An Exploration of Bias in Arizona's

Foster and Adoption Agencies

by

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ABSTRACT

The Arizona state child welfare system has recently experienced an increase in the number of children and youth living in out-of-home care. A lack of licensed foster homes has resulted in many of these children residing in congregate care. This study sought to determine what role, if any, personal and policy bias against five demographic groups (i.e., ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status for individuals and couples, and educational level) plays in this insufficiency of foster homes. In this pilot study a group of foster and adoption licensing agency executives and directors (n=5) were surveyed and qualitatively interviewed with the aim of discerning if bias is present at the personal and agency policy levels and to seek input for a future study with direct-service staff. Results indicate a discrepancy between personal and policy bias within agencies. Additionally, evidence suggests a policy bias which results in unmarried couples and single parents being perceived as inferior placement options. Implications for future research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Arizona Department of Child Safety's first quarter report for 2017, the number of children and youth in out-of-home care has reached over 18,000 (Department of Child Safety, 2017). This number has consistently increased over the past 11 years ranking the state of Arizona worst in the nation by this distinction (McKay, 2016). While the number of children in out of home care has increased, Arizona has struggled to maintain a sufficient number of licensed foster homes. As of October 2016, the number of foster homes in Arizona was 4,619, half of which are kinship homes dedicated to taking in only specific, family-related children (Joint Legislative Budget Committee, 2016). Lack of foster parents has resulted in over 2,700 children aged birth to 17 years old being placed in in shelters, group homes, or residential treatment facilities (Department of Child Safety, 2016). The insufficiency of foster placements has been recognized by DCS, Governor of Arizona Doug Ducey, and the largest licensing agency Arizona Children's Association as the prominent concern needing to be addressed in the child welfare system (Ortega, 2016). Despite this need, licensing agencies have been unable to recruit and maintain the number of foster parents Arizona requires.

The cause of this shortage in foster homes is unknown. The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not personal and/or agency-level bias is present in organizational policy or individual licensing staff. The current social and legislative climate of Arizona may be resulting in blatant or institutional discrimination against certain demographics of parents and thus preventing them from pursuing or achieving foster home licensure. This study utilizes prior literature as evidence of social bias in Arizona. Additionally, a social conflict theory framework guides the study.

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict theory

Social conflict theory states that conflict is present in all societies as two or more groups struggle to gain or maintain dominant power over social institutions (Meenaghan, Gibbons & McNutt, 2005). These groups are based on varied social characteristics such as economic status, race, gender, education level, or vocation. As the dominant and subordinate groups struggle with each other for power, they alter institutional systems resulting in social change. Conflict theory also states that the competition between groups is not only for power in and of itself but rather competition for economic and tangible resources that allow the dominant group to gain the power of social prestige (Meenaghan, et al., 2005). This type of conflict is present in all societies and becomes more institutionalized as the society increases in complexity. Conflict in this theory is not negative, as conflict between two individuals may be perceived to be, rather, it is inevitable, as the whole of society struggles towards equality (Meenaghan, et al., 2005).

Social stratification is an institutionalized process in which individuals are organized into socioeconomic strata based on their power (social or political), wealth (economic), and prestige (Kerbo, 1983). Strata are used to organize individuals into larger groups and assign them a blatant (i.e. openly recognized by society) or institutional (i.e. recognized via access to social institutions) value. In industrialized Western societies , such as the U.S., social stratification is described by social classes (lower class, middle class, upper class) based primarily on income (Kerbo, 1983). Stratification is best described by conflict theory as the categorization of individuals into groups resulting in a struggle for social mobility. According to conflict theory individuals (or in this case

social groups/classes) will always strive to increase or maintain their levels of power, wealth, and prestige, resulting in a struggle between classes (Lenski, 1966). This conflict will persist as long as there continues to be a lack of egalitarianism in the society's institutionalized structure.

Interclass conflict results in institutionalized forms of discrimination, which prevent demographic groups with less power (i.e. minorities) from achieving the positions that those with more power currently hold (Lenski, 1966). Minorities may be prevented from reaching these positions overtly through the implementation of policies or laws; which is commonly seen when a minority group is openly viewed as inferior by those in power. As society progresses away from overt discrimination, the barriers become integrated into social systems resulting in a situation where minorities are no longer barred from reaching higher positions of power but rather face more barriers in the pursuit of these positions (Kerbo, 1983).

Parenthood is one such position of social power. The parental process of socialization instills values, worldviews, and concepts of social status into a developing child (Maccoby, 1992). Parents therefore have influence over the socialization of their child and thus have the power to shape the future social ideology. Although a parent is not the only influence contributing to the socialization of their child, the family has continued to be seen as a primary setting for this process (Maccoby, 1992). This reflects the widespread assumption that even though socialization or resocialization can occur at any point in the life cycle, childhood is a particularly malleable period, and thus it is the period of life when enduring social skills and values are laid down (Maccoby, 1992). This

type of influence gives the role of parenthood a form of multigenerational power that extends beyond the individual.

Controlling who may and may not become a parent (or foster parent) allows the group of individuals in a society who hold power the ability to ensure that they maintain that power over a span of generations. Social control through parenthood is not a new concept in the United States. Throughout the early 1900's members of minority groups, such as persons with cognitive and physical disabilities, underwent forced sterilization. Individuals were barred from becoming parents as they were considered lesser members of society based on their mental abilities, race, and physical characteristics (Stern, 2016). From 1910 to 1978 eugenics, as it came to be known, was legalized in 32 states resulting in the sterilization of over 60,000 individuals who were, by law, not allowed to become parents (Stern, 2016). By controlling parenthood through eugenics, those in power were able to maintain their influence by regulating and hindering the social impact and advancement of minorities (Stern, 2016). This conflict continues to present itself in society through the regulation of who may and may not foster and adopt children. While less conspicuous than the eugenics movement, barriers through legislation, agency regulations or policies, and personal bias may still exist which prevent members of minority groups from becoming foster or adoptive parents. This study looks at five demographic categories present in Arizona whose populations, as evidenced by existing literature and legal statutes, may be experiencing such barriers. Background information on each of these five demographic groups is presented below.

Adoption and Fostering Parent Discrimination

Child welfare literature dating back for more than 150 years documents the need

and search for foster and adoptive parents (McGowan, 1983). These recruitment efforts were originally born out of the need to find homes for thousands of orphaned immigrant children whose parents had struggled severely with poverty and disease after resettling in the United States (Riis, 1890). Challenges arouse nearly immediately as the first child welfare workers sought to recruit and retain parents willing to take in children of diverse and often traumatic backgrounds (Mallon & Hess, 2010). As the system progressed a need to recruit parents who demographically strayed from the 'Caucasian mother and father' model was recognized. Such historically underutilized groups include parents who are single, unmarried, gay or lesbian, racial minorities, or have lower levels of education (Mallon, 2004). Recruiting parents from these groups has been challenging due to underlying bias and institutional barriers in society which impact the child welfare.

Hispanic/Latinx families have a long history of helping raise children in need of temporary and permanent families through informal foster care and adoption (Hutchison, Ortega, & Quintanilla, 2008). Despite this trend several studies have found that Hispanic/Latinx families are nationally underrepresented as foster and adoptive parents. These studies found that Hispanic/Latinx families are significantly less likely to become licensed parents due to language barriers, agency staff having little knowledge of ethnic norms, and various negative personal experiences between potential licensed parents and agency staff (Capello, 2006; Hutchison et al., 2008). Additionally, one study found that parents of color are three times more likely to have their license involuntarily closed after completing the foster or adoption process (Mallon & Hess, 2010).

Same-sex, single, and unmarried foster and adoptive parents have experienced similar barriers in the recruitment and licensing process. Multiple studies have found that

each of these parent groups experiences or perceives higher levels of discrimination in the licensing process than married or heterosexual couples (Brown et al, 2009; Mallon, 2006 ; Storrow, 2008). In addition to perceived bias many same-sex couples report being told by agency staff that they are not eligible to adopt, that they must adopt as a single parent rather than a couple, or that their relationship does not coincide with the agency's values and beliefs (George, 2016; Mallon, 2006; Shelley-Sireci & Ciano-Boyce, 2002). Single parents have reported similar experiences of being told that they are a second-best option for placement and that children require both a mother and a father to be raised properly (Kinkler, 2015). One study found that single parents were often told the number of couples that the agency tried to place their child with before deciding to place with a single parent (Kinkler, 2015; Owen, 1997). Such research conducted nationally or in other states suggest that comparable levels of bias may be present in Arizona foster and adoption agencies.

Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latinx

Arizona has a long history of implementing policies and procedures that negatively affect its Hispanic and Latinx communities (Farish, 1915; Hanson & Santas, 2014; Madekia, 1910; Nier, et al, 2012; Nill, 2011; Powers, 2008; Quigora, 2013). Latinx is used as an inclusive, gender-neutral term to describe individuals who self-identify as Latino, Latina, or wish to be included within this ethic group without using masculine or feminine pronouns (Scharron-del Rio & Aja, 2015). These communities may be susceptible to experiencing a compact form of discrimination because of their racial and ethnic status, as well as their language and accents (Arujo & Borrell, 2006). Due to the inherent diversity within this subgroup, determining social bias against such a

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group may be difficult; thus policies and their impact on Hispanic/Latinx communities in Arizona should be utilized.

The Territory of Arizona was created by the federal government in 1863 out of portions of the Gadsden Purchase (1853) and the territories Mexico ceded to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago (1848) after its defeat in the U.S.-Mexican War (Farish, 1915). According to the treaty, Mexican citizens living in the transferred areas were to retain their property rights and receive American citizenship (Nill, 2011). Arizona remained a territory until 1912, during which time the rights of Mexican-born citizens were debated in Congress and race was frequently brought up as a reason to not grant Arizona statehood (Nill, 2011). A New York Times editorial commented on this controversy by stating that Arizona becoming a state would be a 'problem at the outset' as over half of its population were Mexican-born and 'ignorant' of the American language and culture (Madekia, 1910). Despite the opponent's arguments, Arizona was admitted as a state, with the promise that all Mexican-born residents would be equal citizens.

In 1913, less than one year after being admitted as a state, Arizona communities began building separate schools for Mexican American children (Farish, 1915). While this practice was never officially recognized as law in Arizona state statutes, segregated Mexican schools were created in nearly every city throughout the state (Powers, 2008). In theory, these Mexican schools were supposed to help children become fluent in English in their early primary school grades. However, segregation of Mexican children remained a practice in late elementary and middle school grades (Powers, 2008). Segregated Mexican schools routinely received fewer books, resources, and maintained stringent

language practices. Students caught speaking Spanish at school were spanked or had their mouths washed out with soap in an attempt to force the speaking of English. Segregation was also present in other Arizonan public facilities, such as swimming pools, churches, and movie houses, and housing (Powers, 2008). The segregation of Mexican children in schools was eventually outlawed in 1950 as such a practice constituted a denial of the equal protection of the laws for all citizens (Nill, 2011).

Discrimination against Hispanic/Latinx communities again came to the forefront of Arizona policy in 2010 with the legislature's passage of SB 1070 (Quigora, 2013). This law was aimed at deterring undocumented immigration by imposing penalties on individuals who came into Arizona undocumented, or on anyone housing or employing them without proof of citizenship (Quigora, 2013). The most controversial provision of statute allowed law-enforcement officers to stop any individual whom they had reasonable suspicion of being in the state undocumented. Opponents of the law argued that this would inevitably result in racial profiling as the majority of undocumented individuals were of a Hispanic/Latinx background (Nier, et al., 2012). The enforcement of SB 1070 proved to do just that. In response to the law's proposal and passage, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio deputized dozens of men to carry out a zero tolerance immigration policy in communities throughout the Arizona valley (Nill, 2011). Consequently, predominantly Hispanic/Latinx communities experienced months of raids which included deputies knocking on doors, stopping vehicles, and rounding up individuals in public areas to check their identification for legal citizenship (Nier, et al., 2012).

While most of the provisions of SB 1070, including racially influenced stops, were eventually deemed unlawful by the courts, the impact of this bill's enforcement and media coverage still influences Arizona communities today (Quigora, 2013). During the initial enforcement and resulting legal battle of SB 1070 supporters and members of the opposition frequented local and national media organizations to discuss their positon on the law (Nier, et al., 2012). Statistics on the criminality and potential danger of undocumented Hispanic/Latinx individuals were the primary source of rhetoric used by the opposition, most predominantly by Sheriff Arpaio (Quigora, 2013). The consistent negative media campaign affected not only those individuals who were undocumented but those who were perceived to be so. By enforcing SB 1070 through the carrying out of raids on Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods these communities came to be viewed as negative or potentially dangerous (Quigora, 2013).

Throughout the past several years, the rise in anti-immigrant rhetoric has correlated with an increase in anti-Hispanic/Latinx hate crimes in Arizona (Nier, et al., 2012). Recent studies have also shown an increase in housing discrimination against these communities since the passage of SB 1070 (Hanson & Santas, 2014). The presence of such blatant forms of discrimination, coupled with Arizona's long history of marginalization of Hispanic/Latinx individuals, leads to the assumption that such bias may also present in the child welfare system. The historic and ongoing treatment of Hispanic/Latinx individuals has presented them in such a way that they are deemed lesser than the Caucasian majority (Farish, 1915; Hanson & Santas, 2014; Madekia, 1910; Nier, et al, 2012; Nill, 2011; Powers, 2008; Quigora, 2013). If this misconception has

permeated into the child welfare institution, potential foster and adoptive parents may be experiencing unrecognized barriers to becoming licensed.

Sexual Orientation

Arizona was one of the last states in the US to legalize same-sex marriage. On October 7, 2014 the 9th-Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a multi-state ban on same-sex marriage, declaring it unconstitutional (Levit, 2016). As a result of this ruling, same-sex couples in Arizona were guaranteed the right to marry and all subsequent legal protections that are granted through marriage (SCOTUS, 2015). One such legal protection should have been the right to jointly adopt and foster children, which had previously been banned. However, following the this ruling Arizona Attorney General Bill Montgomery released a statement declaring that his office had no legal obligation to grant same-sex adoption petitions even if the couple was rightfully married (Montgomery, 2015). Thus the ban on same-sex couples jointly adopting remained in place until 2015 (Pitzl, 2016).

This practice created significant barriers in the lives of gay and lesbian couples who had decided to adopt children. Kevin Patterson and his husband David were one such couple who had decided to foster two young girls who they later ended up adopting (Pitzl, 2016). Due to the ban on same-sex adoption Kevin had to adopt his daughters as a single parent, leaving his husband with no legal rights to the two girls they have been raising together for years. Every time David took his daughters to school, the doctor, or any extracurricular activity he was forced to obtain signed permission from his husband (Pitzl, 2016). The lack of legal rights also prevented David from being able obtain custody of his daughters in the event that Kevin were to pass away or the couple were to

divorce. Kevin and David were not the only couple negatively affected by the joint adoption ban. More than a dozen such couples came together and formed the LGBT foster and adoption coalition, Project Jigsaw, to assist gay and lesbian parents in their pursuit of legal custody (Patterson, 2015).

More than six months after same-sex marriage was legalized in Arizona, newly elected Governor Doug Ducey announced in his state-of-the-state address that same sex couples would be allowed to jointly adopt effective immediately (Rau & Wingett, 2015). Ducey cited the growing number of children in the state's child welfare system and the need for more foster and adoptive parents as the reason for his lift on the adoption ban (Rau & Wingett, 2015). Despite this progress same-sex couples are still not treated as equal parents under Arizona statutes. According to Arizona Revised Statute 8-103 any child that is available for adoption must be preferentially placed with a married man and woman. Only if a married heterosexual couple is not available can the child be placed with a same-sex or single parent. This precedent may prolong same-sex couples from adopting or deter them from the process entirely.

In addition to the legal battle over equality, same-sex couples may experience additional barriers in the foster or adoption licensing process. In Arizona there are 31 agencies that are contracted to train and license parents for fostering or adoption (DCS, 2017). Of these, seven openly state that their religion-based policies prohibit them from licensing same-sex parents (Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, 2017; Arizona Baptist Children's Services, 2017; Arizona Faith and Families, 2017; Catholic Charities, 2017; Catholic Social Services, 2017; Christian Family Care, 2017; Gap Ministries, 2017). There are currently no federal or state policies that protect potential foster or adoptive

parents from discrimination at the agency-level. Agency staff may refuse to work with a couple based on their sexual orientation and the couple has no path to recourse other than choosing an LGBT friendly agency (Patterson, 2015). The lack of protection from discrimination in this process may act as further deterrent to this demographic group pursuing foster or adoptive parenthood.

Marital Status: Unmarried Couples and Single Parents

Arizona's Revised Statute 8-103, as stated before, places a preference for all adoption and foster placement on a married man and woman. This policy asserts that there is a benefit in child rearing to the married, two-parent familial structure and thus unmarried or single parents are less equipped to raise children (Lansford, et al., 2001). Adoption by single parents began slowly in the 1960's as single parents (primarily women) were encouraged to adopt to counteract the growing number of children without homes (Shireman, 1996). By the 1990's literature framed single parent homes as a 'nontraditional' alternative that should be encouraged to house children with special needs (Shireman, 1996). In both instances, the possibility of single parent child rearing was presented as an inferior option that was only marketed to be used in times of crisis in the child welfare system (Raleigh, 2012). At the same time, the Federal Government was legislatively discouraging single parenthood through passage of bills such as The Personal Responsibility Act of 1996 that would have drastically reduced the amount of social services parents could qualify for if they were raising children out of wedlock (Burke, 2003; Pub. L. 104-193). While the bill passed both chambers of Congress President Clinton ultimately vetoed it (Burke, 2003). This same degradation of single parents remains today with the Arizona statute's preference of married couples.

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Similarly, unmarried couples are unable to jointly adopt children due to their marital status no matter the duration of their relationship. One-half of the couple may adopt or foster a child but the other will not have any legal rights or privileges to the child that they are jointly raising with their partner (Raleigh, 2012). Unmarried adoptions are thus treated as single-parent adoptions and are given a secondary level of preference (ARS 8-103). For this reason, single or unmarried potential parents that make up 51% of the total adult population of Arizona, may be experiencing licensing bias in the child welfare system (US Census Bureau, 2016).

Level of Education

The Department of Child Safety frequently collects data about the demographics and experiences of licensed foster and adoptive parents in Arizona (DCS, 2015). The latest study was conducted in 2015 which collected the demographics data of over 1,200 currently licensed foster and adoptive parents in every county throughout the state. According to these data 59.7% of all licensed parents have obtained a college degree (DCS, 2015). Compared with the US Census data from the same year, which shows that only 27.5% of all the adults in Arizona have earned a college degree, there is a significant disparity (2015). A statistical difference of over 30 points is evidence that there is a cause of lower-educated parents not being represented among those who are eligible to foster and adopt. While numerous social factors may account for this difference it may, at least in part, be present due to agency or personal bias against parents with lower educational levels. Further research must be conducted in this area to determine the role bias plays in the education-parenting gap.

Study Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to discover what barriers, if any, are present in Arizona foster and adoptive licensing agencies. The research questions guiding this study are as follows: 1) Are there any biases in the policies or procedures present in the licensing agency that would prevent or restrict parents of certain demographic groups from becoming foster or adoptive parents? 2) Are there any biases in the personal values or beliefs of staff in the licensing agency that would prevent or restrict parents of certain demographic groups from becoming foster or adoptive parents? Furthermore, the follow-up study sought to answer the question: 3) What barriers may be present in foster and adoption agencies that would hinder the implementation of future research with front-line agency staff?

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Research Design

This research study utilized a QUANT→qual design (i.e., qualitative follow-up) design with both an initial quantitative survey and a follow-up qualitative phone interview of participants (Morgan. 1998). This initial study was framed as a pilot case study that will be used to inform a future, wide-scale study of front-line workers at Arizona foster and adoption licensing agencies.

The first component was an online, quantitative survey which was created and disseminated utilizing the Qualtrics survey research software. This survey had three sections. The first section asked for demographic information including age, gender, education level, agency identification, time working at agency, and position at the

agency. The second section provided 6 vignettes for a scenario of placing a child with a licensed foster family. The participant was asked to read each vignette and rate how likely they would be to place the child with each couple described on the basis of their personal values and beliefs. The third section of the survey provided the same vignettes but asked the participant how likely they would be to place the child with each couple on the basis of their agency's policies and procedures. The survey was designed to be implemented with direct-service level staff but was given to directors in this research pilot study in order to receive feedback on a broader implementation.

The second component of this research pilot was a brief, qualitative, phone-based interview with each participant following the completion of the survey. The interview asked several questions with the purpose of obtaining information about the survey and the agency that will be useful in implementing the survey with direct-service staff in the future. The interview included questions about the individual's experience of taking the survey (e.g. logistics, comfort answering questions on bias, etc.) and questions about implementing the survey within the agency (e.g. how likely would direct staff be to take the survey, what barriers may be present, etc.). All study procedures were approved by the Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance.

Sampling Procedures

The sample for this exploratory, pilot study was, by design, small. An individual was eligible to participate in this study if they met the following criteria: 1) They were the director, co-director, or chief executive officer of a foster and adoption licensing agency; 2) They had worked at the respective agency for at least 6 months; and 3) The agency they worked for licenses parents only in the state of Arizona. There were 31

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agencies in Arizona who were contracted with the Department of Child Safety to license

parents for fostering and adoption at the time of this study. The directors of each of these

agencies were be asked to participate in this pilot research study with a goal of obtaining

at least 5 survey and interview participants (*n*=5) to test the online survey and provide

qualitative feedback to the researcher on the survey process via telephone. In order to

recruit participants, a network and convenience sampling approach was utilized. Through

the professional connections the researcher had at the Arizona Council of Human Service

Providers and the child welfare coalition, Project Jigsaw, the contact information of many

agency directors was obtained. The researcher used three methods for recruiting

participants. First, they spoke and provided research handouts at a meeting of the Arizona

Council of Human Service Providers, which over 20 agency directors attend monthly.

Subsequently, they emailed an electronic copy of the research participation information

to the Council's members following the meeting. Finally, they electronically searched for

the contact information of agency directors who did not participate in the Arizona

Council and emailed them the research information directly.

Measures

Two measures were used in the completion of this research study. The first

measure was a quantitative, web-based survey which contained three sections. The first

section asked for participant demographic information (i.e. gender, race/ethnicity, age,

and level of education, agency of employment, agency position, and duration of

employment. The following two sections contained six differing vignettes of theoretical

foster parents. These vignettes were created to reflect the demographic makeup of

Arizona. The vignettes presented the same family six times with differing characteristics

(race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, and level of education). The first section of vignettes asked participants to rate on a 6-point Likert scale from "highly unlikely" to "highly likely" the degree of likelihood they were to place a child with the family based on the participant's personal values and beliefs. The second section of vignettes asked participants to repeat the likelihood Likert scale based on their agency's policies and procedures. All vignettes were created using Arizona census demographic data from recent years to reflect the most common minority groups, family characteristics, and names present in the state at the time of the research. At the end of the survey participants were asked to provide a contact email in order to set up the follow-up phone interview. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

The second measure was a qualitative, phone-based, follow-up interview with each participant. After the completion of the survey, each participant was contacted via email by the researcher to set up a day and time to participate in the interview. Each interview lasted between 10-15 minutes during which time seven primary questions were asked. These questions collected information about the participant's professional experience, the size of their agency, the training to which front-line workers are exposed, and the participant's experience of taking the survey. See Appendix B for a copy of the interview questions.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of participants using the link to the online Qualtrics-based survey that they were provided (either in the hand-out or via email). Surveys were completed independently over a three-month period without researcher interaction and took an average of 10 minutes to complete. All survey

information was stored via the Qualtrics online database for further analysis. Phase 2 consisted of a series of follow-up, phone interviews which took 10-15 minutes to complete over a one-week period. During these interviews, the researcher explained that the purpose of the follow-up was to gain information about the participant's agency of employment and experience of taking the survey in order that a future study with front-line workers could be conducted. Interview notes were transcribed electronically following the interview for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two phases, differentiated by the type of data collection (i.e., Phase 1-Survey analysis, Phase 2- Interview analysis). Phase 1 data was analyzed using a simple descriptive approach of the survey results. During this process, the answers to survey questions were read, analyzed for notable results, and then these notable results were coded by question type (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theoretical coding method was utilized in which the researcher had the underlying literature findings and research questions in mind when analyzing the data for themes (Krysik & Finn, 2013). After coding, themes emerged and were presented in a written description.

Phase 2 data was analyzed using a traditional content and thematic analysis approach, which is a systemic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Kerns, et al., 2014). This took place in a six step methodology (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data from the qualitative phone interviews by transcribing and reading the responses to each question as a complete set of information. Next, the researcher generated initial codes from the data as an analysis began to present key terms that were present throughout the

different interviews. Then, the researcher searched for themes by reviewing the list of codes, determining similarities between key emerging terms, combining these key terms, and identifying any necessary sub-themes. After themes were determined, they were reviewed. Reviewing took place in two steps which included arranging themes into common patterns to determine whether or not the relationship between themes was reflective of the data as a whole (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). All themes were then defined, individually analyzed, and named. A thematic map was created by hand and utilized to aid in this analysis process. Finally, the themes were presented in this report with the use of charts. The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to being launched.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

This pilot study had five individuals who participated in the online survey and four of those individuals who participated in the follow-up phone interview. Each survey was completed independently and each phone interview was conducted individually with the researcher. Demographic information was collected as a portion of the online survey, with specific follow-up questions being asked during the phone interviews. Participants were primarily female (80%) and approximately 36 years of age with a range between 31 and 41 years old. They self-identified as 40% Caucasian, 40% Multiracial, and 20% Hispanic/Latinx. All of the participants had completed college with 60% holding 4-year degrees and 40% holding Master's degrees. Each participant maintained a leadership position in their agency with 60% as the Director/CEO, 20% as the Founder of their agency, and 20% as the Fostering/Adoption Program Director. The majority (80%) of

participants had worked at their agencies for 5+ years and each had started in a direct-service position.

Phase 1: Agency Director Survey

The major results emerging from the agency director surveys are depicted in Table 1 and discussed below in the order of the survey vignette categories: Caucasian couple, Hispanic/Latinx couple, unmarried couple, same-sex couple, uneducated couple, and single parent. The major discrepancies are highlighted in the third column.

Table 1: Agency Director Survey Themes

The results from the online survey were fairly consistent among participants. The majority of participants indicated that they were likely or highly likely to place a child

Categories	Answer Categories	Answer Occurrences
Caucasian/White Couple	-Consistently Highly Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely Agency: 2/5 Highly Likely
Hispanic/Latinx Couple	-Consistently Highly Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely Agency: 2/5 Highly Likely
Unmarried Couple	-Consistently Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely **Agency: 0/5 Highly Likely**
Same-Sex Couple	-Consistently Highly Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely Agency: 2/5 Highly Likely
Lower Education Couple	-Consistently Highly Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely Agency: 2/5 Highly Likely
Single Parent	-Consistently Likely	Personal: 2/5 Highly Likely **Agency: 0/5 Highly Likely**

with Caucasian, Hispanic/Latinx, same-sex, or couples with lower levels of education. These answers were the same based on the participant's personal values/beliefs and their

agency policies/procedures. Participants also responded that based on their personal values/beliefs they are likely or highly likely to place a child with an unmarried couple or

a single parent. However, this answer changed when participants were asked to indicate

placement based on their agency's policies or procedures. For both of these categories of

parents, participants indicated that they would be less likely to place a child with single or

unmarried parents as a result of the agency policies in which they were employed . This

was the most significant variation in survey answers as indicated in Table 1.

Phase 2: Agency Director Follow-Up Interview

The major themes emerging from the agency director follow-up interviews are

depicted in Table 2 and categorized below in the order of interview flow. The five major

themes that emerged are staff training, research with staff, size of staff, survey structure

changes, and client nondiscrimination.

Table 2: Agency Director Follow-Up Interview Themes

Major Themes	Major Sub-Themes	Sample Quote
Staff Training	-Position-specific orientations -Length: two or more weeks with shadowing -Staff undergoing full foster parent trainings -Development of ongoing internal staff trainings	"All licensing staff attend a position-specific orientation and an 8-day leadership program."
Research with Staff	-Commonality of engaging in research studies -Directors talk about evidence-based practice -Directors encourage staff research participation -Utilization of online format for research	"I talk to my staff frequently about the need for evidence-based practice in our field."
Size of Staff	-Vastly differing size of agencies and staff -Involvement of Directors in client interactions -Levels of leadership in staff monitoring	"We have about 100 staff that work directly to license or support foster parents"
Survey Structure Changes	-Length of vignettes -Use of paragraph format for demographic changes -Suggestions to bullet demographic groups -Suggestions to directly address demographics	"The use of paragraphs almost made it too confusing; perhaps if demographics were just directly listed it would be easier to answer."
Client Nondiscrimination	-Presence of client nondiscrimination policies -Presence of staff nondiscrimination policies -Inclusive of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability status	"Our agency has a full, written client nondiscrimination policy which all staff are required to uphold."

Staff Training

Each participant in the interview reported that the agency in which they are employed has extensive staff training programs. In each agency staff who work directly with clients, in either licensing or casework, undergo multiple weeks of training. This training includes both classroom training sessions and direct engagement with clients or shadowing current employees. All staff members in these agencies are required to complete a full foster-parent training course, which can take from 6-10 weeks to complete. Participants noted that this training is a requirement for each staff member so that they are able to understand the process that clients have gone through in order to become licensed. Additionally, two participants noted that their agencies are currently in the process of developing internal, ongoing training for licensing staff which would include topics such as cultural competence and trauma-informed care. Each participant stated that any staff member in their agency who works with foster or adoptive parents would have an understanding of the agency's policies and procedures prior to working with clients.

Research with Staff

Interview participants stated that they personally seek research projects to engage in and encourage their staff to do the same. Each participant had personally been involved in other research studies in the past. One common theme which emerged was the director's emphasis of evidence-based practice as a necessity to the field of child welfare. One director stated, "I talk to my staff frequently about the need for evidence-based practice in our field", and would therefore encourage her staff to participate in

research studies." Furthermore, participants suggested that researchers should utilize Directors or Supervisors to disseminate information about research studies in order to gain the most staff buy-in and participation. Online or electronic-based surveys or interviews were suggested as the most common and convenient method for staff members to engage in research at the participant's agencies. Some staff, however, at smaller agencies may not have access to a computer on a daily basis.

Size of Staff

Each participant provided a specific or approximated number of staff that were employed by their agency for the purpose of licensing or supporting foster and adoptive parents. The number of staff ranged from 2-100 individuals who directly fill these roles. The smallest participant agency has only two staff that fit this description and thus their director takes on much of the direct client interactions including placement of children and case management. Directors of larger agencies described a hierarchal leadership structure in which only the staff with no supervisory duties engaged directly with clients during the licensing process.

Survey Structure Changes

Participants in the follow-up interview provided feedback and suggestions on the survey they had previously taken. The majority of participants noted no discomfort in answering questions related to bias or discrimination. Half of the participants stated that they had no issue with the paragraph-vignette structure of the survey, while the other half stated that it was confusing. Those who stated that the paragraphs were confusing suggested a more direct approach to asking about the demographic groups, such as using

bulleting or one-sentence questions. A common theme emerging from the interviews was the length of the survey vignettes resulting in the participant skimming rather than fully reading each scenario. Participants noted no discomfort in answering the demographic or agency-related questions at the start of the survey.

Client Nondiscrimination

All interview participants stated that their agency has staff and client nondiscrimination polices. These policies are taught to each new staff member during the orientation or on-boarding process at the agency. Additionally, all participants recited their policies in full, which included the categories of race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study illustrate two meaningful trends in bias in addition to providing feedback for future research. The first two research questioned were aimed at determining whether bias is present at the individual or agency policy level. The survey results demonstrate that there exists a discrepancy between placement of a child based on an agency's policies as opposed to an individual's beliefs, conforming the second research question. While all respondents noted that they would place a child with any of the given demographic groups their answers became less sure (i.e., evidenced as 'likely' instead of 'highly likely') when they were asked to differentiate between their own perspective and that of their agency. Assessing this discrepancy in the context of conflict theory leads to the conclusion that a reluctance to place children with single or unmarried parents is likely the result of a social bias against the parenting abilities of parents who do

not fit the "heterosexual married couple" definition of parenting. Such a trend arising in even a small sample population gives indication that there may be an inherent bias in child welfare policy that is not present in staff, and warrants future study. If such a pattern proves to be present on a larger scale, there may be cause for modifications in child welfare policy and practice.

The findings from this study are consistent with previous research, which suggests that there may be bias against potential foster and adoptive parents on the basis of marital status. While each participant indicated that they would place a child with an unmarried couple or a single parent, they would be less inclined to do so than placing the child with a married couple. This finding supports the inferior status that has been projected onto unmarried parents since the 1960's (Shireman, 1996). The indication by participants that unmarried parents offer less than ideal placements confirms that the Arizona law that requires children to first be placed with a married mother and father (ARS 8-103) has a tangible impact on child welfare practice. This also confirms the assertion of conflict theory that the predominantly powerful class of parents (i.e. heterosexual married parents) seek to maintain their power by framing single or unmarried parents as inferior by default and thus are less capable of raising children.

The final research question sought to understand induvial agencies and determine whether barriers existed that would prevent further research. The follow-up interviews provided several points of insight into foster and adoption licensing agencies that may be useful for future research. Feedback provided by participants indicated that the survey itself may be improved by the alteration of vignettes. Recommendations suggest that more precise language should be utilized to avoid distraction from the characteristics of

the families. By doing so, there will likely be fewer limitations in substantiating the presence of bias in such agencies. Furthermore, participants indicated a high possibility of encouraging front-line staff to engage in such a research endeavor. Information gathered on agency size and number of staff will be applicable to determining an accurate sample size of front line staff for the state of Arizona.

There are several limitations to the present study including a small sample size (n=5) and a lack of random sampling of participants. While a small sample was ideal for a pilot study, the results cannot be used to make broader, generalizable assumptions about bias in Arizona or child welfare. There was also no exact list of the entire population of agency directors, from which a random sample could be generated for this study. Additionally, there was no prior published research on bias in foster and adoption licensing agencies in Arizona. Without prior research, bias and social discrimination must be assumed and thus only an experimental research design was possible for this study.

This study provides an exploratory first-hand look at potential bias or discrimination in the Arizona fostering and adoption process and possible discrepancies between individual and institutional bias in the foster and adoption placement process. Although this study was limited to a small number of agencies in the state, there was preliminary evidence that placement preference may differ between personal beliefs and agency policies. Finally, the discrepancy in placement with single and unmarried couples warrants further research in order to ensure justice for all parents is being achieved. This finding, coupled with the absence of 'marital status' as a protected class in each of the participant agency's nondiscrimination statements suggests that policy change is needed in order for all potential parents to have an equitable experience in the foster and

adoption process (National Association of Social Workers, 2009). Licensing agencies in Arizona should add "marital status" to their nondiscrimination policies through internal policy reviews and updates in order to ensure that single and unmarried parents are afforded equal treatment and consideration as placement for children in need of homes. This study highlights the need for additional inquiry in this subject area.

Historical literature suggests that social bias may be affecting the lives of many demographic minorities in the state of Arizona and yet little research has been conducted to determine whether such bias has had an impact on the child welfare system. Conflict theory would suggest that social institutions such as the child welfare system have been created with an inherent favor of the majority (i.e. heterosexual married parents) and a bias against the minority (i.e. parents of color, single parents, same-sex parents). Further research must be conducted with a large sample of staff at foster and adoption licensing agencies who interact directly with clients. By taking into consideration the suggested alterations to the survey and making vignettes more precise, future researchers can construct a study that reflects the full scope of bias at the agency and individual levels. Such research would not only lend itself to policy and practice improvements in Arizona, but may lead to similar studies throughout the United States in the pursuit of creating a more equitable child welfare system that meets the needs of every child, youth, and family.

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APPENDIX A

AGENCY DIRECTOR SURVEY

<u>Consent to Participate in Research Project</u>

Project Title: Supervisors' Perceptions in Foster and Adoptive Licensing Agencies

Principal Investigator: **Research Supervisor:**

Patience H. Pearson   Kristin M. Ferguson-Colvin, Ph.D.

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<u>Introduction/Purpose</u>: You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is conducted under the direction of Kristin Ferguson-Colvin, Ph.D. by MSW student Patience Pearson from the Arizona State University School of Social Work. The purpose of this study is learning more about the potential individual and agency-level biases in placement of children in foster and adoptive homes. This study will also collect information about agency training, policy, and the best methods to utilize for a potential future study with direct-line staff. With this information, I intend to determine which demographics of parents experience the most restrictive bias and which level of agency interaction this bias stems from. This information will be used to contribute to the current body of social work research and conduct a future study of service-level employees at licensing agencies. Your agency was identified through a web-based search of organizations that work with the Department of Child Safety to provide foster and adoption licensing classes to potential parents. To be eligible to participate in this survey you must be the director, co-director, or chief executive officer in a foster or adoption licensing agency in Arizona and you must have been employed by that agency for at least 6 months. Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, your relationship with the Arizona State University School of Social Work will not be affected in any way.

<u>Procedures</u>: If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to participate in two activities. First, we will ask you to complete a 10-15 minute online survey using the Qualtrics link provided to you. Second, we will ask you to participate in a 10-15 minute

telephone interview at a time that is convenient for you. I will ask you some general questions about the experiencing of taking the online survey, the trainings your agency provides to staff, and the process of conducting a similar survey with direct-line staff at your agency. We will not be collecting any personally identifying information about you, your staff, or your client/consumer population. A potential total of 30 directors from foster and adoptive licensing agencies in Arizona will participate in these telephone interviews. Our discussion will also not be audio-taped; rather, I will take notes on your responses over the telephone.

Possible Discomforts and Risks: There are no expected risks or discomforts with these interviews. However, if you find any of the questions uncomfortable, you do not need to answer   them.

Benefits: You may not directly benefit from your participation. This study will offer information that may help improve programs and services for potential foster and adoptive parents.

Alternatives: Your alternative is to not participate. If you choose not to participate in this study, your relationship with the Arizona State University School of Social Work will not be affected in any way.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decide not to participate without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. Your answers to the questions will not affect your relationship with the Arizona State University School of Social Work in any way. Also, you are free to drop out of the study at any point and dropping out will not affect your relationship with this organization in any way.

Financial Considerations: You will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality: Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Any findings that we report will be in aggregate form; your name will not be used in the final report. In the research paper I am creating with information from this study, I will not list directors' specific names nor will we indicate that our data came from speaking with specific directors from specific agencies. I will be linking the online survey and the phone interview using an identifying code number (1,2,3,…5). The investigator will be taking notes during the telephone interview to

remember all of the important information that is discussed. Following the interview, the investigator will transcribe her notes into a computer file.

The information from the telephone interviews will be stored on the computer of the principal investigator. Any identifiers that link the data to you will be destroyed when the study has finished. The remaining data will be stored on the principal investigators' computer indefinitely. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. The investigator is mandated to report to the proper authorities any indications that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others.

Contact Questions/Persons: If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact the Principal Investigator at phpearso@asu.edu or (480)-560-8518. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Q2 Please select your gender.
- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Other: (3) _____

Q3 Please provide your age as of your last birthday.

Q4 What is your race or ethnicity?
- ○ American Indian (1)
- ○ Asian (2)
- ○ Black/African American (3)
- ○ Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4)
- ○ Hispanic/Latino/a (5)
- ○ White/Caucasian (6)
- ○ More than One/Multiracial (7)

Q5 What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- ○ Less than High School (1)
- ○ High School/GED (2)
- ○ Some College (3)
- ○ 2 year College Degree/Associates (4)
- ○ 4 year College Degree/BA, BS (5)
- ○ Master's Degree (6)
- ○ Doctoral Degree (7)

Q6 What Organization/Agency are you currently employed by?
- ○ Aid to Adoption for Special Kids (1)
- ○ Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona (2)
- ○ A New Leaf (3)
- ○ A Place to Call Home (4)
- ○ Arizona Baptist Children's Services (5)
- ○ Arizona Children's Association (6)
- ○ Arizona Faith and Families (7)
- ○ Casa de los Ninos (8)
- ○ Catholic Charities (9)
- ○ Catholic Community Services (10)
- ○ Child Crisis Arizona (11)
- ○ Christian Family Care (12)
- ○ Community Provider of Enrichment Services (13)
- ○ Devereux Arizona (14)

- ⃝ Family Service Agency (15)
- ⃝ Family Support Resources (16)
- ⃝ Gap Ministries (17)
- ⃝ General Health Corporation/AmeriPsych (18)
- ⃝ Grace Retreat (19)
- ⃝ Human Resource Training Arizona (20)
- ⃝ Intermountain Centers for Human Development (21)
- ⃝ La Paloma Family Services (22)
- ⃝ Lutheran Social Services (23)
- ⃝ Mending Hearts Family Services (24)
- ⃝ Onward Hope Inc. (25)
- ⃝ Pathways (26)
- ⃝ RISE Services Inc. (27)
- ⃝ Spirit of Hope Inc. (28)
- ⃝ Track House Life (29)
- ⃝ West Valley Child Crisis Center (30)
- ⃝ Vision Quest (31)
- ⃝ Other: (32) _____

Q7 What is your current position in the organization/agency?
- ⃝ Administrative Assistant (1)
- ⃝ Case Aid (2)
- ⃝ Caseworker (3)
- ⃝ Supervisor (4)
- ⃝ Administration (5)
- ⃝ Director/CEO (6)
- ⃝ Other: (7) _____

Q8 How long have you been employed at your agency?
- ⃝ Less than 6 months (1)
- ⃝ 6 months to less than 2 years (2)
- ⃝ 2 years to less than 5 years (3)
- ⃝ 5 years to less than 10 years (4)
- ⃝ 10 years or more (5)

Q9 John is a 5 year old Caucasian male who has recently come into state custody as a result of parental neglect. You have been asked to find a foster placement for John from among new applicants. All applicants have successfully completed training and received their license. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with each of the following applicants based on your personal values and beliefs.

Q10 James, 36, and his wife Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Lisa is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your personal values and beliefs.
❍ Highly Unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
❍ Somewhat Likely (4)
❍ Likely (5)
❍ Highly Likely (6)

Q11 Jose, 36, and his wife Isabella, 34, are Latino and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. Jose works as a marketing specialist and Isabella is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. Jose and Isabella have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your personal values and beliefs.
❍ Highly Unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
❍ Somewhat Likely (4)
❍ Likely (5)
❍ Highly Likely (6)

Q12 James, 36, and his girlfriend Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and in a relationship for five years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2012 where they currently reside.

They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Lisa is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your personal values and beliefs.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q13 James, 36, and his husband Robert, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Robert is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Robert have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your personal values and beliefs.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q14 James, 36, and his wife Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while working as servers at a local restaurant where they are both still employed. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your personal values and beliefs.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)

○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q15 James, 36, is a single man who recently became licensed as a foster parent. He moved into his first home in Phoenix in 2010 where he currently resides. James attended college out of state where he earned his bachelor's degree. James works as a marketing specialist at a local branch of an organization. His income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James has no biological children and has recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having his own. You have been asked to review his application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this applicant based on your personal values and beliefs.
○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q16 Now you will be asked to answer placement questions regarding the agency you are employed by. Each scenario is the same as the previous section. John is a 5 year old Caucasian male who has recently come into state custody as a result of parental neglect. You have been asked to find a foster placement for John from among new applicants. All applicants have successfully completed training and received their license. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with each of the following applicants based on your agency's policies and procedures.

Q17 James, 36, and his wife Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Lisa is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your agency's policies and procedures.
❍ Highly Unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
❍ Somewhat Likely (4)
❍ Likely (5)
❍ Highly Likely (6)

Q18 Jose, 36, and his wife Isabella, 34, are Latino and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. Jose works as a marketing specialist and Isabella is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. Jose and Isabella have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your agency's policies and procedures.
❍ Highly Unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
❍ Somewhat Likely (4)
❍ Likely (5)
❍ Highly Likely (6)

Q19 James, 36, and his girlfriend Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and in a relationship for five years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2012 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Lisa is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a

foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your agency's policies and procedures.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q20 James, 36, and his husband Robert, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while attending college out of state where they both earned bachelor's degrees. James works as a marketing specialist and Robert is an elementary school teacher. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Robert have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your agency's policies and procedures.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q21 James, 36, and his wife Lisa, 34, are Caucasian and have been married for 7 years. They moved into their first home in Phoenix in 2010 where they currently reside. They met while working as servers at a local restaurant where they are both still employed. Their household income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James and Lisa have no biological children and have recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having their own. You have been asked to review their application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this couple based on your agency's policies and procedures.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q22 James, 36, is a single man who recently became licensed as a foster parent. He moved into his first home in Phoenix in 2010 where he currently resides. James attended college out of state where he earned his bachelor's degree. James works as a marketing specialist at a local branch of an organization. His income is $90,000 before taxes annually. James has no biological children and has recently decided to provide a home to a child in foster care rather than having his own. You have been asked to review his application as John is in need of a foster home. Please indicate the likelihood of placing John with this applicant based on your agency's policies and procedures.

○ Highly Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
○ Somewhat Likely (4)
○ Likely (5)
○ Highly Likely (6)

Q23 Thank you for participating in this online survey.

So I can set up a convenient time for the phone interview please provide your email below:

_____

APPENDIX B

AGENCY DIRECTOR FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

Follow-Up Questions: Supervisors' Perceptions in Foster and Adoptive Licensing
Agencies

1. What method (online, in-person, phone, etc.) of survey taking is most convenient for
you?

      -What makes that method most convenient?

      -Most convenient for your staff?

2. What factors (incentives, time at work to complete survey, etc.) would contribute to
your front-line workers being willing to take the survey?

      -In what ways, as a director, are you able to encourage your staff to complete the
      survey?

3. Specifically, how many staff members at your agency are responsible for licensing
parents for fostering and adoption?

4. What type and duration of training do direct-service staff receive before they begin
working with foster and adoptive families?

      -Are these training methods/materials publically available?

      -Would you be willing to provide access to these materials for research
      evaluation?

5. Describe any experience you have had in a direct-service position at your agency.

      -Describe any direct-service experience you had before employment at this
      agency.

      -If none, how do you think your answers would have differed if you had direct-
      service experience?

6. In what ways did answering questions about your bias make you feel, either

comfortable or uncomfortable?

7. Does your agency have a client nondiscrimination policy that includes race, age,

gender, and sexual orientation?