understand his feelings	14	3	9.93	17
Style	Reports treating son with respect	0	1		1

Theme	Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
Style	Reports trying to be fair with son	4	2		6
Style	Reports trying to share parenting	25	14	8.86	39
Style	Reports trying to stay calm while dealing with son	1	0		1
Style	Reports wanting to provide a consistent environment	7	7		14
	Column total	166	90		256

Role models

Lesbian parents were statistically significantly more likely than traditional parents to state that: (1) a role model played with their son and (2) the role models in their son's life were good influences. They were less likely than traditional parents to state that their son spent time with a role model who was encouraging/ nurturing/ caring/ loving. One other suggestive trend did not reach statistical significance. This was in the category: Role model spends time doing physical activities with son.

Table 18: Parents' descriptions of son's relationships with role models by family type

Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
Certain role models have little influence	5	0		5
Role model has had influence on son's thinking	7	7		14
Role model has influenced son's moral growth	8	3		11
Role model plays with son	18	11	3.27	29
Role model spends time doing physical activities with son	15	8		23
Role model teaches things/ shows things to son	7	6		13
Role models in son's life are good influences	14	6		20
Some of the models in son's life are not reliable/ not a good influence	3	1		4
Son has a love/hate relationship with someone close to him	0	1		1
Son is influenced by model's appearance	0	2		2
Son spends time with a person who has different values than parent	2	1		3
Son spends time with a role model who is critical of him	1	5		6
Son spends time with creative people	2	7		9
Son spends time with a role model who is encouraging/ nurturing/ caring/ loving	7	23	17.07	30
Son spends time with people of different ethnicities/ ses	3	2		5
Son spends time with people that have similar circumstances	1	0		1
Son spends time with someone who understands him/ with whom he is open/ who he trusts	2	3		5
Column total	95	86		181

Daycare and schooling

Lesbian and traditional parents differed in their discussions of childcare and schooling. Lesbian parents were more likely to report being involved in their sons' schooling and that their son attended a special, private, or alternative school. Traditional parents were more likely to report helping their sons with their homework. Overall, more aspects of childcare and schooling were mentioned by lesbian parents (an average of 1.7) than traditional parents (an average of 1.2).

Table 19: Childcare and schooling by family type

Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
Describes importance of good childcare	20	16		36
Reports being involved in son's schooling	14	7	3.59	21
Reports choosing to send son to public school	4	1		5
Reports that parents help son with homework	2	9	5.46	11
Reports that son attends a special/ private/ alternative school	12	2	9.32	14
Column total	52	35		87

Sleeping arrangements

Lesbian and traditional parents differed in their discussions of sleeping arrangements. Lesbian parents were more likely to report that their son had his own room. Two other suggestive trends did not reach statistical significance. These were in the categories: (1) reports that son shared parents' bed as a infant/ toddler and (2) reports that son shares parents' bed. Taken together, the pattern of performance in these categories suggest that lesbian parents may be more open than traditional parents to sleeping with their sons.

Table 20: Reported sleeping arrangements by family type

Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
Reports joining son's bed if he is upset/ sick/ bad dream	0	6		6
Reports singing lullabies to son at night	3	3		6
Reports sitting with son while he falls asleep	0	2		2
Reports that son has his own room	28	8	24.75	36
Reports that son never sleeps in parents' bed	1	0		1
Reports that son occasionally joins parents' bed	3	5		8
Reports that son shared parents' bed as a infant/ toddler	5	1		6
Reports that son shares a room with a sibling	6	9		15
Reports that son shares parents' bed	5	0		5
Reports that son shares parents' room	0	2		2
Column total	51	36		87

Parental concerns

Lesbian and traditional parents differed in their parenting concerns. Lesbian parents were more likely than traditional parents to report being concerned about raising their sons in an unconventional way. Traditional parents were more likely than lesbian parents to report being concerned about (1) raising a good/ moral/ not macho man; (2) their sons achieving things in his life/ having a good life; or (3) their sons being psychologically healthy/ happy. One other suggestive trend did not reach statistical significance. This was in the category: expresses concern about the special quality of father/son relationships.

Table 21: Parents' descriptions of concerns by family type

Category	Lesbian	Traditional	X ²	Total
About being a good model/ setting a good example	5	0		5
About being ready/not wanting to have children	6	3		9
About defined roles for parents	1	0		1
About finances	7	5		12

About having enough time for son	11	8		19
About having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent	8	11		19
About knowing how to raise a child	3	5		8
About parenting a girl	2	0		2
About parenting a son	16	9		25
About parents' differences/ disagreements	1	2		3
About possible genetic inheritance	2	3		5
About providing/ creating a good/ stable family	3	4		7
About raising a child in an unconventional way	13	2	10.76	15
About raising a good/ moral/ not macho man	7	17	6.94	24
About sibling rivalry	4	6		10
About son achieving things in his life/ having a good life	0	12	?	12
About son becoming an independent thinker	1	2		3
About son being intelligent	0	5		5
About son being a part of his culture	0	3		3
About son being an only child	1	0		1
About son being psychologically healthy/ happy	3	15	11.43	18
About son encountering prejudice	11	7		18
About son getting a good education	0	4		4
About son sharing the values of his parents	2	6		8
About son's ability to be an individual	0	6		6
About special quality of father/son relationships	7	1	?	8
About teaching son to be financially independent	1	0		1
About the effects of son being biracial	0	1		1
About the importance of two parents	4	0		4
About the prevalence of father/son romanticism in the media	1	0		1
About what happens to kids if parents split up	2	0		2
About whether a child will strain the parents' relationship	6	1		7
No concerns about having a child	5	3		8
That parents are from different backgrounds	0	1		1
That son might not be an athletic person	0	1		1
That son will have to go through the same hardships as his parents	0	1		1
That son will have too easy a life	1	0		1
That son won't be able to be open with his parents	1	0		1
That son won't be special	1	1		2
That the son would have no father	4	0		4
That there might not be enough love for another child	1	2		3
That time to have a baby was running out	3	4		7
Wants kids because of the constant challenge/ learning	2	1		3
Wants kids because of the playing	1	0		1
Column total	147	152		299

Appendix A

Topics of reflection

- deciding that son needs coed peers
- wanting to create a family with partner
- wanting children to pass on values
- the importance of family as being an incentive to have children
- being aware of gender issues for son
- having close friends as extremely important
- bearing children as the natural progression of life
- thinking it is good for son to have male role models
- having high expectations of son
- the benefit of siblings
- wanting a son because of a lack of men in family
- encouraging close bond between siblings
- deciding to tell son about his Dad
- wanting a child because of time spent with other kids
- deciding it would be good for son to know Dad
- always wanting to have kids
- wanting to develop a bond with child/children
- wanting to have a girl
- deciding that boys need a male image to compare themselves to
- hoping for a son
- feeling that raising a son would be easier
- always wanting to be a Mom
- wanting kids because they have something to give kids
- wanting to be biological Mom for the special bond
- being confident in understanding a son
- having a sense that most men lack a sense of responsibility to their kids
- not trusting any man enough to have children with them
- deciding whether or not to have a known donor based upon their possible influence
- having unconditional love for son
- trying to determine the most responsible and feasible way to have children
- belief that more than two biological kids is unethical
- importance of good childcare
- the impact of having children as making you live in the moment
- considering being a foster parent
- believing that the more role models a kid has the better
- coming from a family of almost all boys
- that son has grown closer to his Dad as he got older
- feeling that many aspects of son's personality seem biologically determined
- wanting one boy and one girl
- wanting many children
- trying to find a donor that meets certain requirements
- thinking that girls are easier
- Other life goals have been met leaving room for kids
- the importance of finding the right partner to have children with
- timing being important
- learning to like parenting despite reservations
- that siblings are very different individuals
- wanting to have a child as a life affirming act
- realizing that it is the right time to have a child
- feeling that boys are simply different from girls
- having a son as important because boys carry the family name
- knowing that baby was going to be a boy

- problems with sibling rivalry
- feeling that kids will complete the couple
- feeling better about having children because there were more options available for lesbians
- being changed by having children
- feeling that lesbian parents were becoming more acceptable
- having a positive experience with own father
- letting son have his own relationships
- wanting to know the sex of the child
- having had a wayward brother
- wanting kids because of how much parents will enjoy it
- wanting kids to love them
- considering personalities of parents and children
- having kids as an adventure
- deciding that they would be okay at raising a son
- wanting kids as companions
- the factors that determine when to stop nursing
- making choices for son's security
- feeling an understanding towards boys
- not wanting military to play a role in son's life
- deciding not to push issues of different families
- wanting children because of the joy they will bring
- the impact of son's health issues on parenting
- being influenced by friends having children
- being very introspective and self aware
- not wanting religion to be a part of raising son
- having a good education as a primary goal for son
- making decisions based upon son's behavior
- spending time with son
- being old fashioned in parenting style
- learning that boys need the same things that girls need
- not wanting to bring children into this world

Appendix B

Lectical™ Assessment System

The scoring procedures employed with the Lectical™ Assessment System (LAS) are partially derived from Commons' (Commons et al., 1995) and Rose & Fischer's (1989) assessment systems. This scoring system, like its predecessors, is designed to make it possible to assess the level of complexity and integration (hierarchical complexity) of a performance without reference to its *particular* conceptual content. Rather than making the claim that a person occupies a Lectical™ level because he or she, for example, has elaborated a particular conception of justice, the LAS permits us to identify performances at a particular Lectical™ level and then ask (empirically) what the range of justice conceptions are at that Lectical™ level.

It is possible to determine the Lectical™ level of text performances, because hierarchical complexity is reflected in two aspects of performance that can be abstracted from particular conceptual content. These are *hierarchical order of abstraction* and the logical organization of arguments. Hierarchical order of abstraction is observable in texts because new concepts are formed at each Lectical™ level as the operations of the previous Lectical™ level are "summarized" into single constructs. The logical organization of a text is observable in its syntax.

Note that logical and conceptual structures are definitionally identical. We make a distinction between the two types of structure for heuristic and pragmatic reasons. When scoring texts, hierarchical order of abstraction refers primarily to the structure of the elements of arguments, which often must be *inferred* from their meaning in context, whereas logical structure refers to the *explicit* way in which these elements are coordinated in a given text.

Lectical™ levels defined

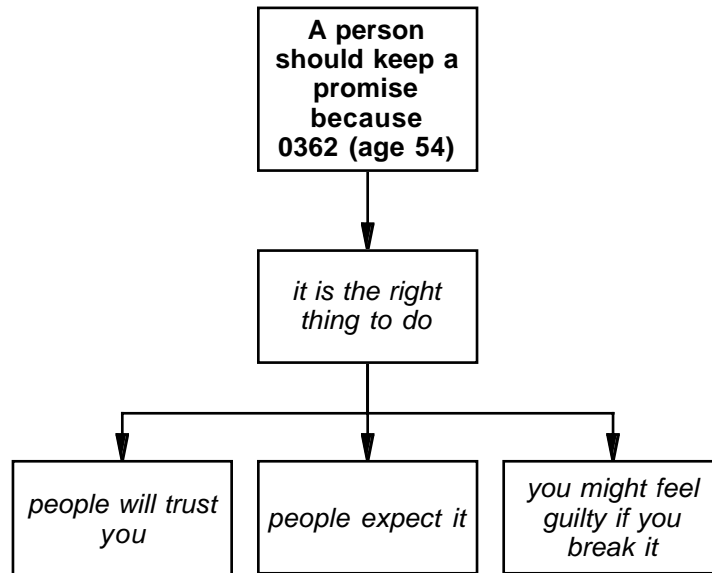
Only the 4 Lectical™ levels commonly identified in adult performances are included in the following definitions. The examples provided in these definitions are from Dawson and Gabrielian's (2003) analysis of the conceptions of authority and contract associated with Lectical™ levels in a sample of 747 moral judgment interviews scored with the LAS. They are all responses to the "Joe" Dilemma. In this dilemma, Joe, a fourteen-year-old boy, wants to go to camp. His father promises him that he can go if he saves his own money. So, Joe works hard at his paper route and saves up enough to go to camp. However, just before camp begins, his father changes his mind, and decides he wants Joe's money to go on a fishing trip. Naturally, Joe does not want to give up going to camp, so he thinks he might not give his father the money. Follow-up questions probe for respondents' understanding of the dilemma and their reasoning about promises, ownership, and familial obligations. For example, respondents are asked if it is important for a father to keep a promise to his son, and the response is probed to reveal the reasoning behind it.

At the single abstractions level (16-20), the new concepts are referred to as 1st order abstractions. These coordinate 3rd order representations, which are equivalent to representational systems (the constructions of the previous level). For example, the concept of *trustworthiness*, articulated for the first time at this Lectical™ level, defines those qualities that make a person trustworthy rather than describing situations in which trust is felt or not felt. It is composed of qualities that produce trust, such as telling the truth, keeping secrets, and keeping promises. "It's always nice... to be trustworthy. Because then, if [someone has] a secret, they can come and talk to you." Concepts like *kindness*, *keeping your word*, *respect*, and *guilt* are also rare before the single abstractions level. "If you don't do something you promise, you'll feel really guilty." The most complex logical structure of this Lectical™ level often identifies one aspect of a single abstraction, as in "Making a promise is giving your word" in which giving one's word is an "aspect" of a promise.

Figure 1 portrays a visual representation, in the form of a concept map, of a 54-year-old respondent's argument about why promises should be kept. The respondent argues that a person should keep a promise because keeping promises is "the right thing to do." When probed, the respondent comes up with three separate (uncoordinated) reasons for keeping promises:

because people expect promises to be kept, because “people will trust you” if you keep a promise, and because “you might feel guilty if you break a promise.” All three of these reasons for keeping promises are considered to be 1st order abstractions, because they extract general,

Figure 1

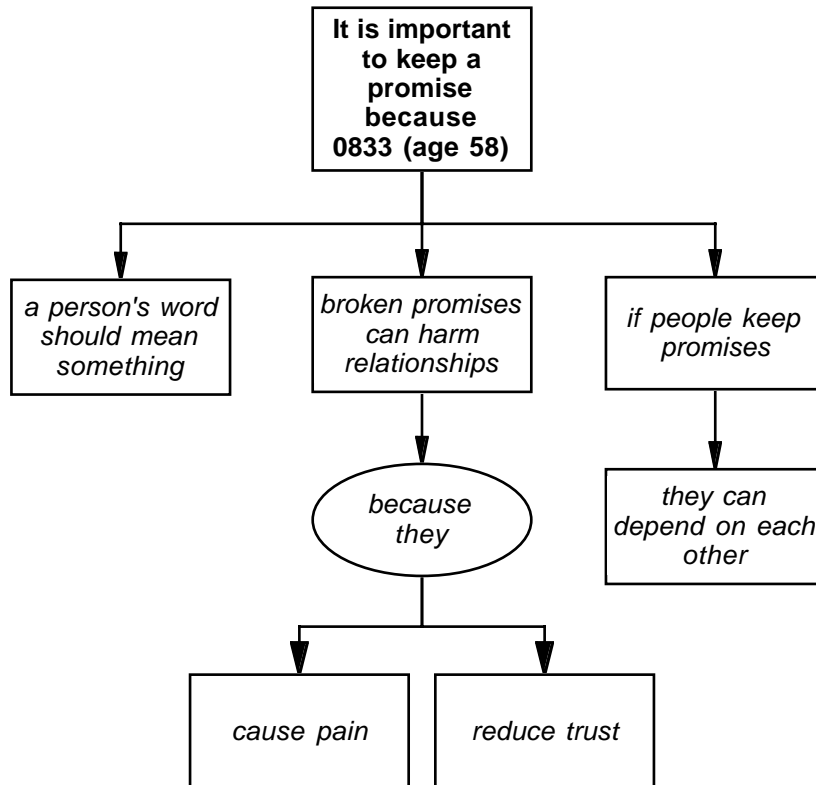


abstract notions by coordinating concepts that appear for the first time at the representational systems level (Dawson & Gabrielian, 2003). Keeping promises will create trust, *in general*; people, *in general*, have expectations when promises are made; and breaking promises can produce negative emotional consequences, *in general*, for the promise-breaker. It is important to keep in mind that the *particular* concepts expressed by a respondent are important only to the extent that they embody a particular hierarchical order of abstraction. A rater must “look through” the meaning of a particular conceptual element to abstract its hierarchical order of abstraction.

At the abstract mappings level (21-25), the new concepts are referred to as 2nd order abstractions. These coordinate or modify abstractions. For example, the 2nd order abstraction *basis* can be employed to coordinate the elements essential to a good relationship. “To me, [trust and respect are] the basis of a relationship, and without them you really don’t have one.” Concepts like *coming to an agreement*, *making a commitment*, *building trust*, and *compromise* are also rare before the abstract mappings level. “I think [Joe and his father] could come to an agreement or compromise that they are both comfortable with.” The most complex logical structure of this Lectual™ level coordinates one aspect of two or more abstractions, as in “Joe has a right to go to camp because his father said he could go if he saved up the money, and Joe lived up to his commitment.” Here, Joe’s fulfillment of his father’s conditions determines whether Joe has a right to go to camp.

Figure 2 provides a map of the performance of a 58-year-old male, who provides three reasons for keeping promises. There are two mappings in this performance. The first is the assertion that “broken promises can harm relationships because they cause pain and reduce trust.” This

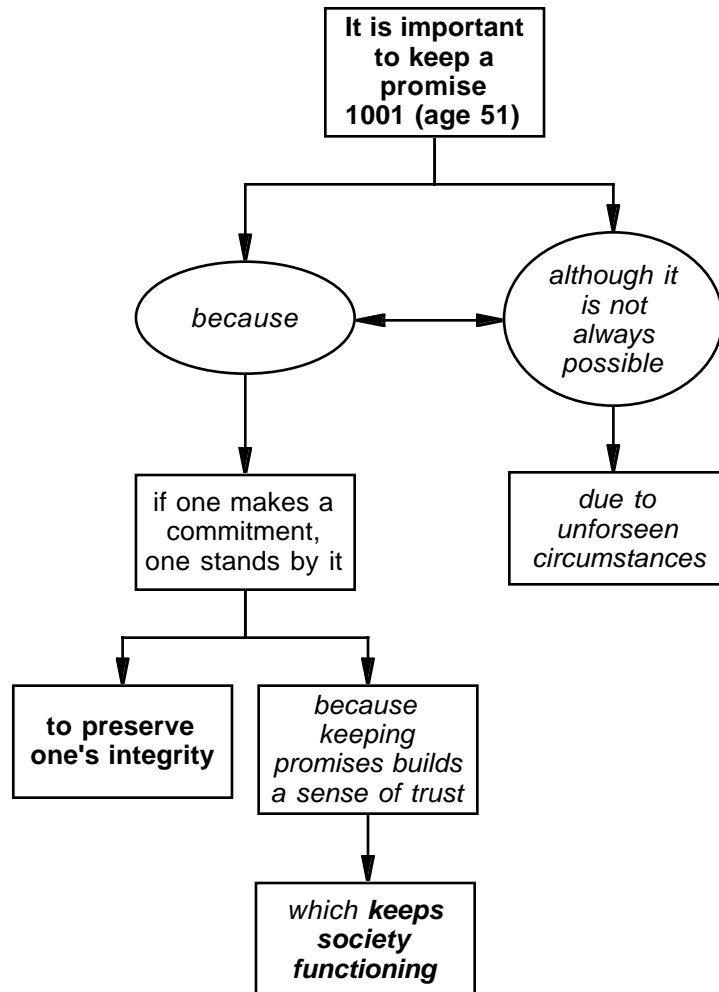
Figure 2



mapping coordinates two abstract consequences of promise breaking into the general notion that broken promises do harm to relationships. The second is the assertion that keeping promises makes it possible for people to “depend on one another.” This mapping coordinates the perspectives of at least two individuals to form the notion that keeping promises produces mutual benefits. Note how this idea builds on the single abstractions notion that people will trust you if you keep promises.

At the abstract systems level (26-30), the new concepts are referred to as 3rd order abstractions. These coordinate elements of abstract systems. For example, the concept of *personal integrity*, which is rare before the abstract systems level, refers to the coordination of and adherence to notions of fairness, trustworthiness, honesty, preservation of the golden rule, etc. in one’s actions. “[You should keep your word] for your own integrity. For your own self-worth, really. Just to always be the kind of person that you would want to be dealing with.”

Figure 3

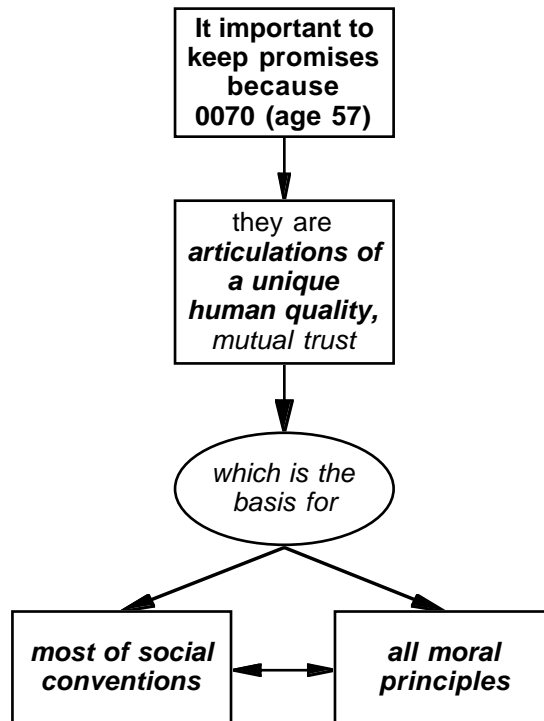


Concepts like *verbal contract*, *moral commitment*, *functional*, *development*, *social structure*, and *foundation* are also uncommon before the abstract systems Lectical™ level. “A promise is the verbal contract, the moral commitment that the father made to his son. It is the only way for the child to ... develop his moral thinking—from watching his parent’s moral attitude.” The most complex logical structure of this Lectical™ level coordinates multiple aspects of two or more abstractions. “Following through with his commitment and actually experiencing camp combine to promote Joe’s growth and development, not just physically but psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.” Here multiple facets of Joe’s personal development are promoted when he both keeps his commitment and accomplishes his goal.

Figure 3 provides a map of the performance of a 51-year-old female. The respondent describes a system in which keeping promises is both obligatory and sometimes impossible, “due to unforeseen circumstances.” The reason for keeping promises is that one must stand by one’s commitments. Doing so not only preserves one’s personal integrity, but also builds a sense of trust, “which keeps society functioning.” The notion of standing by one’s commitments, the idea that doing so preserves one’s integrity, the argument that the sense of trust built through promise-keeping keeps society functioning, and the notion of unforeseen circumstances are all examples

of 2nd order abstractions. Note how this notion—that the trust built from honoring promises keeps society functioning (even in the presence of the effects of unforeseen circumstances)—builds on the abstract mappings idea that keeping promises makes it possible for people to depend on one another.

Figure 4



At the single principles level (31-35), the new concepts are referred to as first order principles. These coordinate abstract systems. An elaborated notion of the *social contract*, for example, results from the coordination of human interests (where individual human beings are treated as systems). “Everybody wants to be treated equally and have a sense of fair play. Because this is so, we have an obligation to one another to enter into a social contract that optimizes equality and fairness.” Concepts like *autonomy*, *fair play*, *heteronomy*, *higher order principle*, and *philosophical principle* are rare before the single principles Lectual™ level. “The only time we’re justified in breaking the social contract is when a higher principle, such as the right to life, intervenes.” The most complex logical structure of this Lectual™ level often identifies one aspect of a principle or axiom coordinating systems, as in “Contracts are articulations of a unique human quality, mutual trust, which coordinates human relations.” Here, contracts are seen as the instantiation of a broader principle coordinating human interactions.

Figure 4 presents a map of the performance of a 57-year-old male. Here, “mutual trust” is employed as a single principle supporting an argument for keeping promises. The rationale for employing this principle is that “most social conventions” and “all moral principles” are based on trust. Both “all moral principles” and “most social conventions” are 3rd order abstractions. Note how this single principles argument builds on the abstract systems notion that trust keeps society functioning.

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Appendix C

Categories mentioned by 30% or more of the parents or for which there were statistically significant differences between groups

This table can be employed in conjunction with the ParentExamples.xls file to locate additional examples of parents' thoughts in the most interesting categories.

Theme	Category	30% or more	Differences between groups
Reflective judgment	Reports considering experience with own parents when deciding what kind of parent to be	x	
	Reports keeping son's developmental level in mind when making decisions	x	
	Reports seeking advice on parenting		x
	Reports seeking advice on discipline		x
Morality	Reports teaching son about moral issues as they come up	x	
	Reports teaching son concern for others	x	
	Reports teaching son fairness	x	
	Reports teaching son right from wrong	x	
	Reports teaching son that it is important to try to understand other people's perspectives/ feelings	x	
	Reports that son learns about moral issues at school/ from peers/ from siblings		x
Parenting	Reports talking through problems with son	x	x
	Reports teaching son to express/ understand his feelings		x
	Reports teaching son how to solve his own problems		x
	Reports compromising/ negotiating with son		x
	Reports trying to share parenting	x	
	Describes the importance of strong/ clear guidelines		x
Concerns	About finances		x
	About having enough time for son	x	x
	About having to change lifestyle in order to be a good parent	x	x
	About parenting a son	x	x
	About raising a good/ moral/ not macho man	x	
	About raising a child in an unconventional way		x
	About son being psychologically healthy/ happy	x	
	About son achieving things in his life/ having a good life		x
	About special quality of father/son relationships		x
Role models	Role model plays with son	x	x
	Son spends time with a role model who is encouraging/ nurturing/ caring/ loving	x	x
	Role models in son's life are good influences		x
	Role model spends time doing physical activities with son	x	x
Daycare and schooling	Describes importance of good childcare	x	
	Reports being involved in son's schooling	x	
	Reports that parents help son with homework		x
	Reports that son attends a special/ private/ alternative school		x
Sleeping arrangements	Reports that son has his own room	x	x