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“MYKE”

Is Partnership Equal? : Looking beyond the Law
Identification of Possible Social Harm as a result of Civil Partnership
within the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

Main Research Question:

What if any Social Harm is caused by the denial of Same-Sex marriage under the Civil Partnership Act 2004?

Throughout the Western World there is discussion, legislation, and contemplation as to what to do about non-heterosexual relationships. In some societies these relationships are banned, in some societies they are ignored and in some they are subject to laws with varying degrees of significance. In the United Kingdom the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) was enacted to establish a new form of legally recognized union called "civil partnership". In this investigation into the possible social harm resulting from the creation of a separate but equal system the relevant case law, statutes, and literature are analyzed. Utilizing a web-survey ($n=407$) the impact of the CPA and the effect on the citizens of England and Wales is investigated. The unique attribute of the United Kingdom is that Parliament is supreme therefore an investigation of the constitutionality of the CPA is moot. By using a social harm analysis this research shows the presence of social harm resulting from the denial of universal marriage.

Dedication

The author would like to thank Lois Bibbings and Harriet Bradley for their continued support and effort in assisting in the completion of this research. For without their enthusiasm and dedication to scholarly pursuits this work would not be a reality.

The author would like to dedicate this research to his Mother, Monika and Father, Robert Jackson who have assisted the pursuit of knowledge throughout my entire academic career and continue to support my inquisitive nature and drive for excellence.

I would extend special appreciation to the University of Bristol, Faculty of Law including Stephanie Dimberline, Mark Samways, Bronwen Morgan, Keith Stanton and Morag McDermont who without their devotion to the creation of an MSc in Socio-Legal Studies this research would not have been possible.

I conduct this research in the hope that it may be a positive contribution to the field of Socio-Legal research and to all my friends and acquaintances in the LGBT community both in the United Kingdom and the United States.

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Introduction

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) is a measure to address the lack of recognition of a long-term relationship between same-sex partners within the United Kingdom. The Civil Partnership Act however, does not call this recognition a “marriage” but created a new legal concept termed “civil partnership”. While the advances made by the CPA to extend the legal benefits of marriage to same-sex couples is significant, it remains that same-sex partners cannot “marry”. This difference in name is not something to dismiss as a mere formality. This paper seeks to address the impact of the CPA on the citizens of the United Kingdom with reference to the possible “social harm” that may result from the denial of universal marriage. Social harm in this paper deals with the continued inequality between the normative standard of heterosexuality (opposite-sex couples pairing formally recognized as marriage) under the laws of England and Wales, and the accepted argument that same-sex couples should receive equal recognition and benefits for their relationships (Bibbings, forthcoming 2009).

To identify possible “social harm” it was necessary to review the history behind the development of the CPA and conduct independent empirical research. The empirical research took the form of a web-survey and consisted of 13 closed and 2 open response questions allowing for the participants to provide demographic information as well as narrative responses with reference to the CPA. The web-survey received a total of 577

responses out of which 407 were complete. Narrative responses¹ below provide insight into the divisive nature of utilizing the term “civil partnership”.

By calling civil partnership anything other than marriage it is creating another division between us and the heterosexual population. I think it gives people the wrong message about same sex relationships. To me it says there is something abnormal about us, & it undermines the importance of my relationship. 1280639P

... although a step in the right direction it seems to have been something put forward almost to “keep the gays happy” rather than genuine equality! If I as a gay woman am not allowed to marry my partner just as my straight friends marry theirs with the blessing of the church and all the legal entitlements that marriage includes, then I am being discriminated against simple as that! 1332235P

The main research question is: What if any “social harm” is caused by the denial of same-sex marriage under the Civil Partnership Act 2004?

Civil Partnership Act 2004

The Civil Partnership Act was conceived as a Private Members Bill (PMB) beginning in 2002 and originally covered both same and opposite-sex couples. The consultation process began in earnest in 2003 and the Civil Partnership Bill (CPB) became an Act of Parliament in 2004 and received Royal Assent. The first possible date civil partnerships could take place was December 20th, 2005 in England and Wales². The Office of National Statistics (2007,2008) has released reports detailing the number of civil partnerships between December 2005 and the end of December 2007 showing 26,787 civil partnerships have occurred in the United Kingdom³. Very little research has been done to assess the impact of the act or the overall public knowledge of this new legal union (Auchmuty 2008). With regards to the legal

¹ **N.B. The quotes will be presented verbatim from the respondent with all typing errors or mistakes to see all responses to question 12 and 13 refer to appendix. I may edit the quotes for length and repetition but such edits will be denoted by ... or other means.**

² This is due to the mandatory 15-day notice required prior to a civil partnership registration. The CPA went into effect on December 5th, 2005. See CPA, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 11.

³ This figure represents the entire United Kingdom, which is inclusive of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

consciousness (Ewick & Silbey 1998, Hull 2003) of the citizens of the United Kingdom it has become apparent from the web-survey that many are still unfamiliar if not unaware of the details of the CPA. This confusion is evidenced in the following web-survey responses.

... In particular, a civil partnership is available for people who are not intending to be life partners, eg between siblings, and is therefore not equivalent to 'marriage'....
1376415P [this is incorrect as that siblings cannot be civil partners]

A marriage has more rights and status, where as a civil partnership is by definition less than a marriage. This is insulting. 1372068P [this is incorrect as that while marriage and civil partnership are different in name the act is in theory to "mirror" the benefits of marriage]

civil partner ship offers a security to same sex partnerships but does not cover equality with pensions and other benefits which marriage gives automatically which is not just. 1399039P [this is incorrect as that pensions and benefits were a significant legal benefit of recognition of a union and therefore covered by the CPA]

Social Harm

The concept of social harm is a product of dissatisfaction with the field of criminology and seeks to address all harms that an individual faces from cradle to grave (Hillyard et al. 2004:1). These harms are not directly classified as crimes but are significant in the day-to-day life of the individual citizen. These harms can arise from such situations as improper taxation, government inaction, and individual interaction. To be clear this research deals directly with the application of social harm to sexuality within society and the preferential position of heterosexuality. The application of social harm to sexuality is infrequently addressed by harm scholars (unlike gender), however significant work has been presented by Bibbings (2004, forthcoming 2009). Examples of perceived harm by respondents are as follows:

... by having two distinct types of union it automatically puts them up against each other for analysis and discussion of difference. As one is older and more widely practised than the other it is obvious that marriage is seen as the norm and partnership as a threat. 1374306P

... however the fact that the it is called a civil partnership and not a marriage requires people to constantly out themselves when asked about their marital status, ie when getting insurance, mortgages etc. 1374059P

The first extract shows the question of harm in being different in name and puts to question the equality of a new concept versus the historical traditions of marriage. The second extract shows the problem or harm of using civil partnership in business dealings when asked about marital status, as it automatically discloses non-heterosexuality (possible basis for discrimination).

Empirical Research: Web-survey

Among the methods to investigate possible social harm a web-survey was chosen as the most beneficial means to reach participants. Survey distribution methods included the use of Facebook Ads, DIVA Magazine, University of Bristol listserve, and the addition of a link to the web-survey in a Stonewall UK email. The survey was also used to look at the efficacy of anonymous Internet based research.

The web-survey was open for completion from November 2007 to January 2008, receiving 407 complete responses^{4,5}. The division between self-identified heterosexuals (189) and non-heterosexuals (209) (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, etc) was quite close with non-heterosexuals representing 51.4% of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 16-30 years old (275/67.6%). The web-survey was completed by more women than men (248[60.9%]/159[39.1%]) and the residence of the majority of the respondents was the United Kingdom (383/94.1%) as was desired for a survey focused on the CPA.

⁴ Note: A complete response would be one in which all survey questions were answered and the individual made it to the final page of the web-survey.

⁵ See Appendix for a copy of the survey printed from the **B**ristol **O**nline **S**urvey (BOS) system.

The entire research project required ethical approval, especially the web-survey. Whether or not the survey would be anonymous, who would host the survey, security of the data, and identification of potential harm to participants were some of the ethical questions that required resolution. A more detailed discussion is presented later in this dissertation.

Findings & Reflection

The reality is that the union between two individuals of the same-sex to the exclusion of all others called anything but marriage causes harm. This is evidenced by the responses provided by the web-survey participants and the work on sexuality and harm by Bibbings (2004, forthcoming 2009). The (hetero)normative standard for the recognition of long-term relationships is “marriage” and that while the two legal concepts may mirror one another this policy of difference in name is significant and produces social harm as defined by Hillyard (2004). This research was not designed to be a survey about legal consciousness⁶ (Hull 2003) but in the end it has become evident that there remains a large degree of unfamiliarity with the actual legal provisions of the CPA. Furthermore, this research is only a starting point for a significant body of work on the CPA post-implementation. The field of social harm is well suited to the analysis of the CPA post-implementation as the interplay between equality (universal marriage) and society (heteronormative) remains ever present.

⁶ Legal Consciousness as defined in Hull (2003:630) as “all the ideas about the nature, function, and operation of law held by anyone in society at a given time” (Trubeck 1984:592) or more simply as “the ways people understand and use law” (Merry 1990:5).

Chapter 1: Civil Partnership Act 2004

1.1 Background

The legal recognition of same-sex relationships in England and Wales finds its origin in the Private Member's Bill (PMB) presented by Lord Lester to the House of Lords in January 2002 (Peel & Harding 2004: 41). The goal of the Bill was to allow couples to register their partnerships to gain rights and responsibilities of secular marriage (Peel & Harding 2004). This Bill was withdrawn upon the notice of the Government to legislate in regard to recognition of these unions⁷. The Labour Government responded with a consultation document issued by the Women and Equality Unit in June 2003 entitled: Civil Partnership – a framework for the legal recognition of same-sex couples. In November 2004 the results of the consultation were published with 84% of respondents supporting a civil partnership scheme. The Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) received Royal Assent on 18th of November 2004 and the Act became effective on the 5th of December 2005 with the first registered civil partnerships taking place on the 21st of December 2005 in England and Wales (BBC News, 2005). During the process of review in Parliament the House of Lords repeatedly attempted to defeat the bill by adding recognition to siblings, carers, and other cohabitating individuals⁸. This was defeated in the Commons along with other amendments that would have made passage of the Bill impossible. While it can be said that the CPA is a great step forward in the move for equality under the law for same-sex

⁷ An interesting point of note is that the original Bill by Lord Lester covered both heterosexual and homosexual couples and looked to address individuals that were living in cohabitation arrangements outside of marriage.

⁸ See Hansard HL vol 660 cols 403-407 (22 April 2004).

couples it remains that the legal creation of civil partnership continues to discriminate against same-sex individuals (Bibbings, forthcoming 2009).

1.2 *Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Throughout the debates in the House of Lords it was made clear that the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) would provide almost if not all of the rights, responsibilities and benefits of secular marriage⁹. Therefore it is essential to look at the nature of the two acts of Parliament that control the unions of individuals in England and Wales. The origins of marriage under the common law can be found in the case of *Hyde v. Hyde*¹⁰ in which it is said, “marriage...is the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others”. Here it is made clear that marriage under the common law of England and Wales requires individuals of the opposite sex and therefore the idea of same-sex unions was not recognized or considered. The relevant Acts concerning marriage in England and Wales are the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by the Marriage Act 1983¹¹ and the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973¹² these acts are quite similar to the structure of the CPA. The similarities between the two Acts are not coincidental as that the driving force behind the arguments for recognition of same-sex couples under the law was that equality requires these classes be treated equally under the law. The Solicitors Family Law Association has stated:

⁹ See Hansard, HL vol 660 cols 403-407 (22 April 2004). Baroness O’Cathain is an obvious opponent of the recognition of same-sex relationships under the law.

¹⁰ (1866) LR 1 P & D 130. The case concerned the status of a foreign polygamous marriage (Utah) in England and Wales where the polygamous marriage was valid in the home jurisdiction. The court held that such a marriage was not recognized in England and Wales.

¹¹ Note: The Marriage Act 1983 allows for the marriage of housebound and detained persons with reference to the conditions of the Marriage Act 1949.

¹² Note: The Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 which states that a marriage shall be void if the parties are not respectively male and female.

The formal requirements of civil partnership should mirror those of marriage as this has the advantage of familiarity and creates parity between the two different forms of commitment (Stonewall 2004d: 7).

To that end the CPA contains prohibited degrees of relationship which would prevent a partnership and as well a structured dissolution procedure similar to divorce. The equal rights group Stonewall¹³ was influential in securing the interests of same-sex couples in matters such as next of kin, registering a death, intestacy, inheritance tax, pensions, hospital visits, and immigration (2003a: pgs 2-3). However it must be made clear that Stonewall, like many other proponents of the Bill, was adamant that civil partnership was not marriage and that it would not undermine the institution of marriage. Stonewall made this clear in a Parliamentary briefing:

However, this will come without undermining, in any way, the institution of marriage. Civil partnership is a separate legal structure, designed for same-sex couples. There is no overlap in any way with marriage. Indeed, civil partnership arguably strengthens marriage, by recognizing and valuing the importance of committed relationships to society generally (2004a: 2).

This balancing act was intentional as it was essential that the argument be not that the institution of marriage was being expanded to encompass same-sex relationships but that a new legal form of recognition was created to address such an injustice. The Women & Equality Unit only further supports this legal reality when it states on its website:

The UK's civil partnership status is not the same thing as gay marriage. (2007).

The current state of affairs in the United Kingdom is that individuals who are in same-sex relationships must enter into a civil partnership and those who are in an opposite-sex relationship must enter into secular marriage to gain the benefits of legal recognition of the commitment between the relevant

¹³ For more information refer to <http://www.stonewall.org.uk>

individuals. This reality is captured in the creation of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA).

1.3 Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA) was a response to the declaration that the law of England and Wales was incompatible with the Human Rights Convention as it related to transsexuals and the ability to have a family life. The GRA and the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) were legislated alongside one another to allow for the individuals who were currently married to enter a civil partnership to allow for a full certificate of recognition to be issued. The CPA was not only created for transsexuals, however it allowed for a solution to the issue of marriage being between only a legally defined man (at birth) and woman (at birth) through the issuance of a gender recognition certificate. The interplay between someone's biological sex at birth and their legal ability to partner shows the rigid nature of the common law of England and Wales and the desire to maintain the social tradition of marriage as stated in *Hyde v. Hyde*¹⁴. The relevance to the discussion of social harm and the interplay of recognition and acceptance by society at large of civil partnership is evident in the need for a new legal concept of civil partner. The reality remains that marriage at least for the time being is exclusively the forum for opposite sex partners and any foreign same-sex marriage will be treated as a civil partnership since it "mirrors" marriage.

¹⁴ (1866) LR 1 P & D 130.

1.4 Wilkinson v. Kitzinger

A significant challenge to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) came with the case of *Wilkinson v. Kitzinger*¹⁵, in which the two individuals sought a declaration that their Canadian marriage was a valid “marriage” and in the alternative challenged the provisions in the CPA¹⁶ which required that foreign unions between same-sex individuals are to be treated as civil partnerships. Wilkinson and Kitzinger are both citizens of England and entered into a valid marriage under the laws of Canada. In the opinion Sir Mark Potter¹⁷ made it clear that the CPA in being equivalent to marriage for same-sex partners as to opposite-sex partners did not interfere with the right to family or marriage under the Human Rights Convention. The intent of the CPA was to establish a system of legal recognition that mirrored marriage and it was within the purview of the United Kingdom, as a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), to deal with the issue of same-sex unions and that the resultant civil partnership system was sufficient. The ECHR did not require the Canadian marriage to be recognized as a same-sex marriage but as a civil partnership (Harding 2007:223-224).

Wilkinson and Kitzinger despite the outcome in the case before Potter P did write extensively on their experiences and desire to enter marriage as a means to benefit the travel and legal implications of their relationship (Kitzinger & Wilkinson 2004). However, the discussion in The Re-branding of

¹⁵ *Wilkinson v. Kitzinger* [2006] E.W.H.C. (Fam.) 222; [2006] H.R.L.R. 36

¹⁶ See s. 1(1)(b) and Chapter 2, Part 5 of the CPA which deals with the recognition of “overseas relationships”

¹⁷ President of the Family Law Division of the High Court

Marriage: Why We Got Married Instead of Registering a Civil Partnership

(2004) does embrace a pure equality argument as well as the implications that “marriage” is something beyond the letters that comprise the word. The response to these two Feminist scholars’ marriage has not been without debate. Most notably, Auchmuty (2004, 2008) takes issue with the equality argument in light of the patriarchal nature of “marriage” and the radical Feminist movement that directed significant attention to exposing the oppressive nature of marriage on women. The tension remains between the desire for equality and acceptance versus the debate surrounding assimilation into heteronormative society and disregard for oppression of women through marriage (Bibbings 2004, Harding 2008).

1.5 Legal Consciousness – Civil Partnership Act

In review of the web-survey responses (questions 12 & 13) that focus on the benefits and disadvantages of civil partnership it has become evident that there remains significant issues surrounding the legal consciousness of the respondents. When I employ the term “legal consciousness” I am seeking to ascertain the level of knowledge within the respondents to the CPA. This is not to be confused with responses that aspire to see the CPA be subsumed with marriage, but responses that clearly state an impact or benefit of the act that does not exist in the statute. This unfamiliarity with the actual legal changes made by the CPA may be influenced by many factors. Some of these factors could be the large media attention paid to the creation of the CPB in all aspects and the final implemented CPA. Examples of such

coverage would include the debate surrounding the Burden sisters¹⁸ that I believe led to the incorrect statement by participant 1376415:

... In particular, a civil partnership is available for people who are not intending to be life partners, eg between siblings, and is therefore not equivalent to 'marriage'....

What is so concerning about this statement is that the CPA does not allow for the partnership of siblings, the CPA has prohibited degrees of relationship which means blood relatives are prohibited from partnership and that the CPA seeks to address the union of same-sex partners not any two individuals of the same-sex. Furthermore, Stonewall UK went to great lengths to debate the need for an institution that provided the legal benefits of marriage while at the same time was not marriage. There seems to be a need for further study into the legal consciousness of the population of the United Kingdom in reference to the CPA now that it is the law and not a theoretical possibility (Harding 2008).

I must make it clear that my paper is not about legal consciousness, as an independent methodology of my analysis to answer: What if any “social harm” is caused by the denial of same-sex marriage under the Civil Partnership Act 2004? However, my social harm approach does involve an acknowledgment and integration of the views and attitudes of the respondents to identify and determine if harm is present. Hillyard et al (2004) identifies this element of a social harm approach by stating:

... The point is that if we are attempting to measure both the nature and the relative impact of harms which people bear, it is at least reasonable to take some account of people's own expressions, and perceptions, of what those harms are! Thus a field of inquiry is (partially) defined by people's understandings, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences rather than preordained by a state. ... (Hillyard et al. 2004:20)

The field of social harm does involve the processing of narratives from individuals to assist in the evaluation and determination of harm that indicates

¹⁸ See Sloan, B. The Burden of Inheritance Tax, Cambridge Student Law Review, 2007, pgs 114-117.

an incorporation of legal consciousness within the methodology. However, social harm does not seek to be identified as a subset of legal consciousness but its own field that investigates the actual impact of the law not just the individual's awareness. Therefore, while legal consciousness is pertinent to the research at hand a lengthy discussion of the implications of the survey responses will not be analyzed under a purely legal consciousness analysis as advanced by Harding (2008), Ewick & Silbey (1998), and Silbey (2005).

Chapter 2: Social Harm

2.1 *Why a Social Harm Approach*

The focus of this work is to identify the possible “social harm” caused by the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) in the United Kingdom. In this paper, I use the definition of social harm as described by Hillyard et al. (2004) in

Beyond Criminology:

The principle aim of a social harm approach is to move beyond the narrow confines of criminology with its focus on harms defined by whether or not they constitute a crime, to a focus on all the different types of harms, which people experience from the cradle to the grave. (Hillyard et al. 2004:1).

The field or study of social harm arises from dissatisfaction with the confines of criminal law in determining what constitutes harm. Harm can exist outside of a criminal act. The social harm approach broadens the definition of harm to expand from only those harms that result from a crime to encompass all things that can result in harm to the individual or society. Mistakes, accidents, safety issues, misinterpretations, policies, environmental hazards, and laws (to name a few causes) can all result in harm though most of these things do not constitute crimes (Hillyard et al. 2004:18-21). The social harm approach can focus on basic human rights, equality, and justice that cannot be dealt with in a criminology approach that typically seeks to identify an individual as the cause of a crime and individual punishment as a remedy (270-271).

Ward (2004: 84-87) has addressed the state as a source of harm. Such harm can be a result of state policies that in their application can create inequality and produce immoral outcomes. Ward (2004: 95) points out persecutions and restrictions placed on non-heterosexuals by the state that produces an inability for non-heterosexuals to live out their sexual identities in

a free and open manner is a form of social harm. Hillyard & Tombs (2004) further support the idea of the state as a source of social harm when they discuss the dynamic between the state and its citizens:

Thus a focus on harm could have benefits for local and national states – though we have to recognize that such a focus would present a potential threat to these states, since state activities (or inactivities) are likely to be highlighted as sources of harm. (Hillyard & Tombs 2004:21)

The Civil Partnership Act is a policy of the state (Westminster Parliament). However, the state's action, while seeking to alleviate disparity in treatment has created a basis for social harm through the continued denial of universal equality by the use of the term "civil partnership" rather than marriage. The state's actions are not limited to the nomenclature selected in the CPA but extend into the realm of sexuality.

The intersection of sexuality and social harm has been discussed by Bibbings (2004, forthcoming 2009). She addresses heterosexuality as a source of harm in perpetuating the notion of non-heterosexual practices as the deviant behavior (2004:226, 2009). The hetero-dominance persists while homosexuality continues to engender negative attitudes from society at large as being un-natural and wrong (226 citing Yang 1997). Bibbings argues in

The Heterostate: Hegemonic Heterosexuality and State Power :

Consequently, anything which is identified as being nonheteronormative (including any behaviour perceived of as a deviation from this culturally constructed standard) tends to be denied, rejected and repressed by the state apparatus. This heterosexual hegemony concerns sex and gender as well as sexuality and seeks to create and reinforce a moral consensus around the "natural" binary order of men and women in all things. (Bibbings forthcoming 2009).

Same-sex marriage is one such behavior that is denied, rejected and repressed by the state while allowing for the alternative, civil partnership.

2.2 From the “Homosexual” Offences to Civil Partnership

The progression of the legal treatment of homosexuality and homosexual acts by the state (United Kingdom) is important in understanding a social harm analysis of the Civil Partnership Act. This movement toward “gay” tolerance began with the shift from the criminalization of the homosexual through regulation of homosexual acts, to benchmarks along the way to civil partnership (gay equality?). While civil partnership is a significant advance, it has been argued that such an advance allows for renewed control of homosexuals by the state (Bibbings forthcoming 2009). The concern of the CPA creating increased control and discrimination over nonheterosexuals is evidenced in the following web-survey responses.

If people prefer to not disclose their sexuality e.g. job application, being in a civil partnership makes it obvious, may encourage discrimination. 1374987P

It publically labels you as gay/lesbian. Not a lot of people want this, and would rather keep such an orientation private. Also other members of the public don't particularly want to know either. Its still considered taboo, and people find it hard to accept. Disadvantages are external to the relationship. 1371611P

Others have said that it provides a ready list of gays should any future Government wish to persecute homosexuals. 1379240P

There is further argument that assimilation of gays/lesbians into the mainstream (hetero)model through the CPA controls the overall impact of this once criminalized group (Harding 2008, Auchmuty 2008, Bibbings forthcoming 2009). While the counter argument is that as long as the state continues to utilize a “separate but equal” system of partnership recognition based on the sex of the individuals involved, there is a subordinate status given to homosexuality that produces harm. It is this harm that is beyond the control of what is criminal but which impacts the day-to-day lives of the individuals

within the United Kingdom that must be addressed. Some background into the historical progression toward gay equality in the UK provides assistance to this argument.

The modern history of the “fight for gay equality” begins with the establishment of the Wolfenden Committee in 1954. The conclusion of the committee was that a consensual act between consenting adults (21+) in private was not a matter to be addressed by the courts. This was the first step in removing the illegality surrounding homosexual acts. With the passage of the Sexual Offences Act in 1967 the partial decriminalization of sex between men was a reality, however the age of consent was still set at 21 and not 16 as for heterosexual sex. Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) prevented advertising or promotion of a homosexual lifestyle that was clearly enacted to maintain the hegemony of heterosexuality in the United Kingdom. The concern most likely was that even though homosexual acts between consenting adults were no longer criminal, the government should not condone the promotion of what is seen as deviant (Bibbings forthcoming 2009). The current state of affairs is that homosexuality as it relates to consenting adults has now been brought in-line with the heterosexual age of consent of 16 as of the year 2000. With the repeal of s.28 with the Local Government Act 2003 it appears that homosexuality has been accepted as something to be tolerated by the state (Bibbings forthcoming 2009). The Civil Partnership Act is seen by some as a giant leap forward in recognition of equality in the United Kingdom. However, it can be argued that while the CPA provides for recognition of same-sex couples and to some degree removes

the lingering stigma of “pretend families” from s.28; it does not provide true equality and subordinates the civil partnered to second class status.

Also, although the Civil Partnership Act 2004 has allowed for the formal legal recognition of same-sex relationships, with accompanying rights, here too heterocentric views endure as civil partnerships stop short of being named “marriage” and the distinction is not merely one of nomenclature. Consequently, wedlock is reserved for the ideal relationships between a man and a woman (to the exclusion of all others) and civil partnership is a form of ‘pretend’ family relationship (see further Stychin, 2006; *Wilkinson v. Kitzinger*, 2006; Harding 2007). More fundamentally, the introduction of civil partnerships can be seen less as a liberatory measure and more as a reinforcement of heteronormativity as it merely replicates (albeit poorly) the marriage model (Auchmuty, 2004; Barker 2006). (Bibbings forthcoming 2009)

The move from criminalization to gay equality (or not) resulting in civil partnership provides support for the use of social harm as a method of analysis to determine the impact of the CPA.

2.3 Marriage vs. Civil Partnership

So what is in a name? That is probably the most important question when comparing marriage and civil partnership under a social harm analysis. The reason that a name, nomenclature, or terminology can be so important is the value attached to it by society at large. While it can be debated that marriage itself is in decline and cohabitation is on the rise in the United Kingdom¹⁹ it remains that marriage could be called the gold standard as it relates to couple recognition and status in society (Auchmuty 2004,2008; Bibbings 2004,forthcoming 2009; Hull 2003). Furthermore, the addition of the identifier of civil partnership or “civilly partnered” to applications and other documents which require/request disclosure of personal information makes it readily apparent that the individual is a nonheterosexual. There is consensus among academics that marriage is more than a word (Auchmuty 2004, 2008,

¹⁹ See Self, A. ed.; Office for National Statistics, *Social Trends No. 38*, 2008 with special attention to Chapter 2, Households and Families with direct reference to partnership at pgs 19-22.

Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2003, Hull 2003, Harding 2008, Bibbings 2004, forthcoming 2009).

Even though the expressed aim of the British government's proposals was to offer lesbian and gay couples a form of legal protection equivalent to marriage, it is clear to me that marriage is more than simply a set of legal rules. It has symbolic significance that exists beyond, and sometimes in spite of, the legal and material reality. Marriage confers upon individuals the highest social status and approval. That is what makes the concept of registered partnerships or civil unions qualitatively different from marriage, even if, legally speaking, they guarantee the same rights. (Auchmuty 2004:102)

Nearly half of the respondents felt that legal same-sex marriage would provide legitimacy for same-sex relationships in the broader society, would put same-sex couples on equal footing with straight couples, or would at least force straight society to recognize the existence and seriousness of committed same-sex couples. (Hull 2003:638)

Thus the current proposals, while an improvement, maintain marriage as the privileged preserve of the other-sexual by excluding the same-sexual and effectively penalising other-sex couples who do not espouse the truly heterosexual union. (Bibbings 2004:228)

The quotes above display that there is truly a difference when it comes to "marriage" versus "civil partnership" however this belief is not held only within the confines of feminist, gender, and sexuality scholars but also within the words and statements of the respondents to question 10 of the web-survey.

10. Do you believe marriage and civil partnership are equal? (Where equal means they provide the identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the individuals involved)

Different only insofar as marriage is a long- standing institution whose gravity civil partnerships cannot yet match. 1376632P

I believe they should be equal but they are not. The very act of having a civil partnership makes it different and therefore something 'other' than marriage. 1304203p

I feel that civil partnership is a watered down version of marriage – to keep the church happy – and so will not be seen as equal by the general population. 1376090P

No – the terminology is not rally important. However I believe the wider public perception is that they are not equal and that CP is a sop to gay people. 1373896P [sop = small bribe]

No – they are not equal, marriage will always have more status and confer more rights. Civil Partnership should be made more equal. 1376180P

There's legal equality, but social equality is harder to determine. I think that is an individuals puts value on the term "marriage" as being something more socially upstanding then there will not be social equality. Personally I don't

care about the difference and the word “marriage” is just a label, but this doesn’t stop people making value judgements based on this label. 1383167P

The statements by survey participants make it clear that there is something to the word “marriage” and its related place in society that makes the use of civil partnership an issue post-implementation. While it may have been a clever means of bringing about the passage of the CPA it appears that a formal equality argument still remains. Wilkinson and Kitzinger made such an argument when they sought to have their Canadian marriage recognized as a “marriage” and not a civil partnership. Auchmuty (2008) explains the formal equality argument and its rate of success.

Their claim was thus one of *formal* equality. As civil partners, Wilkinson and Kitzinger have all the rights, responsibilities and privileges of marriage. But they do not have the name. Without the name, they argue, they lack the status of marriage. Different is not equal.

... it seems that equality claims have tended to advance women’s cause most successfully because, in a patriarchy, difference (from men) tends to be seen as inferiority (to men), and different treatment tends to leave the status quo untouched and unquestioned. The same is probably true for other disadvantaged groups – it is usually better to go for inclusion than separate provisions. (Auchmuty 2008: The petitioner’s reasoning)

While the debate surrounding inclusion and assimilation remains, there are still significant ways in which the Civil Partnership Act 2004 varies from marriage.

The CPA while mirroring marriage does not conform on all aspects. In review of both the web-survey responses and the relevant scholarly literature it has become evident that civil partnership does vary from marriage to a significant degree (Bibbings 2004, Auchmuty 2008, Stychin 2006). The primary difference, which is discussed by both academics and web-survey participants, is religion. Does religion play a pivotal role in the recognition of long-term commitment and at the same time is something lost to the strict

demands of CPA with regards to the exclusion of anything religious from the process of recognition?

... it is more productive to consider how civil partnership departs from that institution [marriage]. At the formation stage, partnership is achieved through the signing of the civil partnership document, but there is no exchange of vows (s. 2). Nor may a "religious service" be used at the time of signing the document (s. 2(5)), and registration may not take place in "religious premises" (s. 6(1)(b)). Both points raised some concern on the part of the Church. The Lord Bishop of Oxford argued that the absence of vows makes partnership a rather empty vessel – it insufficiently replicates marriage.⁶ ... But these provisions are clearly designed to counter claims that this Act creates same-sex marriage. (Stychin 2006:82-83)

These questions have not been explored in great detail (through empirical research) however it appears that religion, as a part of the commitment is something desired by numerous voices. The web-survey provides the following examples.

A civil partnership can become more of a legal binding than that of a proclamation of love and unity ... It also can take away the religious aspect of a union and again turn it into that of a more legal ceremony unlike the marriage equivalent when it may be wished by the couple to be married in the eyes of their religious beliefs than that of the legal system. 1289996P

By naming one marriage, and one civil partnership a difference and distinction is made and I don't think there should be one. ... For those who are committed Christians or any other religion, it also precludes them from tying the knot in the church. 1381949P

The second area in which the CPA departs from marriage is in the requirements associated with consummation and dissolution. A civil partnership does not require consummation for validity of the partnership. However, it could be argued that such a requirement is a throwback to patriarchy and historical grounds for divorce such as inability to procreate. More importantly, adultery is not a ground for dissolution of a civil partnership, which creates issues surrounding the dynamics of the relationship to be recognized under civil partnership. It seems absurd to me to think that "adultery" cannot occur between same-sex partners and lead to the dissolution of a civil partnership. Returning to Bibbings (2004) and heterosexuality as harm, it would appear that such a recognition only supports

the sentiment that the only recognized form of sexual intercourse is penetrative (penis/vagina) hetero-sex. Stychin (2006) supports this view in his note on the Civil Partnership Act.

There is a noticeable absence of two concepts which have been historically central to the institution of marriage: consummation and adultery. Both are described as having “a specific meaning in the context of heterosexual relationships” which cannot be “read across” to same-sex relationships (Department of Trade and Industry 2004, pp. 35-36). This absence in legislation – and the coy explanations that accompany it – provide a useful illustration of the continuing centrality of penetrative intercourse in the way in which the law *constitutes* heterosexual relationships. ... This provides the most significant way in which lesbian and gay relationships remain unassimilated to an unchallenged norm of heterosexual marriage. (83)

While marriage and civil partnership are to mirror one another there still remains differences which provide support for arguing that trying to fit a “square peg through a round hole” by cutting off the corners is not the most appropriate means of addressing past injustice and discrimination.

In conclusion, I have been able to identify three major areas which contribute to the identification of possible social harm in the CPA. I have called these three areas “themes of harm” and can be identified as: (1) concern of the CPA creating increased control and discrimination over non-heterosexuals; (2) civil partnership is viewed as a lesser (2nd Class/ subordinate) status than marriage by either the participant or society; and (3) inability to include religion/religious ceremony in civil partnership registration. The narrative survey responses will be evaluated for the presence of these themes to conclude whether or not possible social harm results from the CPA.

Chapter 3: Empirical Research – Civil Partnership Web Survey

3.1 Introduction and Survey Construction

To investigate possible social harm as a result of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) it was necessary to conduct empirical research. Commentary and discussion about the CPA was predominantly focused on pre-implementation with little if any discussion of its impact in practice. A survey was created in order to gain demographic information on respondents as well as any perceived advantages or disadvantages of the CPA.

The survey was developed to be short and easily manageable which would allow for ease of completion on the part of the respondent. It was limited to 15 questions of which two questions were open response allowing for narrative analysis. The survey was Internet based and hosted on the **B**ristol **O**nline **S**urvey (BOS) system that allowed for the collection of responses without direct contact with the researcher. The survey was composed of five sections that were broken into multiple questions in each section.

The sections were²⁰:

1. Demographic Information
 - a. What age group do you belong to?
 - b. Where are you currently taking this survey?
 - c. Please state what country / location you define as your residence?
2. Gender Identity & Sexual Preference
 - a. Sex recorded at BIRTH
 - b. What is your gender identity?
 - c. What is YOUR sexual preference?
3. Long Term Relationship Questions & Attitudes
 - a. Are YOU currently in a long term relationship? (relationship greater than 6 Months)

²⁰ Refer to appendix for a complete copy of the survey and possible responses.

- b. Have YOU been in a long term relationship? (relationship longer than 6 months)
 - c. Do you believe in a formal recognition of long term commitment? (civil partnership or marriage)
 - d. Do you believe marriage and civil partnership are equal? (where equal means they provide the identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the individuals involved)
 - e. Do YOU believe same sex relationships are **less real** than opposite sex relationships? (Please select BOTH (1) yes OR no then (2) discuss the selection in the other section)
4. Civil Partnership Advantages & Disadvantages
- a. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible BENEFITS or ADVANTAGES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.
 - b. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible DISADVANTAGES or NEGATIVES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.
5. Where did YOU hear about this survey
- a. Where did you hear about this survey?
 - b. What web address did YOU use to access this survey?

The questions were predominantly closed response questions that would then allow for analysis under SPSS 14. The open response questions were analyzed by hand and were typically short statements to multiple sentences in length. I created the survey questions with input and assistance from dissertation supervisors. In writing up this work it has become apparent that these questions are similar in nature to work conducted by Peel & Harding in 2004. The survey by Peel & Harding (2007) was used to look into the legal consciousness of the gay and lesbian community in relation to civil partnership pre-implementation.

The survey was left open for responses from the 19th of November 2007 to the 21st of January 2008. During that period of time there were a total of 577 responses of which 407 were complete. The survey analysis involved

only the 407 complete responses. The respondents range in age from 16 to 101+²¹ with the majority of respondents from 16 to 30 years old. Amongst the 275 respondents within this category the dominant age group was 18-21. The survey received more responses from females than males as identified by sex at birth (Question 4) and the survey received responses from a large group of self-identified heterosexuals (46.4%), which illustrated that the survey was not selective to non-heterosexual respondents. The majority of responses occurred between January 10th and 15th 2008. The dramatic response increase is most likely linked to the newsletter sent by Stonewall UK on the 10th of January 2008 and the University of Bristol listserve emails that were sent the same day.

3.2 Ethical Considerations & Approval

When conducting sociological research, one must be aware of the ethical implications of such research on the participants, the university or organization involved, and the duty of the researcher to the field of study. Bryman (2004:505) suggests that there are four main areas in which ethical concerns arise: whether harm comes to participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception. The most important consideration when approaching this research is making sure that the study does not harm the participants. Harm in this regard is to the mental and physical well being of the participants. To this end both Bryman (2004) and Berg (2007) discuss the necessity of the participant being able to leave the study at any time, review of the survey questions with a test group, and providing debriefing to the participant. With regards to the empirical research undertaken in this

²¹ The veracity of the 101+ age response is questionable, but it is a valid completed survey.

dissertation, in hindsight, I would suggest the analysis of harm to participants needed more scrutiny. The web-survey did allow for the participant to leave the survey at anytime by closing the browser window and since the survey was anonymous there was no recourse for incomplete submissions. There were some 170 incomplete surveys. However, if a participant chose to leave the survey before completion there was no opportunity to debrief the participant. With regards to testing the survey prior to going live, it would have been beneficial to test a few more friends and associates to remove the spelling mistakes and gain additional feedback as to questions that may have been unclear. In reviewing some responses to survey questions, it has become obvious that some individuals did not understand or did not agree with vocabulary used in some of the questions. One example would be the use of the word “believe” in the question concerning the formal recognition of long-term relationships.

To address the three remaining concerns of Bryman (2004) of informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception, I would suggest that the survey did adequately address these concerns. With regards to informed consent, the participants were greeted on the main page of the survey with information concerning the scope of the survey and that actively completing the questions implied informed consent. When utilizing Internet based anonymous web-survey it would be impractical to require a higher level of consent because such consent would require the violation of the anonymity of the survey. To address the possible invasion of privacy the Law School Ethics Committee and I agreed that the survey should be anonymous and that no identifying information would be held beyond the logging of IP addresses by the

university BOS system. This was necessary because the BOS system is designed to log and assign unique identifiers based on the ability to track respondents. However, the researcher was not privy to any IP addresses and has no means of accessing such information without the direct involvement of the BOS team. With regards to deception the survey did not seek to deceive any of the participants and was not conducted as a part of any covert research. The only possible deception was that the survey never discussed “social harm” and this was done on purpose to avoid impacting the responses of the participants.

When the research proposal was presented to the Law School Ethics Committee three main questions were raised. Since the research involved the use of human participants it required ethical review and approval. The ethical questions that were raised during the review process involved the security and integrity of the data, provider of survey services, and identification of participants. The first issue to address was the company or organization to host the online survey. Three possible candidates were proposed which included surveymonkey.com, zoomerang.com, and the **B**ristol **O**nline **S**urvey (BOS) system. All three candidates had a financial cost to their use and both surveymonkey.com and zoomerang.com were companies from the United States. In the end, with an in house survey system which had been operating for some time and the ability to have the data stored on university servers it was determined that the BOS system was the most appropriate for the research. The BOS system also allowed for ease of compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) by not sending

research data to another country, the United States, which is not on the approved list as in compliance with data protection principles²².

The second area of concern, once the survey provider was selected, was the security of the data collected and that once that data was utilized that it would be disposed of in a proper matter with regard to data protection principles. After discussions with the BOS system team, it was made clear to the ethics committee that access to the data would be restricted and that it would be disposed of properly upon completion of the research. It is important to discuss at this juncture the issues surrounding the wiping or erasure of data in a computer system. Unlike paper surveys or documents, which could be shredded or burned to remove all trace, computer data is merely over-written by subsequent data once the computer has been told the data is no longer necessary. While the survey was completely anonymous the responses until thoroughly written-over by subsequent data could be recovered with a data recovery program. However, since this data is held in the possession of the University of Bristol and on its servers it is unlikely that another individual could gain access to these data drives and seek to recover the information without the knowledge of the university. There are ethical implication surrounding the new computer age and web-survey data collection but I feel with a high level of confidence that since this survey was anonymous that any compromise of data would not prove detrimental to the respondents.

The final area of concern was the determination whether the survey should be conducted anonymously or with some sort of identifier for the

²² Under the Data Protection Act companies can have contractual agreements and data protection policies in place which allow for them to be treated under the DPA as an approved data handler even though the country of their corporation is not approved. See http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/Acts1998/ukpga_19980029_en_1

participants. The debate focused on the prevention of multiple responses by the same individual leading to the invalidation of the research data. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions asked, the final decision was that the survey should be conducted anonymously. Under the DPA it would be beneficial to not come under the collection of sensitive personal information section that requires a higher level of data protection and disclosure. Once ethical approval had been received the survey was designed and reviewed by my supervisors²³ and opened for data collection.

3.3 *Survey Respondents & Distribution Methods*

Once the survey was open to receive responses it was a matter of getting the survey in front of people to respond. Initially I targeted publications and organizations within the gay and lesbian community of the United Kingdom. Contemplation was given to confining the research to the Bristol community. However, this proved to be cost restrictive on the budget provided. It was found that with the creation of Facebook Ads that one could post an advertisement and have it published to a much larger population for less money and with a higher response rate. The initial construction of the Ad was rejected as it was found to be in violation of the Facebook Ad rules (does not allow over capitalization [IMPORTANT]), after revising the advertisement it was approved and ran from December 2007 to January 2008.

²³ The supervisors for this dissertation were Lois Bibbings, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Bristol and Professor Harriet Bradley, Sociology, University of Bristol.

Figure 1: Facebook Ad: 1st Attempt (Left) Approved Ad (Right)



In addition to Facebook the survey was also advertised in DIVA magazine in the letters section.

Figure 2: DIVA Magazine, Issue 140, January 2008



The other organization that assisted in the research was Stonewall UK. It distributed a link to the survey in the January 10th 2008 email newsletter that greatly increased response rate. The email language is reproduced below.

NOTICE BOARD

Civil Partnership Research

The University of Bristol is conducting research into civil partnerships. The online survey is **completely anonymous** and takes only 10-15 minutes to complete.

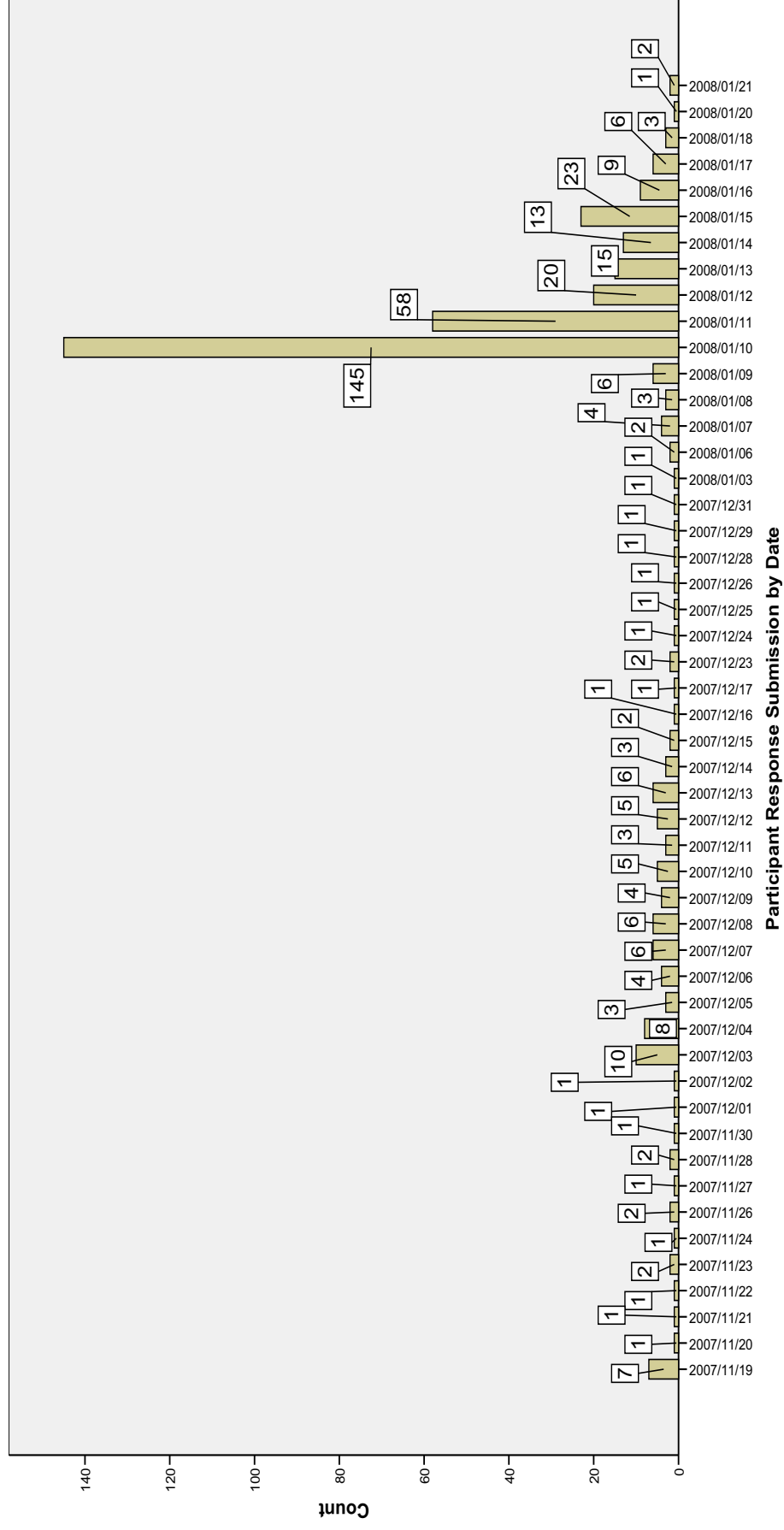
To take part or for more information go to
www.civilpartnershipsurvey.co.uk

The assistance of Stonewall UK is greatly appreciated and I would state that I have in the past been a contributing member of Stonewall UK. The Stonewall UK email considerably increased response numbers and also supports the position that electronic correspondence is a better avenue for survey response than hard copy such as DIVA magazine that required the reader to return to a computer to complete the survey.

The final method used in tandem with the Stonewall UK notice was distribution to the departments at the University of Bristol. Utilizing the diligent work of an associate on the MSc programme, Tanya Palmer, I was given the email addresses of the individuals who controlled the departmental listserve. After writing an email and inviting the departments to review the survey and distribute it, the response rate to the survey also increased dramatically. The reception of the survey was mixed with some departments not finding relevance to their programme and other departments requiring different procedures for distribution. However the departments that did distribute the survey link were a great assistance in this research.

The combination of avenues of distribution did suggest that the internet is an effective means of distributing a survey and receiving valid anonymous responses. As previously stated, the survey did receive a total of 577 responses of which 407 were complete. The majority of responses were between January 10th and January 15th 2008. The survey completed on January 21st, 2008.

Figure 3: Participant Response Date (n=407)

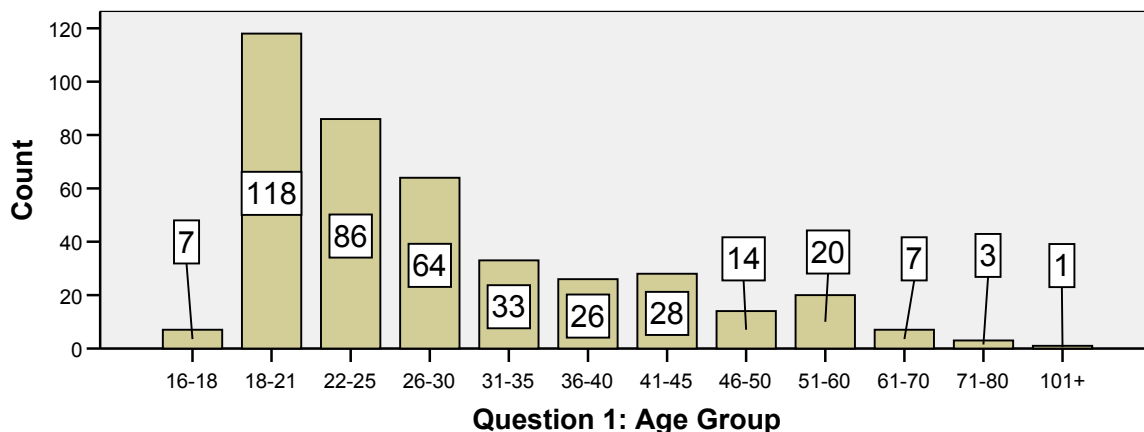


Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Results – Civil Partnership Survey

The web-survey was utilized to identify possible social harm as a result of the Civil Partnership Act. However, the survey not only provided insight into possible social harm but also into the efficacy of Internet based research. The responses of the 407 participants were exported from the BOS system and imported into SPSS 14 to allow for analysis and re-coding as necessary. However, SPSS was not utilized for the two open response questions (12, 13) which were analyzed by hand, looking for the presence of social harm through the identification of recurrent themes of harm. I define such themes of harm as the expressed: (1) concern of the CPA creating increased control and discrimination over non-heterosexuals; (2) view of civil partnership as a lesser (2nd Class/ subordinate) status than marriage by either the participant or society; and (3) inability to include religion/religious ceremony in civil partnership registration. The groundwork for the social harm analysis of the narrative responses was established in Chapter 2. The results will be presented in graph form, where appropriate, and comments and analysis will follow each graph. The analysis of the narrative responses will be discussed separately after question 15.

4.1 Age of Participants

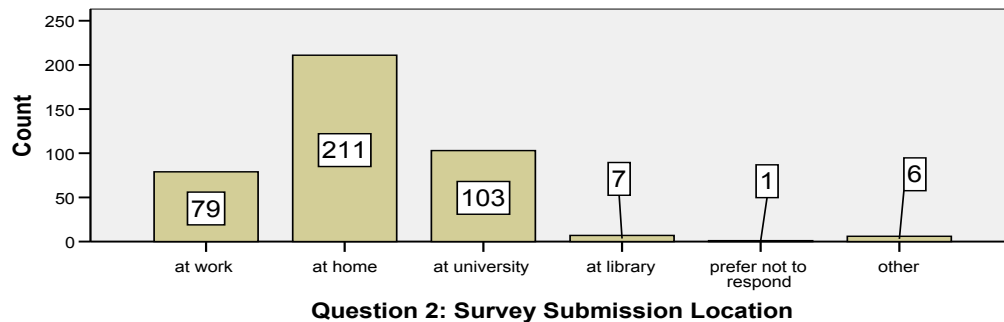
Figure 4: Age Groups of Sample (n=407)



The survey participants were asked to self-identify by age groups instead of entering their actual age. The rationale for this was to add ease to the data manipulation and also that the actual age of each respondent was not relevant to the overall analysis. The results show that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 16-30 years old (275/67.6%). While reviewing this age data, it was discovered that an overlap existed in the age categories, i.e. 16-18 and 18-21 year olds. This does not appear to impact the analysis as it relates to the identification of possible social harm. Requiring deeper review is the reach of the survey to age groups not traditionally reached by internet surveys. These groups would include the participants above the age of 31 and with specific reference to this survey there was a considerable showing up until the age of 60. Mustanski (2001), Binik et al (1999), and Riggle et al (2005) all typically hold the view that most survey respondents when it comes to internet based research in a university environment is predominantly “the science of the behavior of sophomores” [Mustanski (2001) citing Reips (2000) citing McNemar (1942, p.333)].

4.2 Survey Submission Location

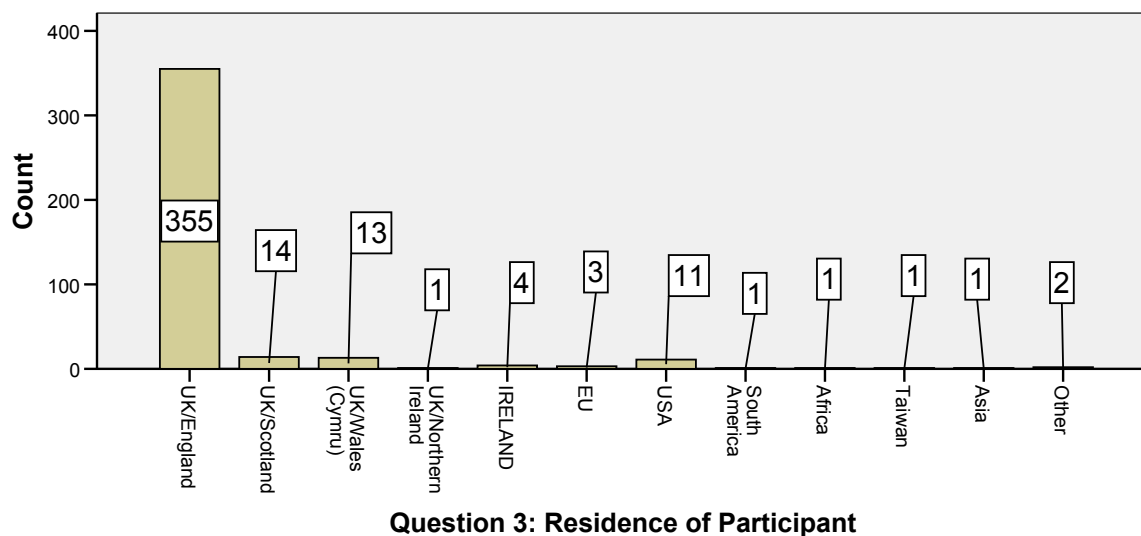
Figure 5: Current Location of Participant ($n=407$)



The survey submission location was requested to identify areas at which individuals access the internet. Previous research by Mustanski (2001), Peel & Harding (2007), Binik et al. (1999), and Riggle et al. (2005) discusses to varying degrees the location at which individuals respond to academic surveys in relation to the nature of the survey. The individuals that responded to this survey predominantly utilized home internet access to complete the survey. This correlates with the trend that most individuals desire to review emails about surveys and topics of a personal nature at locales other than the workplace or other publicly shared computing facilities.

4.3 Residence of Participants

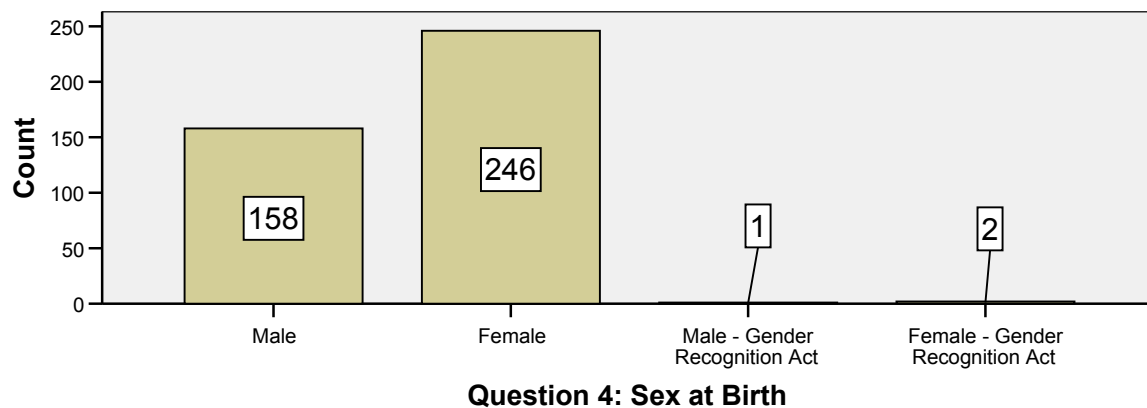
Figure 6: Residence (n=407)



The residence of participants was requested in order to determine the reach of the internet survey and as well to provide insight into the audience that responded to the survey. This survey was predominantly targeted at the United Kingdom because the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) has specific significance to that country. Out of the total number of participants (407) some 94.1% (383) of the respondents were from the residences of interest (UK – England, Wales, Scotland, & Northern Ireland).

4.4 Sex at Birth

Figure 7: Sex at Birth (n=407)



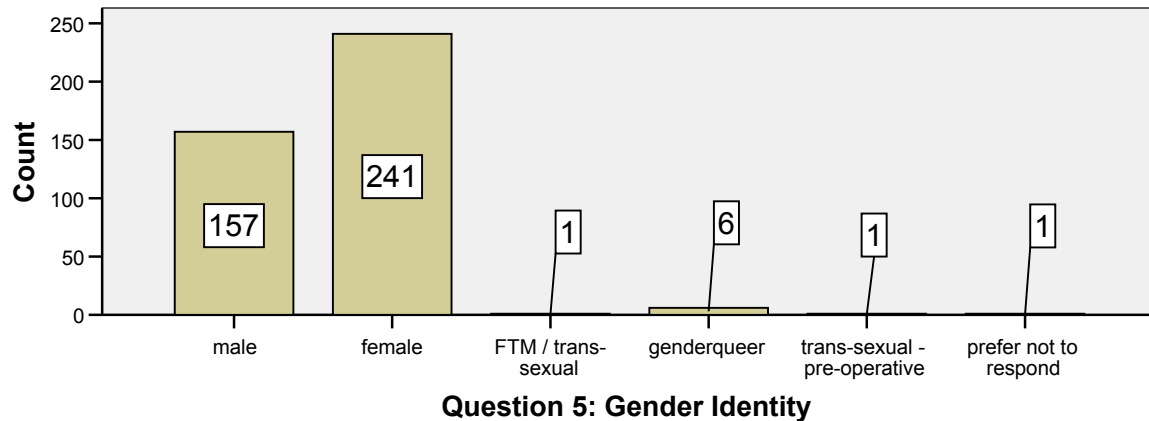
The first particularly sensitive question which was addressed to the participants was sex at birth. The categories beyond the traditional male/female also included specific categories for those who have utilized the procedures under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA). The results show that there were 3 participants who recorded that their birth sex had changed under the GRA²⁴ which shows that this legislation along with the CPA²⁵ has been utilized since implementation. The survey was completed by more women than men (248[60.9%]/159[39.1%]) respectively and does not support previous research on sexuality by Mustanski which showed a higher rate of response from the general population by men (2001).

²⁴ Note: The November 5th, 2008 Gender Recognition Panel minutes disclose that the number of Full GRC's issued through the 31st of October 2008 within the UK were 2198.

²⁵ Note: The GRA and CPA were once thought to be of little significance, at least in the Parliamentary debates, because the overall population that would utilize the two pieces of legislation was thought to be quite low. Recall that the National Statistics Office (2008) reported that between Dec 2005 and Dec 2007 some 26,787 civil partnerships were entered into in the United Kingdom.

4.5 Gender Identity

Figure 8: Gender Identity (n=407)

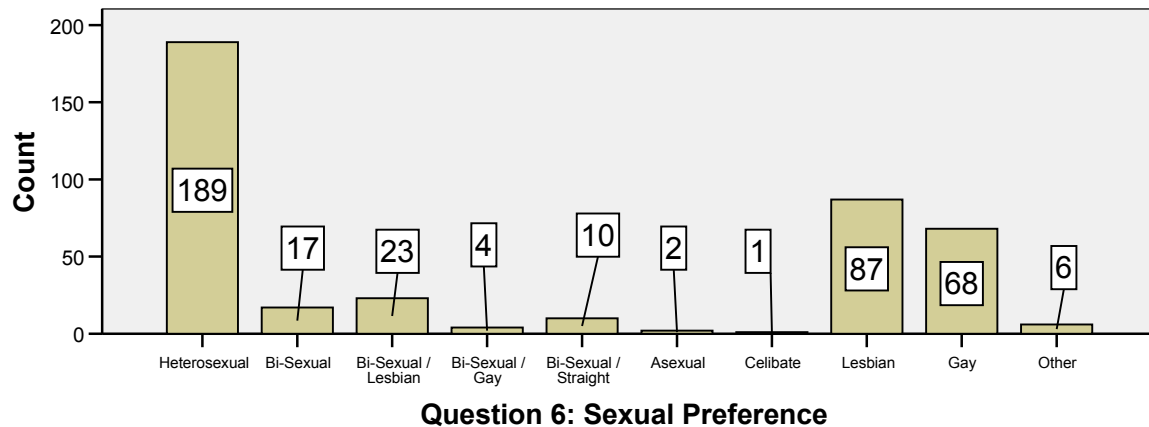


The participants were asked to self-disclose their gender identity in order to gain a more complete picture of the respondent as well as seek to discern any potential deviance from the binary male/female dynamic as conceptualized in both the GRA and the CPA. The answer choices included an “other” category which was not used by the respondents and the option of genderqueer²⁶, which was defined for the respondents, was used only 1.5% of the time. The term genderqueer as defined in this survey was used to describe individuals that do not fit the gender binary as created by society. The individual typically feels that they are a mix of genders or something in-between however they do not feel that there is a need for a sex-change and therefore do not fit within the definition of a trans-sexual.

²⁶ For more information of genderqueer look at Genderqueer Revolution located at <http://www.genderqueerreolution.org> and Wikipedia which has a semi-relevant article at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genderqueer> accessed on 20th August 2008.

4.6 Sexual Preference

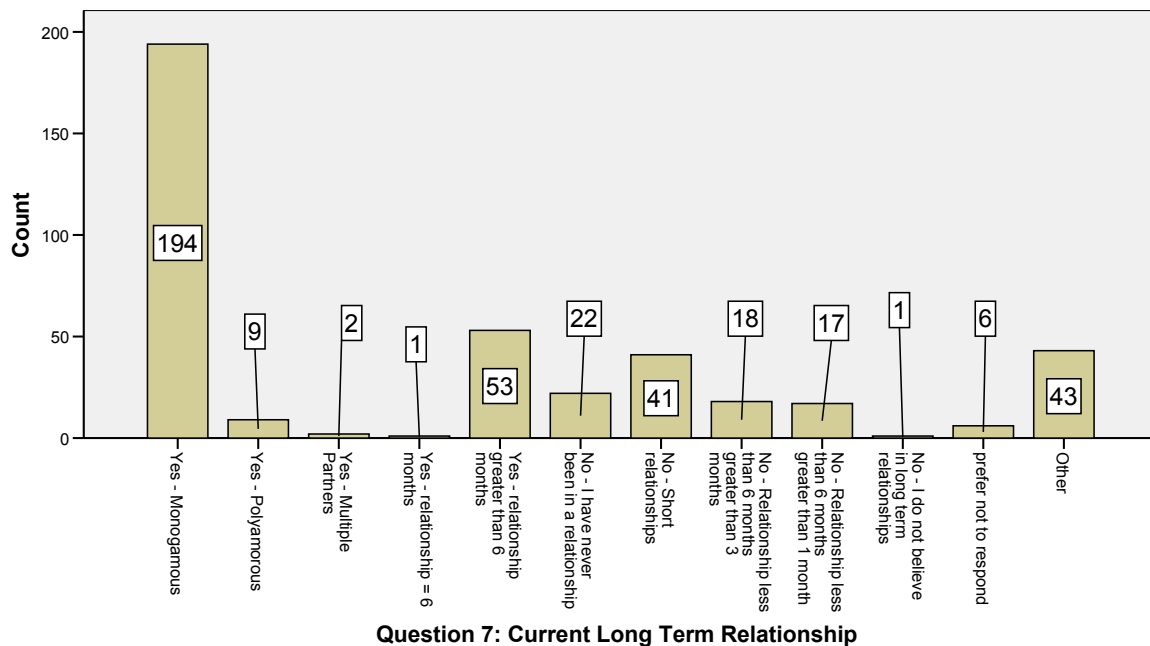
Figure 9: Sexual Preference (n=407)



The sexual preference of the participant is directly relevant to the review of attitudes towards the Civil Partnership Act 2004. It is important to note that the survey was completed by 189 self-identified heterosexuals. From these results it is clear that the survey reached not only individuals within the homosexual community of England and Wales but also a large number of heterosexuals (46.4%). The large number of heterosexual respondents was attributed to the distribution of this survey through the University of Bristol listserve and Facebook advertisement which did not differentiate on the basis of sexual orientation. The survey however did receive responses from self identified non-heterosexuals (209) which comprised more than half (51.4%) of the survey participants. Based on survey responses the likelihood of bias based on sexual preference is greatly reduced as that it appears that both hetero and non-heterosexual individuals were almost equally represented.

4.7 Current Relationship Status

Figure 10: Current Long Term Relationship Status (n=407)



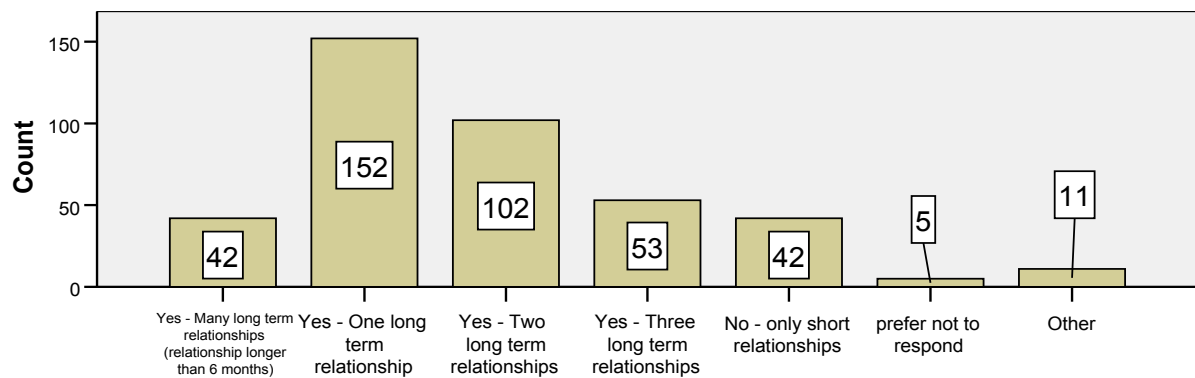
7. Are YOU currently in a Long Term relationship (relationship greater than 6 months)?

A question concerning the current relationship status of the participants was utilized to associate the responses given concerning civil partnership with actual experience. Throughout the pre-implementation discussions on the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) it was made clear that this act was intended to recognize “long term” same-sex relationships, even though the CPA does not delineate the actual amount of time considered to be long term. I have set the time required to denote a long term relationship in this research as greater than 6 months. To that end, it was necessary to identify if the participants had such “long-term” experience when stating an opinion regarding civil partnership. Short-term same-sex relationships are not intended to be recognized under the CPA even though marriage does not utilize language of long/short term. The majority of the respondents (63.6%, 259/407) are currently in

some form of long term relationship. The “other” category was utilized to a higher extent than in previous questions and predominantly this response was used to state that the participant was not currently in a long term relationship but had been previously. In the future, it might be beneficial to state that the next question was going to ask about “previous” long-term relationships.

4.8 Past Long Term Relationship Status

Figure 11: Past Long Term Relationships (n=407)



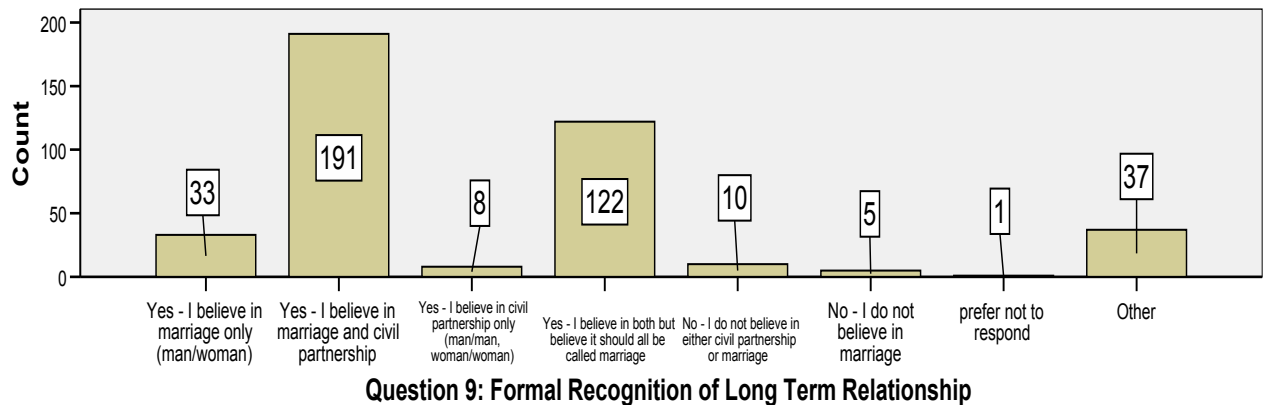
Question 8: Past Long Term Relationships

8. Have YOU been in a Long Term Relationship (relationship longer than 6 months)?

The existence of past long term relationships was used to identify if the survey participants had experience with what has been classified as the relationships eligible for civil partnership. While the CPA does not have a time requirement outside of the 15 day notice period, also required in marriage, the long term nature of the relationship was stressed as a rationale for recognition by Stonewall UK and other organizations during the pre-implementation phase of the CPA. A majority of the respondents (88.2%, 359/407) had been previously in a long term relationship which lasted 6 months or longer.

4.9 Formal Recognition of Long Term Relationship

Figure 12: Formal Recognition Long Term Relationship (n=407)

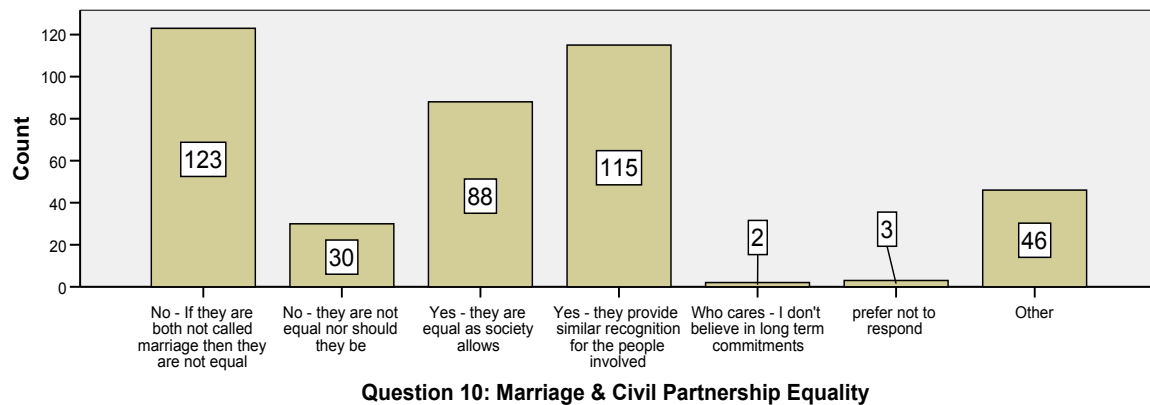


9. Do you believe in a formal recognition of long term commitment (civil partnership or marriage)?

The issue of formal recognition (legal recognition) of relationships between individuals whether same sex or opposite sex was put forward in order to identify any possible discontent with the creation of a two path system to recognition based on the respective sex of the partners. The survey results show that more individuals (191) believe in both marriage and civil partnership than individuals that believe in both but desire for such recognition to be universally called marriage (122). Wright (2006) suggests that with the creation of the CPA the move for universal marriage may be set-back as the governed feel that the matter has been addressed. Since the rhetoric and reality is that the CPA “mirrors” marriage, what is the necessity of pushing for same-sex marriage? The responses to this question cannot substantiate or invalidate Wright’s findings, but several narrative responses actually call civil partnership a stepping stone, a move toward, or 1st step in the process towards universal marriage.

4.10 Marriage and Civil Partnership Equality

Figure 13: Marriage & Civil Partnership Equality (n=407)



10. Do you believe marriage and civil partnership are equal? (where equal means they provide the identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the individuals involved)

To further investigate the attitudes of the participants in the survey, a more direct question about marriage and civil partnership was posed concerning the equality of the two forms of legal recognition. In calculating the responses for No - marriage and civil partnership ARE NOT equal, there were a total of 153. With regard to Yes – marriage and civil partnership ARE equal there were 203 responses. The “other” responses (46) which were narrative in nature were reviewed and for the most part these responses indicated that marriage and civil partnership were NOT equal (34 out of 46). Revising the tally of Yes and No responses to incorporate the “other”; the final calculation is a total of 187 (No) and 208 (Yes). An observation can be made that the survey participants are closely divided on the issue whether or not civil partnership and marriage are equal.

The first indication of possible social harm is evidenced in the responses to this survey question. This evidence supports that civil partnership is not of equal

status as compared to marriage in the minds of many respondents. A significant reason for this inequality in the narrative responses was society and culture.

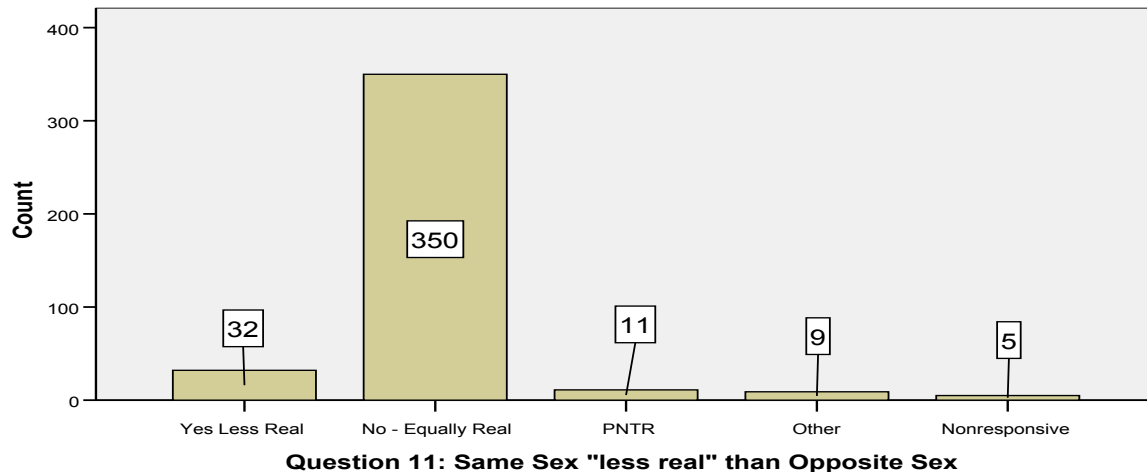
As yet they are not considered equal by society and there are some clauses that favour marriage over cp, but to all intents and purposes most people call cps marriage anyway. Yu'd hardly say "they are civilly partnered". 1353376P

They provide broadly legal equality. Cultural equality is a different issue.1373419P

Support for inequality as a source of social harm was previously described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation by Auchmuty (2008) in her discussion of *Wilkinson v. Kitzinger*. Thus, I have identified the existence of possible social harm through this question.

4.11 Are Same-Sex Relationships “less real” than Opposite-Sex Relationships?

Figure 14: Same Sex “Less Real” than Opposite Sex Relationships (n=407)

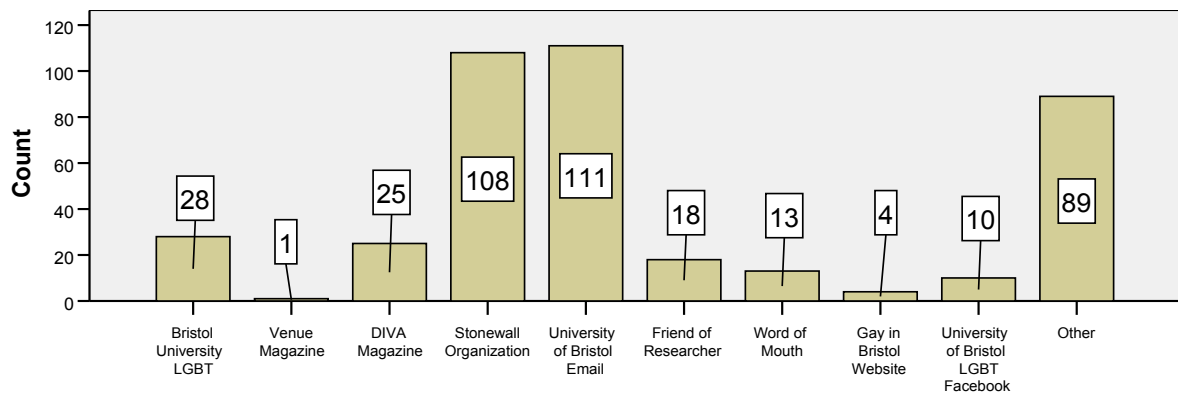


11. Do YOU believe same sex relationships are **less real** than opposite sex relationships? Please select BOTH (1) yes OR no then (2) discuss the selection in the OTHER section.

To identify possible bias on the part of survey participants the question was posed concerning the personal belief of the participants as to the validity of same sex relationships. The question was left ambiguous with the use of the term “less real”. The question was not asked to offend the survey participant but to identify any possible bias. On the technical side, the question posed coding problems in the analysis as the **B**ristol **O**nline **S**urvey (BOS) System allowed for multiple responses as the researcher requested that participants answer both “Yes/No” and to explain the response. This created unexpected re-coding and the final categories created are in the above graph. If the survey participant checked all the boxes or a combination which would NOT be logical the decision was made to classify such responses as “non-responsive”, there were only 5 such responses. The results provide support for the determination that amongst the survey participants same sex relationships are viewed to be just as significant as opposite sex relationships by most respondents (350/407).

4.14 Where did the Participant Hear about the Survey?

Figure 15: Where did the Participant Hear about the Survey (n=407)

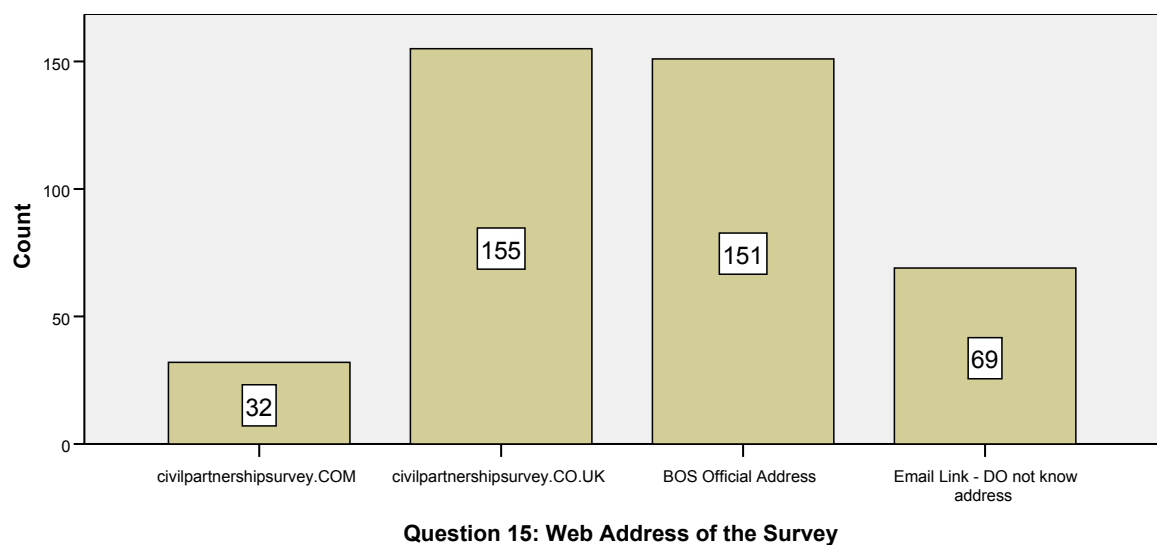


Question 14: Where did the Participant Hear about the Survey

The nature of internet research and the ability to reach individuals who previously either would not have participated in the survey or would not have had an opportunity to participate requires analysis of effective methods of survey distribution. To that end the participants were asked where they heard about the survey to assist in identifying the best methods of distribution. The results display the effective nature of the use of the University of Bristol listserve as well as the addition of a link to the Stonewall e-Bulletin which was sent out on January 10th 2008. The “other” category by a large margin consisted of participants who reached the survey via the Facebook advertisement. The prospect of using Facebook was not anticipated when the survey was written, therefore, there was not a category for Facebook. The nature of Facebook also allowed for the targeting of UK Facebook users which at the point of ad placement was well over 6 million. When conducting internet research electronic links are more beneficial than printed media as evidenced by, the Stonewall UK e-bulletin, Bristol University listserve, and Facebook Ad that all utilized clickable web-links to access the survey.

4.15 Web Address of Survey

Figure 16: Web Address of Survey (n=407)



The ability to conduct research via the internet creates issues concerning the ease at which a participant can access the survey. To that end, the researcher purchased two web addresses for the survey:

www.civilpartnershipsurvey.com & www.civilpartnershipsurvey.co.uk

The two web addresses were purchased to allow for a more memorable and easier address to be entered to access the survey than the official **B**ristol **O**nline **S**urvey (BOS) system which was:

www.survey.bris.ac.uk/law/civilpartnership

The participants were asked as a final question what web address they utilized to access the survey. The different web addresses were used to accommodate individuals that assumed the survey was located either at a UK specific internet address “.co.uk” or a more universal/American “.com” address. The one issue with this technique was that Facebook Ads required that the survey link be the actual BOS official address in order to comply with the advertising rules of the website. This information is provided to further discuss the effectiveness of distribution methods in Internet research.

Analysis: Narrative Responses of Survey Participants

The open response questions concerning the beliefs or opinions of the participants with relation to the perceived benefits (Question 12) or disadvantages (Question 13) of civil partnership contributed a personal insight unattainable through closed response questions. A majority of respondents stated the advantages were tax and other legal benefits of recognition similar to those conferred in marriage and that formal recognition provided validity of the relationship to others and/or society. However, some of the narrative responses to Question 12 proceeded to discuss disadvantages of civil partnership versus marriage. I believe this occurred because the survey participants did not realize that Question 13 was to address the disadvantages of civil partnership. Thus the responses in 12 and 13 were inter-mixed and will be reported together.

Question 12: Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible BENEFITS or ADVANTAGES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.

Question 13: Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible DISADVANTAGES or NEGATIVES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.

4.12 & 4.13: Selected Narrative Responses Depicting Possible Social Harm

It is appropriate to present selected responses from both Questions 12 and 13 and discuss the relation of these narratives to the possible presence of social harm. Recall that the narrative analysis will proceed with attention to the three major themes of harm which are: (1) concern of the CPA creating increased control and discrimination over non-heterosexuals; (2) CP viewed

as subordinate to\ less than marriage; and (3) inability to include religion in CP registration.

Theme 1: Concern of the CPA creating increased control and discrimination over non-heterosexuals

... I see no reason why all unions should not be called and recognised as marriage. I don't like the fact that people feel we need a different name for a same sex marriage. It doesn't seem that far from proposing that mixed race marriages ought to have a different name to same race marriages and that would be insulting to larger areas of the community and never be proposed. ... this seems to be a similar argument because there is still a lot of stigma surrounding same sex marriages/relationships as there was for mixed race marriages/relationships but if people made no distinction between the two then there would be less stigma surrounding the issue. 1371661P

So long as it has a difference name it segregates people by their sexual orientation which, as something I believe you do not choose (in the same way you do not choose to be left or right handed), it is wrong to do so. 1372172P

The only disadvantage I have personally come across is when asked about my marital status. I consider myself to be married, but by having to say I'm in a civil partnership, it immediately identifies me as a lesbian. I'm proud to be who I am but there are still a great many places where I feel it would be safer for me to be more discrete about that. 1373861P

... My main objection to calling them by different names is that it highlights a difference in the way homosexuals and heterosexuals are treated. If we insisted that only white people could be married and blacks had to have civil partnerships this would rightly be denounced as racist. 1371572P

1: many straight people don't have the foggiest idea what 'civil partnership' means. 2: In our society, 'equality' mean formal equality; this is an entrenched, normative view and very difficult to reverse. 3: a two-tier system is discriminatory 4: Article 12 of the ECHR is about the "right to marry", not the right to enter into a civil partnership 5: it leads to misunderstandings...for example, I recently purchased a new car, using credit. When filling in the credit application form, the car saleswoman asked me "are you married or single?" I responded "I am in a civil partnership" (my partner was with me at the time) She said "Is that like 'single' then?" I said: "No, it's like married" 1373038P

With reference to Chapter 2 in this dissertation, Ward has stated that anything that makes the lives of non-heterosexuals unable to be freely expressed causes harm. In accordance with the first theme which is about inequality and the potential for discrimination the above participant narratives bring to the discussion identifiable harm. This supports the argument that the CPA post-implementation has the possibility to cause social harm. The participants also

identify that society and treatment in public is a large part of the creation of harm.

Theme 2: CP viewed as subordinate to\ less than marriage

I can see no advantages of having civil partnership as opposed to marriage for everyone. As a member of the lgbt community, I would much rather enter into a marriage on equal standing to heterosexual couples than a civil partnership. 1377226P

i think that by giving it a different name you are making it different and in our heteronormative society this particular difference means 'less equal than'. if it were equal no one would question it being called marriage. look at local authority paperwork some 2 years after the first civil partnership many do not have paperwork that has a category for 'civil partners' - it just shows it is not taken seriously. ... 1378524P

there are no advantages or benifits other than being able to say i have a fake marriage. 1309526P

Some parts of society are still to backward-looking to be able to cope with the idea of gay marriage, I don't think it would be easy to have that legalised at this stage. With civil partnership, at least the gay couples get something. 1371595P

... A civil partnership is also a very important stepping stone towards society recognising 'marriage' within a homosexual relationship. It is small enough for the more conservative individual to allow, and a big enough step towards equal rights for the gay community. 1376415P

Status is considerably lower than marriage – not worth as much in some people's eyes. 1373995P

That society perceives it (civil partnership) as second best. 1375085P

The comments above support the consensus that marriage is more than just a word. Societal traditions and history tied into marriage give it a privileged status when it comes to the recognition of relationships (Auchmuty 2008) and therefore any subordinate status is a ground for possible social harm.

Theme 3: Inability to include religion in CP registration

... A third reason to celebrate our partnership was the achievement of a change to the law for which we have campaigned since we met 33 years ago. It is a pity the established church succeeded in obliging partnerships to be formed with no mention of religion, and not to be called marriage – in our view the church loses more than it gains in that matter. ... 1374452P

Because the heterosexual union is intertwined with the concept of marriage, the civil partnership, despite giving all possible equality of rights to a couple as they would have after marriage, is seen to be lacking due to not having the added gravitas of

being recognised by the Church, however anachronistic this recognition may seem to many members of society. 1376632P

My partner would have liked to have a church ceremony but we couldn't even have 'God' mentioned in our ceremony or hymns.... 1374659P

Those who do have strong religious beliefs may not be satisfied with a civil partnership. Also due to strong restrictions they can't get 'married' where ever they want. Stricter regulations restrict civil partnerships in a way marriage doesn't. 1374376P

The significance of religion, while dismissed by parts of the non-heterosexual community, is evidenced in the above participant statements. It would appear that in attempting to successfully pass the CPA the state (Westminster Parliament) removed religion from the lives of non-heterosexuals. I would find it quite absurd to assume that gays\lesbians and the entire non-heterosexual community do not hold or maintain religious beliefs. The denial of these religious beliefs and the significance one may attach to them in recognition of a commitment has the ability to cause harm. Therefore this third theme further supports the possible social harm as a result of the implementation of the CPA.

Multiple Themes: Participants whose statements capture more than one theme

The label of marriage for same sex couples would help move forward any angst still felt towards the gay community, bringing such unions on the same level as heterosexual marriages is similar to an acceptance by society. 1372889P [**Theme 1,2**]

Marriage is accepted all over the world, it provides stability and helps couples show how committed they are. Civil Partnerships at present seem still to be all media hype and jumping on the bandwagon, its a step in the right direction but its no marriage.... CP's are a shout out of 'hey I'm gay' and Marriage is an institution not worth entering. Advantages? What Advantages?? 1320021P [**Theme 1,2**]

My partner and I are currently planning a civil partnership and, although people are supportive, we do feel that they do not take it as seriously as if we were planning a marriage. We would also like the church blessing but this is not possible which is disappointing. 1374033P [**Theme 2,3**]

And finally a participant that captured all three major themes of harm,

I got married in a Civil Partnership in December to my female partner. While it was one of the best moments of my life, it was also poignant. I have a strong spiritual belief system and not being allowed to get married in a church like any other Christian person I found to be personally insulting. Yes, we have legal rights now. But in society's eyes I think there is still a sense of "oh they are not REALLY married" or "it's JUST a civil partnership". I just tell people I got "married" – because in my opinion, that's what we did. If the legal system in this country wants to split hairs that's their problem. My partner and I are MARRIED! I think that the legal system calling it a "Civil Partnership" is cowardly. They just didn't want to deal with the inevitable backlash from small minded people. I guess it's a step forward, but it's really only a half-step because it still isn't allowing people to be viewed as equal. Equality means you marry who you choose, where you choose, in the manner you choose – not being restricted to a registry office with a silly tag like "civil partnership". 1374001P

I encourage the reader to review all the web-survey responses²⁷ with regard to the three themes of harm and see that these themes extend to a majority of the 600 or so narrative responses combined between Questions 12 & 13.

Counter Point: CPA causes no harm or should not exist

While the above narrative responses provide a significant foundation to support the argument that the CPA is a possible cause of social harm, it should be noted that some participants felt that the CPA was more than sufficient and that to them it did not cause harm. Likewise, there were individual participants who felt that the CPA and recognition of same-sex relationships should not occur. In an effort to provide a more complete view of the responses the following statements are presented.

CPA causes no harm

The main benefit is recognition by society that a CP is legal, binding and very real. There appears, by the wording of the questions, a slant on gay people disliking the fact that our union is not referred to as 'marriage'. I personally see it as a bonus that we are differentiated. ... Referring to my CP gives instant understanding. Having a CP gives protection through law, the same rights as 'married' people, pension rights, next of kin rights, adoption rights, protection of assets, protection by the law surrounding the marital home, monetary protection for the kids should a split occur. 1298605P

²⁷ Note: the complete responses to question 12 & 13 are available in the appendix

We have done it for our future security regarding property, pensions, also for the next of kin status incase my mother claims it, if I was in a bad accident, who would I want at my bedside my 20yr partner or a mother who has not contacted me in more than 10 yrs ... Although we didn't rush into it as soon as it was new law we were the first to do it in this area which is not the most accepting, we published it in our local paper & had a great response, ... I would like to think that we are given more respect due to our long term relationship & CP. 1373114P

CPA / Recognition of Same-Sex relationships should not exist

A civil partnership will never be equatable to marriage. Marriage is from God and should only ever be between a man and a women. It is important that people do not equate civil partnerships with marriage as this will demean and undermine what marriage actually is, (a covenant before God) 1373940P

Firstly, I do not believe a civil partnership should ever have equal status with marriage. ... Civil partnerships do confer some of benefits of marriage to the parties, especially legal status as a 'partner'. However, could this not simply be done as a contract? ... Heterosexual couples should get married, and others can form contracts as they like, or not. ... 1378593P

I do not believe that a civil partnership should be known as a marriage. ... 'Marriage' infers a relationship that is completely committal and is stable enough for children. I do not believe that same sex partnerships can provide the same foundation for children. Nevertheless, there should definitely be a system for same sex partnerships to commit, in a similar way to marriage. 1371582P

The Bible is very clear that God says homosexual actions are wrong. ... Some people may choose to have such relationships, but then some people choose to murder people; homosexual acts are no less wrong in God's eyes than acts of murder. It is hopefully obvious that we shouldn't have laws to allow people to carry out their desires to murder people – Why then should we have laws which recognise homosexual relationships? However, if society really deems it necessary, the advantage of Civil Partnerships is that it distinguishes between marriage (which was created by God) and Civil Partnerships (which permits that which God says is wrong). 1371521P

The four quotes above summarize views surrounding the religious nature and perceived immorality surrounding same-sex relationships. While this research does not touch on morality or whether or not same-sex relationships are any less valid it is clear that some participants still have considerable discomfort with the recognition of same-sex relationships and this can be perpetuated through the continued use of civil partnership and marriage.

Conclusions from Narrative Responses

Social harm as captured by Hillyard et al (2004) occurs in its operationalisation as much as on paper.

... The point is that if we are attempting to measure both the nature and the relative impact of harms which people bear, it is at least reasonable to take some account of people's own expressions, and perceptions, of what those harms are! Thus a field of inquiry is (partially) defined by people's understandings, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences rather than preordained by a state. Part of the 'problem' of defining social harm, then, is not a problem at all, but a positive aspect – its definition is partially constituted by its operationalisation. (Hillyard et al. 2004:20)

The narrative responses show that at the time of this survey the Civil Partnership Act in operation does create harm within society. The harm which is both a product of the moral and social acceptance of same sex relationships is not diminished by the creation of civil partnership. While the Act provides the legal framework that mirrors marriage it still represents division and with that division comes harm. The universal recognition that marriage, in name, confers on all long term relationships cannot be underestimated. While civil partnership is a step forward, granting legal recognition to same sex relationships it maintains a rift between same and opposite sex relationships that will not be removed without the action of Parliament.

Conclusion & Future Research

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA) provides the legal recognition of long term same-sex relationships. The CPA itself however, provides this recognition at a cost, the cost of the relationship being called a civil partnership. The CPA addresses many issues and fulfills some but not all of the Government's obligation to protect its citizens from social harm. What is the obligation of the government? What balance should there be between individuality and the common good? The same-sex marriage debate does not only impact the individuals involved but also the hetero-dominant establishment in ways that otherwise may be ignored. The recognition of the relationship between two individuals, who choose to share their lives with one another, impacts the stability of society. Formal recognition of long term commitments with their benefits and burdens allows for the individual to be responsible for their own welfare through a pairing structure while at the same time acknowledging the obligation of the Government. Parliament, if it desires to address the level of social tolerance to same-sex unions should realize that as long as there is a legal, political, legislative difference between unions of same and opposite sex individuals there will be social intolerance and resultant social harm.

The results of the research show that social harm is present. However, the impact of such harm is difficult to quantify since the data is limited on the impact of the CPA as the Act only came into force in December 2005. Further research into legal consciousness (Feldblum 2005, Peel & Harding 2006) is necessary as it is evident that many individuals do not know the full extent of the CPA or the benefits conveyed. The hope with this

research is that it can become one of the foundations for further research into the novel and unique legal structure created in the United Kingdom, that of civil partnership.

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Appendix

1. Civil Partnership Survey
2. Responses to Question 10
3. Responses to Question 11
4. Narrative Responses to Question 12
5. Narrative Responses to Question 13
6. Gender Recognition Panel Minutes of 5-Nov-2008

Civil Partnership Act 2004 & Society



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WELCOME -- Civil Partnership Act 2004 & Society -- WELCOME

The Goal of this survey is to assess and evaluate the level of knowledge in society surrounding the Civil Partnership Act of 2004.

The survey will take 10-15 minutes.

This survey is **completely anonymous** there will be no way to identify the respondent from the responses given. However, the responses of each individual respondent will be kept together as a bundle for analysis.

The results of this survey will be used as part of an MSc dissertation and will be analysed.

Please respond to the questions honestly and based on your actual knowledge.

By participating in this survey you are consenting to the use of your responses for research and understand that once you submit a response **you will not be able** to return and modify that response.

OTHER and WRITTEN responses given may be used in the written dissertation and you give your consent by taking this survey to such use

THIS SURVEY IS OPEN FROM 19 NOV 2007 TO 23:50 ON 21 JAN 2008 -- PLEASE RESPOND DURING THIS TIME FRAME

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Statement in Accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA)

All data collected in this survey will be held anonymously and securely. No personal data is asked for or retained.

Cookies, personal data stored by your Web browser, are not used in this survey.

this survey will ask questions concerning sexual preference and gender identity as well as questions pertaining to long term relationships and civil partnership

Please answer to the best of YOUR ability.

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Demographic Information

Questions are **mandatory** unless marked otherwise.

Note that once you have clicked on the CONTINUE button your answers are submitted and you can not return to review or amend that page.

The setup of the SURVEY system requires questions to be mandatory or optional -- if you choose not to respond to a question please choose "prefer not to respond".

However the more questions YOU choose to response "prefer not to respond" the less data their is available to process in the research.

Please understand once again that this survey is **completely anonymous** and none of your personal responses can be traced back to YOU.

Age of Respondent

1. What age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 16-18
- ☐ 18-21
- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61-70
- ☐ 71-80
- ☐ 81-90
- ☐ 91-100
- ☐ 101+
- ☐ prefer not to respond

Location of Respondent

2. Where are you currently taking this survey?

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- ☐ at work
- ☐ at home
- ☐ at university
- ☐ at library
- ☐ at public computer
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

Country / Area of Residence

3. Please state what country / location you define as your residence?

More Info

- ☐ UK/England
- ☐ UK/Scotland
- ☐ UK/Wales (Cymru)
- ☐ UK/Northern Ireland
- ☐ IRELAND
- ☐ EU -- State country of residence in Other section
- ☐ United States of America -- Which State in other section
- ☐ South America -- State country in other section
- ☐ Canada
- ☐ Africa -- State country in other section
- ☐ China
- ☐ Hong Kong
- ☐ Taiwan
- ☐ Asia -- State country in other section
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

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Online Surveys

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Questions are **mandatory** unless otherwise marked

The design of the survey system requires questions to be mandatory or optional -- therefore all questions are mandatory -- but if YOU prefer not to answer please choose that option.

Sex Recorded at BIRTH

The sex that was recorded at birth on an official government documents.

4. Sex Recorded at BIRTH

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male - Gender Recognition Act
- ☐ Female - Gender Recognition Act
- ☐ prefer not to respond

Gender Identity

What you recognize your gender or gender identity to be

5. What is your gender identity?[More Info](#)

- ☐ male
- ☐ female
- ☐ FTM / trans-sexual
- ☐ MTF / trans-sexual
- ☐ genderqueer
- ☐ transgender - male
- ☐ transgender - female
- ☐ trans-sexual - pre-operative
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

What is YOUR Sexual Preference?

Please choose the best description of your sexual preference or use the **other** option if your preference is not listed.

6. What is YOUR sexual Preference?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Bi-Sexual
- ☐ Bi-Sexual / Lesbian
- ☐ Bi-Sexual / Gay

- ☐ Bi - Sexual / Straight
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Celibate
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

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Online Surveys

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This section concerns attitudes and opinions towards long term relationships and institutions such as civil partnership and marriage.

all questions are **mandatory** unless otherwise noted by the survey system -- once again if you desire not to respond please mark accordingly.

YOUR Relationship Status

7. Are YOU currently in a Long Term relationship (relationship greater than 6 Months)?

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- ☐ Yes - Monogamous
- ☐ Yes - Polyamorous
- ☐ Yes - Multiple Partners
- ☐ Yes - relationship = 6 months
- ☐ Yes - relationship greater than 6 months
- ☐ No - I have NEVER been in a relationship
- ☐ No - short relationships
- ☐ No - relationship less than 6 months greater than 3 months
- ☐ No - relationship less than 6 months greater than 1 month
- ☐ No - I do not believe in long term relationships
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (please specify):

8. Have YOU been in a Long Term Relationship (relationship longer than 6 months)

- ☐ Yes - Many long term relationships (all greater than 6 months)
- ☐ Yes - One long term relationship
- ☐ Yes - Two long term relationships
- ☐ Yes - Three long term relationships
- ☐ No - do not believe in long term commitment
- ☐ No - only short relationships
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (please specify):

9. Do you believe in a formal recognition of long term commitment ? (civil partnership or marriage)

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- ☐ Yes - I believe in marriage only (man/woman)
- ☐ Yes - I believe in marriage and civil partnership
- ☐ Yes - I believe in civil partnership only (man/man,woman/woman)
- ☐ Yes - I believe in both but believe it should all be called marriage
- ☐ No - I do not believe in either civil partnership or marriage
- ☐ No - I do not believe in civil partnership
- ☐ No - I do not believe in marriage
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

10. Do you believe marriage and civil partnership are equal? (Where equal means they provide the identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the individuals involved)

- ☐ No - If they are both not called marriage then they are not equal
- ☐ No - they are not equal nor should they be
- ☐ Yes - they are equal as society allows
- ☐ Yes - they provide similar recognition for the people involved
- ☐ Who cares -- I dont believe in long term commitments
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

11. Do YOU believe same sex relationships are **less real** than opppsite sex relationships?
Please select BOTH (1)yes OR no then (2) discuss the selection in the OTHER section.

[More Info](#)

(*select all that apply*)

- ☐ Yes - please explain YOUR reasons in other section BELOW
- ☐ No - please explain YOUR reasons in other section BELOW
- ☐ prefer not to respond
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

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This section is an opportunity for the respondent to discuss YOUR opinion or what you believe are societies attitudes to civil partnership

What are the Advantages of having Civil Partnership ?

Please comment on YOUR personal knowledge and what you have learned from friends, family, and society.

12. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible BENEFITS or ADVANTAGES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.

[More Info](#)

your responses in this section may be used in the written dissertation -- so by answering you consent to the use of your response anonymously

WHAT are the DISADVANTAGES of having Civil Partnership ?

Please comment on YOUR knowledge and knowlege gained from society, friends and family

13. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible DISADVANTAGES or NEGATIVES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law.

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your responses in this section may be used in the written dissertation -- so by answering you consent to the use of your response anonymously

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Please Tell US - Where you found out about this survey

Where did YOU hear about this survey?**14. Where did YOU hear about this survey ?**

- ☐ Bristol University LGBT
- ☐ Venue Magazine - Bristol & Bath
- ☐ DIVA Magazine
- ☐ Gay Times (GT) Magazine
- ☐ Stonewall Organization
- ☐ University of Bristol Email
- ☐ Flyer at a Bristol Club
- ☐ Friend of researcher
- ☐ Word of Mouth
- ☐ Gay in Bristol Website
- ☐ University of Bristol LGBT Facebook
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

15. What Web Address did YOU use to access this survey?

- ☐ www.civilpartnershipsurvey.com
- ☐ www.civilpartnershipsurvey.co.uk
- ☐ <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/law/civilpartnership>
- ☐ Email Link - DO not know address

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[My Surveys](#)[Create Survey](#)[My Details](#)[Account Details](#)[Account Users](#)**Thank You for Completing the Civil Partnership Survey****Thank You**

I want to thank personally each and every individual that completes this survey as it is a great help to my research and to further research into the field of law and society.

Michael Wade Jackson
Postgraduate Researcher - MSc Socio-Legal Studies








Thank you for completing this survey.

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[My Surveys](#)[Create Survey](#)[My Details](#)[Account Details](#)[Account Users](#)Need help? Search our [knowledgebase](#):[Search](#)You are here: [Civil Partnership Act 2004 & Society Results](#) >> Results For Question 10.**Results For Question 10.**[Return To Full Results](#)**10.** Do you believe marriage and civil partnership are equal? (Where equal means they provide the identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the individuals involved)

No - If they are both not called marriage then they are not equal:		30.0%	122
No - they are not equal nor should they be:		6.9%	28
Yes - they are equal as society allows:		21.6%	88
Yes - they provide similar recognition for the people involved:		28.0%	114
Who cares -- I dont believe in long term commitments:		0.5%	2
prefer not to respond:		0.7%	3
Other (<i>please specify</i>):		12.3%	50

As yet they are not considered equal by society and there are some clauses that favour marriage over cp, but to all intents and purposes most people call cps marriage anyway. Yu'd hardly say "they are civilly partnered".

Depends what you mean by "benefits"?

Different only insofar as marriage is a long- standing institution whose gravity civil partnerships cannot yet match.

From a legal point of view they should be equal and they are not

How about: "Who cares -- I *do* believe in long term commitments"

I beleive they provide similar recognition and benefits, however do not believe they are not viewed equally in society.

I believe both marriage and civil partnership should be equal as far as law is concerned and should provide the same benefits regardless of sexual orientation, but I don't think they are the same thing.

i believe they should be equal but i don't think they are at the moment, not that well informed though in all honesty.

I believe they should be equal but they are not. The very act of having a civil partnership makes it different and therefore something 'other' than marriage.

I believe they should be equal, but at the moment, i feel they are not quite equal

I don't know enough of the details but I'd say not equal - especially since Civil Partnerships aren't always recognised abroad.

I don't understand the question.

I feel that civil partnership is a watered down version of marriage - to keep the church happy - and so will not been seen as equal by the general population.

I think there should be a civil partnership kind of thing (not called marriage) for both straight and same-sex couples. For anyone who does not go in for all the tradition and conservativeness, even inequality, associated with marriage.

I'm not familiar with the benefits of civil partnership so couldn't comment
I'm not sure if they're legally equal (I believe they are not) but because they are not called marriage they do not have the same societal status as marriage.
Marriage is a religious act and so is not the same as a civil partnership, so I believe more married people should have had a civil partnership because they are not religious.
No - If they are both not called marriage then they are not equal : rights are equal but status different
No - Not everything is yet equal, as if it were a marriage rather than civil partnership.
No - the terminology is not really important. however I believe the wider public perception is that they are not equal and that CP is a sop to gay people
No - they are not equal nor should they be : as the man/woman relationship has the capacity to make children and is therefore technically more beneficial to society.
No - they are not equal nor should they be : They are completely different, marriage is a covenant made before God. Civil partnerships are a contract made before a person
No - they are not equal, but should be
No - they are not equal, marriage will always have more status and confer more rights. Civil partnership should be made more equal
No - They are quite different in my opinion but should be recognised respectively and equally by law.
no they are not equal, but they are getting closer to parity. the name has little to do with it,
No, i don't think they're quite equal, but they probably should be.
No, not equal but not just because they're not both called marriage. The rights you get in a civil partnership are not completely the same as those in a marriage.
No, they are not equal currently, but they should be made equal
No, they are not equal, but they should be.
No, they do not provide identical and same benefits regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, that was clear in the legislation.
NO- they are not equal but they should be.
No. They are not equal but they should be
one is religious and the other isn't
Question ambiguous and answer choices do not seem to include all likely responses. As far as I know CP's give *roughly* equal rights/responsibilities to marriage - are you asking if I think this is good? (yes) Are you asking if I think they should be exactly the same in legal consequences? (yes)
See above.
There's legal equality, but social equality is harder to determine. I think that if an individual puts value on the term "marriage" as being something more socially upstanding then there will not be social equality. Personally I don't care about the difference and the word "marriage" is just a label, but this doesn't stop people making value judgements based on this label.
They are equal as society allows but this doesn't necessarily mean that they are equal
They are equal but marriage is currently only for 'acceptable' Christians, in my view. Civil partnerships are for those who are not Christians or for Christians who are not currently 'acceptable'. I pray regularly that my church will one day allow me in with complete acceptance.
they are not equal. however, i respect that some lesbians and gay men would choose civil partnership over marriage.
they are not identically equal and they should both afford the same status
They aren't equal, no, but it is not necessary for both to be called marriage to be equal. It's more the way the partnerships are viewed by government etc., and how things work out after one partner has died and so forth.
They provide broadly legal equality. Cultural equality is a different issue.
They should be different (as in q9) and both available to any genders.
They should be equal but do not seem to have the same status
They should be equal, whatever society chooses to label them.

This is covered by my answer to question 9.

Though I'm not a christian, nor am i very educated on this subject, i think marriage has more of a recognised spiritual element than civil partnerships.

Yes - they provide similar recognition for the people involved : but we do not like calling it a marrige we are much happier just to say CP, most straight people still call it a marrige though, especially those who have known us for many yrs

Yes and no. They aren't formally equal in terms of identical rights and responsibilities and the same name, but they are *substantively* equal, plus wider society tends to use the language of marriage to refer to CP.





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Yes - please explain YOUR reasons in other section BELOW: 	n/a	37
No - please explain YOUR reasons in other section BELOW: 	n/a	355
prefer not to respond: 	n/a	11
Other (please specify): 	n/a	345

"less real" is a strange description. What do you mean by "real"? Same sex relationships do exist so how could anyone possibly say they do not?

'real' is what the person (or persons) involved believes it to be. no one else can define someone else's real.

2 men or two women can can love each other as much as a man may love a woman, or woman love an man. However, I find the idea of single sex relationships between two men slightly unnatural (including bumsex), but am not homophobic.

:we have been together for 34 years. how many hets can say this?

A long-term committed relationship is a long-term committed relationship, no matter who it is with. It is not for other people to judge the rights or wrongs of what consenting adults choose to do, who they fall in love with, or what formal commitment they choose to make.

A loving relationship does not depend on gender specific limitations

a loving relationship is a loving relationship regardless of the composition

a loving, committed, and consensual relationship is real and valid, regardless of the sexual orientation of those partaking in it.

A real loving relationship is between two people that choose each other over everyone else, regardless of their gender(s).

A relationship is a relationship is a relationship. Full stop!

A relationship is a relationship regardless of gender, both involve 2 humans so are equally real

A relationship is as real as those who enter into it make it, regardless of sex etc.

A relationship is as real as you make it. It does not matter if its same sex or not. Love and feelings for another person are difficult to fake

A relationship is based upon mutual feelings between two people regardless of their sexual tendencies, thus same sex relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships

A relationship is not defined by the gender of the two people taking part but by what it consists of.

A relationship is only as real as the two involved perceive it to be, I would gladly live with the right person for the rest of my life in a civil partnership and lots of gay men and women would like to do so, but just like straight men and women, it does not appeal to everyone and some men and women of each sexual preference are less into relations and more into sexual relations sadly

a relationship that cannot biologically [potentially] produce offspring is 'less real'.
A same sex relationship is no less real than any other relationship. While they cannot have biological children together, many heterosexual couples choose not to do so either.
absolutely not, its such a rediculose idea that the two are different
All human relationship is equally pointful or pointless.
All humans have the capacity to form loving relationships of equal worth regardless of sexual orientation
All individuals, no matter what their sexual orientaton should be treated equally in the eyes of the law and in society in general.
All love is valid.
all loving relationships felt by both partners are real
all marriages and civil partnerships are equal, there is no reason why they wouldn't be
all relationships are equal they involve the same emotions and commitments
All relationships are equally real, regardless of genders of the partners.
All relationships are real, no matter whom they are between.
All relationships based on love and sex within the confines of that love are the same
All relationships between 2 people are equally as real, regardless of the gender of the people in the relationship - same sex or opposite sex
All relationships where two people love each other should be seen as real, regardless of the sexual orientation of the people involved
All the relationships are equivalent. It is not the gender that counts but the person.
all types of relationships should be respected for what they are, regardless of the sex of the people involved
Any kind of relationship is as 'real' as the next one. It is between people who want to be together, how can one type be more real than another?
Any relationship is "real" as opposed to fictional. Maybe a relationship with a same-sex imaginary partner would be less real. I don't understand the question.
Any relationship is as "real" at the people involved decide it to be. What does "real" mean in terms of relationships? Is a 2 year relationship less real than a 10 year relationship? Is a relationship where there are no children or only one child less real than one with 5 children?
Any relationship is real - if two people love each other and want to be together then, regardless of the sex of the people, it is a real relationship. So many people consider same sex relationships as less real - my partner and I are currently planning a civil partnership and have found that most heterosexual people do not consider this as real as a 'marriage'. If we want real equality for everyone than we need to make marriage available to everyone regardless of the sex of the people involved.
Any relationship that displays the same sexual/emotional response is as valid as any other. Gender is irrespctive
As for opposite sex relationships, they are based on love, devotion and long-term commitment to a single individual.
as they exist, and have simmlar emotions/physical desire etc
At the end of the day Love is love, it doesn't matter if you love the same sex or opposite, The human emotion of love does not discriminate or change if you are attracted to your sex or opposite therefore, to answer your question they are NOT less real
at times, when i think of the lack of possibility to have children, i would answer yes. however, it doesn't seem that way when you are with that person, and you can't see anything but the love you have for each other- surely that is just as real as it could be in a same sex relationship?
Because how can the gender (legal or otherwise) have any relevance to how people feel about each other?
Because I have a good lesbian friend. And we are talking often about our relationships.
Because it is still a relationship involving two people who love eachother. That is all that counts. hwo can ou say it is less real when it exists?
Because there is no logical basis for saying that a same sex relationship is lesser than a heterosexual one.
Because they're not. As far as I'm concerned there's no discussion to be had. It's depressing that this even has to be an option (though I know that people will choose it).

Because when you love someone ,you love someone no metter what sex the other person is.
Because when you love someone it doesn't matter if it is the opposite or same sex
Because, you fall in love with who you do, no matter what sex they are. Love has no boundaries
Biologically opposite sex relationships are more real and it also allows to transfer your gene by having child which is not possible in same sex relationship. And I think opposite sex relationships are more stable and carries on longer than same sex.
Both are entered into by human beings who want to love and be loved to care for the other party. This transends the sex of the other party.
Both are founded on love and mutual respect and support
Both are Real - Real is what matters to the two people involved. The same things happen in s/sex as o/sex relationships, love, laughter, rows and drama!
both generic categories are "relationships" that is, how two people "relate" to one another, which means different things (in terms of practical, fiscal, emotional commitments and understandings) to different sets of people in relationships. so to question the "reality" of one generic category over another is fatuous.
Both involve love so they are the same.
Both people still feel love for each other and that is not any less for same sex couples
Both relationships are just as valid as each other, love is a very complex emotion, but really you can't help it if you happen to be attracted to the same sex.
Both types of relationship involve two people committing to each other.
but i think most het people do
By definition a same-sex relationship for the people concerned is 'real'. The terminology here is v.poor and I think that you would have received a more accurate response if you had used an alternative phrase/word such as 'valid' or 'socially accepted'.
can you proof read your questions they are full of typo's. "less real" how can they be less real - they all exist dont they. Do you mean less meaningful, less fulfilling? less likely to produce offspring? or less valid socially/culturally. Anyway, i think they are equally valid, but probably open to more prejudice
Can't see any differences except the sexes of the "participants".
cannot have children of your own
Commitment, love, long term support and the recognition of these + next of kin status are important more so than gender of your lover.
Do I need a reason for this? It seems self evident to me.
Don't understand what is meant by 'less real'. If it means can the relationships be as loving and long-lasting as an opposite sex relationship then I believe they can.
each relationship, whether same or cross sex, is different and as 'real' as the individuals make it. no reason why same sex relationships should be less real than cross sex.
each to their own
Equal validity no difference dependant on genders
Equality on the grounds of sexual orientation is a right and needs no explaining - but as you want an explanation, its about the ability to fall in love.
equally real since feelings involved are the same
Every relationship should be judged upon its individual merits - gender of people within the relationship is irrelevant.
everyone needs and deserves love and affection. Some prefer to get it from the same sex, others, from the opposite sex. Both are equally real.
Everyone should have a right to believe what they want to believe and feel what they want to feel. If you are saying same sex relationships aren't as real as opposite then you might as well also say Budha is not as real as God
feelings of love and wanting to comit to each other does not alter just baccuse both partners in that relationship are of the same sex.
For a kick off, pick a clearer GUI for your poll. Then how's about I don't discuss my position anyway.
For the people who experience them - no. In the eyes of society - yes.

God made men and women with different aspects of his personality, and when a man and a woman are joined together in marriage, then they compliment each other as intended. Same sex relationships can't have this and are trying fill a gap in relationships with the same gender with the wrong sort of relationship.
Having been in same sex relationships I find them more real, more intense and emotional than the opposite sex relationships I've had.
Homosexuality is a naturally occurring phenomenon.
How am I supposed to answer such an asinine question?
How can they be less real? Civil partnership is a public affirmation of love and carries the same commitments as marriage.
however society leads us to believe it is so. in reality they're both as real as each other, how can they not be?
I am a heterosexual myself. Although I have no ill feelings toward homosexuals, I have hard time understanding homosexuality as real.
I am in a homosexual relationship and I find it very real...
I am not sure, it would depend more on the lifestyle (whether or not they are looking for sexual relationships for a short term pleasure, for example, or for a life commitment) of the person, not simply the fact that they are in a same/OPPOSITE sex relationship....
I am struggling slightly with the concept of a relationship being 'real'. Same sex relationships are, in my opinion, 'real' because they exist, at least on some level.
I beleive there is nothing wrong with loving someone and no-one should have the right to judge anyone elses life or who they share their own time and their bed with, shouldnt matter to anyone else who and what people get up to in their private lives unless it directly influences theirs to be upset in the process
i believe homosexual relationships are equally real as same sex relationships
I believe love is an emotion regardless of gender and isn't made any less real due to gender.
I believe same sex relationships are equally as real as one of the opposite sex. Why should gender play a part in defining whether your relationships is real or not?
I believe that a relationship between 2 people wether the same or opposite sex are both the same its still 2 people sharing their love and lives as 1
I believe that all relationships between consenting adults are real.
I believe that any union between consenting adults same sex or not, 2 or more, should be respected. I think that love transcends gender, and the 'realness' of a relationship should be defined by the quality of the interaction as opposed to gender mix/match!
I believe that relationships are equally valid regardless of the sexes of the people involved.
I believe that same sex and heterosexual relationships are equally 'real'
I believe that the love, mutual respect and support that is characteristic of a strong relationship utterly transcends such trivialities as gender and sexual orientation.
I believe that they should both be considered equally both socially and legally providing the relationship is genuine and long-term (applies to both same sex and opposite sex relationships)
I believe you love who you love and that love is felt the same independant of sexual preference
I believe you should seek happiness and not gender. I think you can have just as much of this happiness from someone of the same sex. Its no different
I belive that if two people of the same sex are in love then that relationship is as real as every other relationship there is.
I can't see a reason why they might be considered less real than opposite sex relationships.
I can't see any reason why heterosexual relationships should be considered better, since relationships are about more that procreation.
I can't tell the difference between love for a man and love for a woman - and I have experience of both.
I cant' see any reason why relationships should be less loving, or more physical, just because both participants are the same sex.
I could not comprehend how they could possibly not be as 'real'. If people feel emotions thenit is real.

I do not believe that the same stability can exist within a civil partnership, especially where children / extended intimate family are involved
I do not see how one set of relationships can be defined as "less real" than another. "Less real" implies some sense of falseness or pretence which, though it may be applicable to individual homosexual or heterosexual relationships, cannot be applied in a general way to either set.
I do not think a woman-woman relationship and a man-man relationship can be the same or as "real" as man-woman. Mainly because often they may have to hide there gay relationship from neighbours/friends etc.
I do not understand what you are trying to get at with the "less real" - any relationship to which two people are involved is "real" whether that be for a short or a long term! It is insulting to suggest otherwise.
i don't believe people choose their sexuality, theres no reason why the emotional depth is any different depending on sexuality
I don't believe same sex relationships are "less real", just less important.
I don't believe same sex relationships are less real. If the people involved feel the same love and have the same trust as an opposite sex relationship then it can't be less real.
I don't believe there is any difference in the 'reality' of one relationship compared to another.
I don't doubt that the feelings and commitment in the relationship are any different than in a heterosexual relationship.
I don't have any experience of same sex relationships, but I have no reason to believe they're any less real.
I don't see on what basis one should rank the "reality"/"quality" of relationships, i.e. why the difference between heterosexual couples and homosexual couples should give rise to discrimination
I don't think gender has any bearing on the reality of the commitment, feelings or, well, *anything* people can have with each other.
I don't think you can call them less real, i know people in same sex relationships and they seem to be just as affectionate/in love as people in opposite sex ones.
i dont see why two men or women can love eachother any less than a man with a woman, if two people are in love it shouldnt matter their gender, race etc
I feel that regardless of the sexes involved in the relationship if the feelings and emotions are the same which they inevitably will be then a same sex relationship is just as real as a mixed sex relationship.
I find them difficult to get my head around but accept them
I have been in a same sex relationship for nearly 28 years equally as good or valid as that of my parents or my partner's parents long term stable relationships.
I have been in both hetero and homosexual long term relationships, there is no difference in "realness" between either
I have met gay/lesbian people that are as in love as I am with my man, or man I've known. It's the same feeling.
I haven't had a lot of experience with homosexual relationships, in terms of my peer group so I'm not qualified to judge on the matter, and so I don't. As far as my opinion is concerned, homosexuality isn't "wrong" or any sort of ill deed so there's no reason to say homosexual relationships are any less valued than heterosexual ones. Either way, its not a subject I spend a lot of time contemplating, I take a more of a "live and let live" stance.
I live with a lesbian, and although I do not understand why she feels that way it is obvious her feelings for her same sex parter are comparable to my feelings towards my opposite sex parter.
I see no reason why the gender of either partner should matter in a relationship.
I suppose that deep down in our DNA, whether we realise it or not, we choose partners and form relationships with people on the basis of our perception of their ability to provide good genetic material for shared offspring. Therefore, relationships are made (usually subconsciously) with a view to producing offspring. This eventual outcome can normally only occur in male-female relationships.
I think if someone thinks it's less real - this says more about their sense of self-worth and self-esteem that it does about the relationship quality.
I think in the short term they are equal in the long term they aren't
I think it is often the case that same sex relationships are stronger than heterosexual ones as we have to deal with even more issues so there are additional pressures on the relationship. I love my partner very much & it annoys me when people think our relationship isn't real or as important as an opposite sex relationship. We have had a lot of issues to deal with regarding coming out to our families, co workers etc - heterosexuals don't have or understand these problems, but we are still together as firmly as ever despite the difficulties we've had to overcome.

I think relationships between any sex are as real as those between any other sex and have the right to be seen as such.
I think that how 'real' the relationship is depends on how much the couple loves one another, rather than their ability to produce offspring, which is essentially the difference between the two.
I think that marriage/civil partnerships provide legal benefits, but would prefer them to be free from cultural or religious constraints such as the production of biological or otherwise children, and so cannot see a difference. Same goes for relationships- if someone loves someone, there shouldn't be criteria they have to follow to have a 'real' relationship.
I think that same sex relationships are just as real as opposite sex relationships.. different but equally real
I would state that the sexual preference or gender identity of the individuals in a relationship is unimportant. The feelings between two people are unique and no one should be able to state or disregard feelings or challenge the viability or veracity of such a relationship -- test --
I'm a lesbian - of course I don't think that same sex relationships are 'less real' than heterosexual relationships.
If 2 people are willing to offer a commitment to each other then that relationship is as real as the feelings behind it, irrespective of the gender of the people involved.
If anything, same sex relationships can be more "real", as the two people can experience discrimination or other problems. If two people are in a relationship, gender of either person should not be something that is questioned or given a "less real" value to
if it's based on love not sex; same to opposite sex relationships
If marriage of two opposite sex relationships are allowed, why not two same sex relationships is not allowed?
If one is "less real", then by logic the other must be "more real". Definition of "real" is not included in survey therefore faulty logic or poorly worded question.
If people care enough for each other to commit to a formal recognition of long term commitment then I do not think it matters what gender the partners are.
if people are in love with each other then nothing else matters
if the people love each other it shouldn't matter what gender they are. it's the same.
If they happen then they are real, and should still be regarded as equal!
If they love each other then that's all that matters. Society shouldn't criticise that their relationship isn't 'real'.
If two people love each other and have made a commitment to each other to be in a relationship then it is real regardless of what sex those two people are.
If two people love each other that's no-one else's business, good on them
I'm in a same sex relationship and have never had such a real relationship as I'm currently in.
In many ways I think the passion and satisfaction to be found in a successful same sex relationship, given that it is so much harder to find than a heterosexual relationship, is far more intense and overwhelming than that found in a straight relationship.
in the society we live in today with such disconnection between people, I feel if you can find someone to cherish you you should take it no matter what gender they are.
It depends on the relationship. Heterosexual people are just as capable of having casual relationships as gay and lesbian people are. It seems it's a standard response for opponents of LGBT rights to say that LGBT people have unstable relationships.
it doesn't matter what sex people are if they want to make a commitment to each other. It's the commitment part which is important.
It doesn't matter who you are in a relationship with, you matter as much as anyone else
It doesn't matter who you are with as long as you love each other and are happy.
It is not possible for the reproduction of humanity in same sex relationships. With this stated same sex relationships are in my opinion not appropriate. A penis is made for a vagina not an asshole.
it is only the love and responsibility shared between the two people that matters, it has nothing to do with gender
it is purely pc and not right
It makes no difference to me who other people want to be with.
It needs to be demonstrated that different-sex relationships are somehow more real. That's very difficult to do without being sexist (ie "demonstrate that I should be attracted to men/women without prior knowledge of my medical sex")

It seems obvious to me that they're not less real. They both involve humans trying to follow their hearts. I don't believe we have any choice about our gender preference.
It's still about two people being in love and trying to make the most of it. My mother is a lesbian and I do not consider her relationships less "real" than mine
It's who you love not the sex of the person.
Its about you and the person your with, not society.
its disgusting and shouldn't happen
Its not right
its still two people committing to each other, having feelings for each other and generally being in a relationship.
Its two people who love each other. Its as real as heterosexual marriages
just because a relationship is homosexual doesnt been the parties involved love and are committed to each other any less.
Just because same sex couples can't reproduce, doesn't mean that the relationship is less real.
just because they are the same sex the love is still the same
Just because two people are of the same sex does not mean they cannot have the same depth of feelings (love, trust, etc) and commitment that opposite sex couples have. The belief of certain groups that same sex couples are incapable of real love and long-term commitment is simply untrue and in many cases results from prejudice
Just the same level of commitment.
Less real perhaps in terms of how some members perceive them but not for the people themselves, at least certainly not for me. My opposite sex relationship was less real to me than my current same-sex relationship.
Less real? Real doesn't seem to be something quantitative. Both are real and so equal.
Less real? Not sure what info you are asking about.
less real? unless I'm having a long-term halucination, I'm pretty sure my relationship is REAL. And I'm pretty sure mine is not the only one either. I can't see how any other definition of 'real'would matter.
less real? what does that mean exactly?
Less real? What on earth does that mean? I don't consider them to be of any less importance that opposite sex relationships.
Love and commitment are both just as relevant between parties of the opposite sex as they are between those of the same sex.
Love and commitment are the same whatever the sex of the partners. Both needs are part of being human.
Love and commitment between two people does not depend on gender, so there is no reason to believe same sex relationships are somehow inferior to opposite sex ones.
love between 2 people is the same regardless of the sexes involved
Love in a homosexual relationship is just as valid as a heterosexual one. I do not believe the fact that people in a same sex relationship are unable to reproduce through sexual intercourse is relevant. If it was, would the love between an infertile heterosexual couple be less real?
love is a common factor in all relationships and regardless of the gender's involved, a loving committed relationship is as real between one couple as it is the next
Love is a reaction by the heart, irrespective of what the head is telling you, whether that is same sex or opposite sex
Love is Love
Love is love end of. some partners stay faithful and treat their other half well, others do not, their orientation is irrelevant.
mean the same within in the relationship,issues with children
My relationship is stronger and more committed than that of many heterosexuals I know, but it is generally taken less seriously by others, including family members.
My view is essentially that the 'realness' of a relationship is defined by things such as love, stability, commitment, etc - none of which are defined by gender or sexual preferences.
No - a relationship is based on a commitment between two people and not a function of their gender. As long as the two people involved are able to make the commitment then it is real - it is for them and not for society.

No - but I don't agree with them
No because both types of relationship, same sex and opposite sex relationships are equal in terms of both relationships involving human beings feeling the same form of love.
no difference in intent or meaning
No I believe them to be equal. If love and happiness is found by the couples engaging in a same sex or opposite sex then that is that definite that makes it 'real'.
No less real - just different, but should be equal
No matter what a persons sexual orientation, if they love someone and believe in that relationship it doesn't make it less or more relevant if the relationship is same sex.
no not now both can have kids
no one can choose who they fall in love with so whether it is male /female .female/female.or male /male the feeling and and desires and needs r metby that other special someone
No one is more equal than any other. No one is more real than any other.
No reason why i should we're all equal
No reason why they would be less real! Love is love...
No relationship is any less real than any other. If two or more people desire to be together and all are happy then tht should be all that matters.
No seems exactly the same as when I was in a hetro-sexual relationship
No they are definitely not any less real, love is love and committment is committment whatever it's form.
no they are not and if people think they are then by whose standard?
No, because if people are in love with eachother and having a sexual relationship, it should not matter whether they are of opposite sex or same sex - I believe it is their choice, and there is no right and wrong.
No, because if that is what someone chooses, they feel the same type of feelings.
No, i believe relationships are relationships, platonic or intimate, they are all real relationships. If i thought they were less real surely i wouldnt value my female friends?
No, I was friends with a gay couple who had all the complications of an opposite sex couple, and they acted the same way as an opposite sex couple when they were in public.
No, love between two people is the same whatever their sexual orientation. Same sex relationships are as real as opposite sex relationships.
No, they are definitely not less 'real'. I find it particularly irritating when men say that sex between women is not 'real' sex because a penis is not involved.
Not at all - I think same sex relationships are just as possible, can be just as successul; although statistics probably fly in the face of this statement, as does public perception.
Not at all.
Not sure what you mean by "less real", but I can see no intrinsic difference between the two types of relationships.
Of course not - if a couple love each other then their relationship is just as valid as another couple who love each other, whether they are same or different sex couples
of course not less real, but they fit less easily into society so can be a bit confusing.
Of course not. You commit yourself to to a partner whom you love and are sexually attracted to. The fact that they have the same genitals as you is neither here nor there.
of course not; all adult consenting relationships are equally valid
Of course same sex relationships are less real because nature made men sensitive to needs of women and vice versa. Same sex relationships are against the nature and logic.
Ofcourse they are jut as real! Love is love whether its homosexual or heterosexual shouldn't matter.
oh for goodness sake. I have some philosophy training - what on earth do you mean "real"? How am I supposed to answer if I don't know?
One relationship with another person is just as valid as another relationship with another. None are superior/inferior/more or less real.

Our relationship (now civil partnership) of 10 yrs is 100% real - dont know how else to put it.
Our relationship is no different than any straight couple, even before we went through CP, all our friends treat us as a normal couple
People can experience the same feelings for another person whether they are in a same sex or opposite sex relationship, so you cannot say one relationship is more, or less, "real".
People in a same sex relationship have the same feelings and desires for their partner as those in an opposite relationship
people love/care about each other it doesnt matter
Peoples feelings are the same whether its man/man woman/woman man/women. However i believe that straight people think gay relationships do not mean as much as their so called normal ones.
Politically and practically, I think all relationships are equal, but something in me still takes lesbian relationships less seriously, even though I am a lesbian myself.
Prejudices it may be, and i never mean to offend but i do believe we are created to be with members of the opposite sex.
Reality is a matter of perception - so subjective.
Realtionships as a genearlisation are equal weatehr they are hetro or homosexual in nature.
Regardless of sexual orientation, people experience the same feelings of love. Once in a relationship, real life (work, kids, family etc)has to continue in the same fashion as any 'married' couples. There is no difference to loving a man or a woman.
Relationship defined by the feelings of those involved, therefore both sets of relationships equally valid (real).
Relationships are about love and committment, both of which men and women are capable of, whether in same sex or opposite sex relationships.
Relationships are based on feelings so they are as real or fake as the person involved. Therefore it makes no difference if the relationship is same sex or opposite sex
Relationships are not about gender, they are about two consenting adults sharing thier lives with each other
Relationships don't depend on who they're between. A man can be friends with another man or a woman
Relationships provide the same things (eg love, support, sex)for people regardless of the orientation of those in the relationship
Relationships should be defined by the persons feelings for one another only, so same sex would not be "less real" than opposite sex
same love
Same problems worries and activities. Clubbing, sex, money, bills, rent, kids (adopted, surrogate or had the str8 way), jobs, arguments, romance, love. I don't see any that don't apply to both, do you?
Same sex relationships are as real as heterosexual relationships, what matters is the quality of the people involved, not the sexual orientation.
Same sex relationships ARE as real as opposite sex relationships. if one loves another it should not depend on gender
Same sex relationships are as valid as heterosexual relationships. There is no difference.
Same sex relationships are equally as 'real' and important as heterosexual relationships. They still involve two human beings, of which focus merely on the same factors including, Love, romance, etc - therefore it does not mean that either homosexual or heterosexual relationships are less real than the other. I am aware of many people in same sex relationships that have dated for many years.
Same sex relationships are equivalent to opposite sex relationships - it is the relationship which is significant, not the orientation of those in the relationship
Same sex relationships are just as real as opposite sex relationships, people don't fake feelings.
same sex relationships are not widely recognized to have the same meaning as opposite sex relationships--there is still a stigma. but, my belief is that they should be considered equal.
Same sex relationships are often stronger than opposite sex relationships as partners have to work harder to be accepted by society.
Same sex relationships should be given the same rights as heterosexual couples.

See above.
sex/ and gender identity are irrelevant to the quality of bonds between humans - which are variable and complex. Sexual or 'lover' bonds are no more 'real' than non-lover bonds i.e. the bond between close friends- however it is obvious that people often give these bonds different status and that this is enshrined in law and custom.
simple because i can not relate to the same sex in as relational a way as i can to the opposite sex. purely personal
Some opposite sex relations (though not all) have the added responsibility/opportunity to rear children.
straight/same sex relationships are same in my eyes, same commitment is given, it is not any less real just cos its same sex
that's a really dumb question.
The are just as real, I believe only those with homphobic beliefs would say otherwise.
The closeness I share with my partner, is about as real as it gets for me.
The committment two people make together is no different, opposite sex, same sex. We make the same living arrangements, working arragements, pay same taxes, have same family networks.
The day to day workings of same sex relationships may be different, and roles withing the relationship may be blurred. However that does not mean the relationship is less real, this would be like saying a daughters relationship with her father is less real than with her mother, due to her parents sexes alone - and this I find a ridiculous notion.
The emotions felt and level of commitment expressed by same sex couples are just as "real" as those of heterosexual couples.
The emotions involved are equally compelling. However, the ability to genetically share children is not there. This has biological affects that COULD make same sex relationships weaker.
The fact that my relationships are with the same sex doesn't make them 'less real'. For me, 'less real' would be pretending to have a straight relationship. That would be the dishonest, fake relationship.
The feelings are in the heads of the people involved in both same sex and opposite sex partnership - they are both as real or as unreal as each other.
The feelings that 2 people of the same sex can have for each other can be the same as that of 2 people from the opposite sex.
The fundamental factors are the same. Love, Life and Companionship
The gender of the partners is immaterial, no relationships should be denigrated by those outside of them, nobody has the right to comment
the gender of the two people involved in the relationship has nothing to do with the degree of reality- any relationship will face the same issues and challenges.
The love between 2 people does not rely on the gender of those 2 people.
The love is as legitimate and the law now makes them both real. Bye bye Thatcher
the meaningfulness of a relationship has nothing to do with what sexuality people are
The nature of relationships is changing in society and as such the broad range that is now practised means there is large overlap between same sex and opposite sex relationships. Therefore you cannot say one is less real than the other.
The people concerned are people who are real regardless.
The question doesn't make sense.
The question is badly phrased: what is meant by "real"? All I can say is that I believe homosexual love is identical to heterosexual and that as far as society cares (it shouldn't, i am an anarchist) both should be given equal recognition and protection.
The question is not well formed. I presume that it means to ask whether I consider them of any less value, in which case my personal opinion is irrelevant as it is only the value to the people involved in them that matters.
The reality of same-sex relationships is completely self-apparent to me
The reality of the relationship does not seem to be to be dictated by the opinions of others.
The relationships are as real since I believe that the emotions felt by the people involved are equally as real.
the use of the phrase 'less real' makes me want question the person who set this survey and used such odd and misleading language. Less real... how ridiculous!

The validity of a relationship is not dependent upon the gender of the participants, but rather the quality of that relationship.
There are no differences in a same-sex relationship than in an opposite sex relationship. Everyone is human. With the capacity to love and commit to life partnerships.
There are real and less real same-sex and opposite-sex relationships; depends far more on the individuals concerned than their genders
there is absolutely no difference.
There is absolutely no value difference between same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. I view them both as equal.
there is not the same future, they will never be a proper family unit, it was never Gods plan for us to live or have relations with someone of the same sex.
There is nothing less real about my relationships! Those who take this view are prejudiced or very poorly informed.
They are as real as any relationship in reality but not treated as such by many in society.
They are as real as opposite sex relationships, the differences between the fors and againsts to all scenarios very much differs depending upon gender and age range!
They are as real as the participants want them to be.
They are as real to the people involved
They are both of equal validity. It depends on the type and strength of the relationship rather than the gender of the people in it.
They are different as a female partner offers different qualities than a male, but neither is better or worse.
They are different, but so are many heterosexual marriages. However, they should be seen as equal and think now they are.
they are equal
They are equal as far as I know. Sex is only one of the many aspect of relationships.
They are equal as long as they are monogamous and there is no "switch-hitting" going on.
they are equally valid as they're relationships between people. Of course they are real! (literally as well as emotionally - bit of a poorly phrased question here). However I think there is generally a broader understanding of what constitutes a relationship for LGB people
they are no less 'real'. people can still fall in love and have lasting and true relationships
They are not less real emotionally and in fact many long term same sex relationships are more stable than opposite sex partnerships. However as they cannot be as legally binding as marriage and do not carry the same framework, it can be construed that they are less real.
They are similar in what the two people in the relationship feel, whether same or different sex. But a vast number of people from society, especially those with traditional views that promote the 'classical' family will not see them equally 'real'.
They're not imaginary! But they are less defined.
This is a strange question. Of course same sex relationships are just as real as different sex relationships. Just because LGB people have been subject to social and legal censure since the enlightenment doesn't mean that there is anything less tangible about same sex relationships, sexual practices or emotional attachments than heterosexual ones.
This is a stupid question.
This is just plain silly - "less real", what tosh.
this is silly wording, of course they are not 'less real'. ANY relationship is real to the people involved. Your question maybe means valid, in which case the answer is, no they are not less valid.
To us they are totally as real but to many in our society our relationships will always be LESS REAL
Two people committed to each other should be encouraged and supported in that decision, regardless of gender.
Two sentient beings ,with a full repertoire of potential behaviours,plus consent and equality - WHATEVER their gender/sexual orientation - are indeed real in every sense of the word.
Unless one defines a relationship based partially on natural childbearing, there is absolutely no reason to support this premise. If one does define them as such, then any childfree heterosexual relationship is equally 'less real'.
we are all adults and should be treated with the same respect for whoever we chose to be with

We are all human beings. Whether we like same sex or opposite makes no difference to our feelings.
We have been in a same sex relationship for 30 years in my experience this has been longer than any of my straight friends and work colleagues and should have the same respect and validation as 'normal'society
we should all be treated the same... human rights
What a bizarre question, has your supervisor checked your questions?
What an horrific suggestion. They are commitments between two people who love each other, regardless of their gender
what do you mean by less real?
What is there to discuss? Why should the two be differentiated between at all? I don't see the point. We're all just people.
When God created people, he created marriage as being between one man and one woman, not any other combination (as the Bible says in Genesis 1 and 2 and Jesus affirms e.g. Mark 10). Since people are designed for lifetime relationships with the opposite sex, these relationships are, by definition, more real than same sex relationships.
When people decide to commit themselves to each other it doesn't matter who they are
when two consenting adults love each other and commit to one another, all is equal regardless of gender and sexuality
While I would never be in one myself, those who are in same sex relationships are still as committed.
Who is to judge whether a relationship is 'real' or not? If the people in it are committed to each other, not abusive to each other and both capable of deciding that they want to be together then that should be recognised.
Who people love and choose to be with makes no difference. People are no more or no less valid because of who they choose to sleep with.
Why on earth should they be any different?
Why should there be any difference in committment or feelings. We are all people.
why should they be any different
why should they be different. to me a relationship is a relationship
Why should they be treated differently?
Why would they be less real? It's still two people.
Why would they be less real? Only the two people involved in the relationship matter to that relationship.
yes because a same sex couple cannot reproduce it is not how nature intened, if it were mean't to be u would be able to reproduce with some one of your one sex. homosexuals should not adopt, because if that is the oath you choose you are choosing not to have a child.
yes, because the law and many people treat them as such. no, because there is no such thing as a non-real relationship. if you care about a person or numerous people, the fact that they happen to be the same sex, or the same/different gender identity doesn't make it any less real. i know i don't define my relationships with people based off that. it may be what attracts me initially to them, but that's it.
yes, if a relationship is recognised legally and socially, and if two people are prepared to make a commitment to each other and are able to make their relationship work then we should not judge them and do not have a right to call their relationship 'less real'.
you are in love with a person regardless of their sex. perhaps you are only attracted to persons of only one sex but you love them for who they are.
you can feel just as much love for someone who is of the same sex as you as the opposite sex.
You can't control the feeling you have towards another individual - whether they be of the same or different sex therefore you shouldn't be discriminated against
You can't decide you sexual orientation, so relationships between same sex people are no different from those who are of different sex.
You can't help who you are attracted to

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12. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible BENEFITS or ADVANTAGES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law. "your responses in this section may be used in the written dissertation -- so by answering you consent to the use of your response anonymously"

'Marriage' can still carry religious overtones that may be inappropriate to apply in the case of many relationships.

* To be legal nearest relative, thus recognised as same. eg. when dealing with health matters, financial issues, etc.

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- security in relationship and financially (eg pension/home) - a public recognition of love for each other - the beginning of building a life 'together'

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A benefit of having a system where all unions are recognised as marriage would surely benefit gay people and bring them to an equal level as heterosexual relationships. I think if all unions were known as marriage then society as a whole would be more accepting towards gay relationships.

A civil partnership is advantageous (but not more so then marriage) in the getting legal benefits, next of kin, pensions etc. for two people, be they same sex or not, and in a relationship or not.

a civil partnership is different, unique to marriage. the labels should not matter. the status the law gives to a married couple is similar to that of a cp, this should be the same.

A civil partnership will never be equatable to marriage. Marriage is from God and should only ever be between a man and a women. It is important that people do not equate civil partnerships with marriage as this will demean and undermine what marriage actually is, (a covenant before God).

Advantage is having a legally recognised relationship/commitment to each other, it's just a shame that the government has chosen to discriminate by calling it a civil partnership

Advantages are that same sex couples can show their commitment to each other.
ADvantages in terms of parenting, finance, law, pension, inheritance etc. Don't feel there is an advantage to not being called a marriage. Just makes it sound less valid. We are all born equal and one day will be recognised as such, in society and the church... though this probably won't come in my life time.
advantages of civil partnership as opposed to none are that there are property rights, rights of next of kin etc conferred within the agreement. However, i am unclear if pension rights and benefits etc are transferable between civil partners
Advantages? Legal and tax.
After 25 years in a truly committed relationship it was delightful to have a civil partnership in which our relationship was legally recognised. Peoples attitudes are often fixed and although I would perhaps like to have a recognised marriage within a church it is necessary to be aware that change takes much time and we must continue to work towards greater and greater acceptance of peoples difference
All in all, society will never necessarily 'accept' the idea of homosexual love. We will always remain the minority, but for me, i'm not sure whether that is a bad thing. I enjoy being part of a smaller set in society and if it means that we are able to commit to our partners using the Civil Partnership system, then so be it. Its much more special to have our own ceremony and a different name for our commitment. I do disagree with how it is done however. Civil Partnerships are still recognised as much more inferior ceremonies then your general 'marriage' ceremony. They should be held in churches and elsewhere and certainly should not be seen as any different to a marriage, the rules and the vows etc. Its obvious we'd never get the opportunity to stand in a church and be 'married' to our same sex partner, we all know this, but we are no different and the way the government do nothing to emphasise this using one of the most important acts in a person's life; is merely selfish and small-minded.
All our friends and family had a fab day however I don't really care what others thinks. Unless you are religious a marriage is really a Civil Partnership anyway.
allows equal responsibilities to each other. also helps when couples split.
allows people of many sexualities to have there love/commitment expressed
Allowed me to have legal recognition of my relationship.
although i do not believe marriage should be a legal matter, as i stated before, by defining queer marriage as civil partnership, it makes it less valid and recognized than man/woman marriage. benefits (should) include: not having to incriminate your spouse in court, custody and adoption are easier, power of attorney, wills and burial rituals being respected, the partnership being recognized wherever you go, easier to legally marry/separate/divorce, tax benefits and other financial/legal benefits
Although I don't mind a same sex relationship being labelled 'marriage', some sections of society do, so if it helps obtain equal rights for all relationships then call it 'civil partnership'. What matters is the day-to-day practice, not the label used to categorise it.
an advantage of civil partnerships is that it makes such relationships more acceptable which helps reduce population growth.
As a disadvantage I think that many people hear the word 'civil partnership' and don't realise what it entails; it's not viewed as being as serious or long term as marriage is. I personally believe there is no problem with same sex couples being in a civil partnership or being married, but whether it will ever be generally acceptable to call them married is another question.
As an atheist, it avoids bringing church and god into the equation which is a minor advantage (over certain types of marriage). I can't think of any others.
As far as I'm concerned it has no bearing on my foreseeable future whether the system calls it marriage or civil partnership, however, I do respect that some people of strictly atheist beliefs, or those that differ from that of the church, not wanting to be married for religious or political reasons. In this scenario then clearly civil partnerships are the best method of acquiring the legal recognition. However, it must be said, as a science student, and one not well read on the technicalities of the legal system, that I couldn't list any advantages or disadvantages of either, other than for homosexuals and those of religious or political deviations from the state.
As far as I'm concerned the only reason that a different (and, as I'm now discovering, very clumsy) title as been given for the legal union of a same-sex couple is purely to appease a religious / right-wing minority. I guess the only advantage is that it has given it a certain amount of profile during its introduction. But this is by far outweighed by it not being viewed as the same as straight marriage (which it of course is to all intents and purposes).
As far as i'm concerned, if people can get married in a registry office then its not through God as such and

it's religion that doesn't allow same sex relationships but if 2 people of opposite can get married not in the eyes of God then I think 2 people of the same sex can as well and call it marriage.
As long as there is no right for a gay couple to marry then the CP's advantage is that it gives us more rights regarding our relationship for instance if our partner died then we would legally be recognised as their partner and would have full rights as one etc
At least it's something
b
basic legal advantages. Legal Marriage is a trust of assets. e.g in the past those married would have obligations to one another, and in event of death, the spouse could inherit the money. civil partnerships are beneficial as they give those legal rights to gay couples. However, apart from adoption or grotesque genetic engineering, these couples physically cannot have children and so their rights cannot amalgamate those of different sex with regards to families.
bcbx
Being able to recognise a same sex relationship and demonstrate that commitment to another person, be it same sex or opposite sex is fantastic. I think the more civil partnerships there are, the more it is recognised and helps people to develop understanding, thus relieving some prejudices.
Benefits - The same rights as straight married people. Being able to show your love for one another to the world and not having to invent your own dodgy ceremony that no one recognises.
Better CP than nothing.
By definition marriage is a civil partnership, so by calling any other formerly arranged relationship between two persons is effectively identical. The change in lexis may make the idea of gay individuals becoming partners more palatable as it disambiguates "marriage = good 'ol wholesome boy meets girl" from "civil partnership = what they get up to": as such this is effectively a politically motivated manipulation of language.
Calling gay 'marriage' a civil partnership instead of marriage clarifies that the situation is between 2 people of the same sex. It removes ambiguity. Having civil partnerships forces people to remain more committed. It is positive for society's view of gay couples as it prevents people saying that there is not stability for children brought up by for example 2 women.
Calling it "married" or "civil" determines your preference and declares it to society.
Can't be accused of being an old married couple!!
Cannot see any benefits over and above those given by a well constructed will...
Civil Partnership does not have the historical and religious baggage which marriage does. Marriage is or has been associated with ownership, patriarchy and monogamy, none of which I want to include in my relationships. If my long term partner were female or civil partnerships were available to male/female couples, I would consider having one.
Civil partnerships whilst recognised in that way, been it is obvious to other that it is a same sex "marriage". Civil partnership can help sort out will bequests after death of one partner
civil partner ship offers a security to same sex partnerships but does not cover equality with pensions and other benefits which marriage gives automatically which is not just
civil partnership gives homosexual people chance to have formal commitment of their relationship, based on love. I feel it good. But feel it's a pity it cannot be called marriage.
Civil partnership grants same sex couple with the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to each other. More importantly, the benefits of having a legally recognised relationship grant more legal rights and security in relation to property, pensions etc
Civil partnership is a legal construct, whereas marriage is a religious response to the idea of two people being in formal union. Civil partnership is therefore an option to consider for the legal benefits of such a union—even if the two people are not "in love". Marriage relies on the premise of love between two people.
Civil Partnership is a way of having a lot of the benefits of marriage without being married under the church. It also allows same-sex unions. This is obviously beneficial to homosexual couples, and also is preferable to couples who do not identify with the church or do not believe in religion.
Civil partnership is better than nothing, but in my knowledge doesn't guarantee the same rights. For example. my personal experience tells me that a straight person can fall in love and eventually marry a foreigner even when the 2 live in different countries. A gay couple is required to "prove" they've been "living" together for at least 2 years continuously. That is impossible when the 2 live in different countries and can't be together continuously, even when they have been a couple for 10 years!

Civil Partnership provides homosexual couples with the same rights as heterosexual marriage. It provides a system for financial, property, inheritance security as well as next of kin rights and easier for partners to become adopted parents of the other partners children. I don't believe that civil partnership has any benefits or advantages over marriage.
Civil partnership system is at best a middle ground for politicians. Safe house for voters if you will. The more lax legality of it makes splitting up easier etc but complicates in terms of deaths etc. While this has been sorted under the framework I cannot see it withstanding high court rulings or public opinions if tested. Civil partnerships give certain advantages of marriage but fall short of total recognition (as I understand it).
Civil partnerships allow people to be safe in the knowledge that their partner is recognised by the law. If anything were to happen to them, their partner would be recognised and would not be over looked. It is also a way of expressing their love for someone when they are not able to marry
Civil Partnerships are a state recognition of the validity of the relationship between two people of the same sex. The debate about "marriage" and "weddings" is false because these are constructed in a religious context and the parallel should be drawn between civil ceremonies only. the benefits are around recognition and validations, partners rights and benefits as well as having to think through the cessation issues should a relationship end.
Civil partnerships are a step forwards compared to the previous situation where there were no means for lesbian and gay couples to have their relationships recognised in public and in law. I believe that the majority of gays and lesbians perceive civil partnerships as positive, even those who would prefer full marriage rights.
Civil partnerships are a way of surreptitiously identifying non-conventional unions. It is like naming your child: Tenaya-Shawanda.
Civil Partnerships do not have the same exact rights as marriage, hence why they do not have the same name. I believe both should exist for both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. If people want to have a long-term commitment but do not want to call it marriage for whatever reason, then having a civil partnership gives them that option.
Civil partnerships enable homosexual couples to make a legally binding commitment to each other which may provide very useful in various circumstances, re decisions about a spouse's medical treatment and sharing of assets, ie property. It may also help if they want to adopt children.
Civil partnerships give everybody the right to commit to one person. Since sexual preference is not a choice, any other law would discriminate against homosexual people.
Civil Partnerships give rights not otherwise available to same sex couples - things taken for granted by heterosexual couples. They give legal rights in terms of finances, health, inheritance etc. that would not otherwise be available. Without civil partnerships for example, if my partner were ill her family could legally refuse to let me see her, or keep me informed as to her status. Civil partnerships in my opinion do not make us equal to heterosexual, married couples but it's certainly better than what we had before - nothing.
Civil Partnerships provide a recognition and validity from others that affirms the status of the relationship in law. This is a powerful tool in tackling homophobia. However, the benefit of a system of 'Marriage for both opposite sex and same sex couples' would provide send a strong message on the equality of relationship status.
Civil partnerships provide a space for people who do not identify with any religion to be in a relationship that is legally recognized. Its cheaper - although essentially, one could always just go to the church with a few witnesses, it is almost always expected that a marriage will be blessed in the church, followed by a ceremony of some sort (read money). Therefore a couple could enjoy the benefits of legal unity without having to spend money on a wedding ceremony (although I recognize that this is dependent on cultural context).
Civil partnerships should be afforded the same benefits that society places on married couples--rights to inheritance, survivorship, tax breaks, sharing in wealth accumulated, etc.
CP's are an effective way of gaining equal and similar right to heterosexuals in long-term relationships. I feel they should be open to all who wish to ensure this equal treatment but may not wish to be married.
CPs deal with the legal and financial issues surrounding a committed relationship with none of the romantic crap.
CPs ought to be seen as just a bit of a commitment as marriage but isn't. When I announced my imminent CP to work colleagues they said congratulations, when another colleague announced a date for their wedding they got gifts. When a long-term relationship (CP) broke down friends and colleagues told me they were sorry, another friend's marriage broke down at the same time the same people treated with much more sympathy than me. This is not true of all my friends but even the closest of friends treat us differently without realising it. I still get letters to Mr & Mrs from school / college re: my kids after 10 yrs! Sick of salespeople knocking on the

front door asking if my husband is in.
cxz
doesn't upset the god squad
Don't know enough of the details on how the UK C.P. differs from UK M, in order to answer the question.
Entirely positive
Equal rites with respect to legal / financial business etc.
Equality Recognition Stability A new ay for the uninformed to look at gay realtionships A breaking of stereotypes
Equality before the law in pensions, health care etc.
Every long term, committed couple should be entitled to the same benefits as a married couple.
everyone can have the joy of expressing their love to someone by making that huge life-long, official legal commitment, not just heterosexual couples. People will be happier generally, and they will not have to think that something is 'wrong' with the love that they feel - ie there is nothing 'taboo' about feeling real love for someone else, and no-one should make anyone feel like there is, no matter what sex the recipient or giver of that love is.
everyone is entitled to be with whoever they want to be with and should be allowed to legally recognise that.
Far too complex to answer in full. CP is a major step towards full equality for LGBT people, but remains discriminatory by nomenclature. NB society's; beliefs
Financial security. Recognition of committed partnership
Firstly, I do not believe a civil partnership should ever have equal status with marriage. Marriage, in my opinion, is more than just a convenient arrangement regarding sharing of finances and liabilities, it also having religious significance where civil partnerships do not. Civil partnerships do confer some of benefits of marriage to the parties, especially legal status as a 'partner'. However, could this not simply be done as a contract? Why do we need something called a civil partnership? Heterosexual couples should get married, and others can form contracts as they like, or not. Call it old-fashioned, or even bigoted by some, but that's how I think it should be.
For me, the primary advantage of having a civil partnership was the ability to easily gain recognition of my and my partner's relationship for immigration purposes, as she is from the US. Obviously, this is a personal benefit! More broadly, being in a civil partnership gives our long-term relationship added security and legal recognition. It also makes it easier for us to be 'out' as we are in publically recognised partnership. I believe that civil partnership celebrations or gay marriages play an important role in allowing family, friends and acquaintances to celebrate supportive, loving relationships in the same way that they would for straight couples.
For our relationship to be recognised in law for purposes of parental responsibility, inheritance, tax, legal reasons etc. Also to prove to everyone our relationship is as sturdy as a marriage. Marriage to me has more religious connotations and I wouldn't want to be just "married". Marriage is a heterosexual institution adn now we have our own version.
For people who does not want to get married, I do understand that this might help them to get the benefits that they need or want.
For us it was very pragmatic - a matter of fairness. The benefits are that we didn't have to make an elaborate will to be sure what happened to our estate after one of us dies. We don't get stung for death duties. Pensions are sorted out. In theory at least we have equal treatment in the health service. But it should be called marriage. That's how the mainstream thinks of it whether they are for it or against it. Everyone calls it that, particularly straight people. Many forms talk about being married after initially stating that includes CP.
Formal recognition of partnership
Formalizes a commitment to each other and more importantly the legal protection it gives.
Gay couples have the same rights as straight couples.
Gives people the same rights in a civil partnership as married couples Allows financial security
Gives same-sex couples the chance to be legally acknowledged as having made a commitment to each other.
Has a good aim of trying to keep families together and to keep family values alive. Civil partnership may not be the best way to define and reward a family though. Why should a child benifits depend on the relationship of his guardians?

civil parnetship should be treated any differently to a marriage. society needs to accept that times are changing, it should be perfectly accepted by EVERYONE, love of any kind should be celebrated. advantages - bringing society up to date

have no personal experience of it

having actually attended a civil partnership ceremony in the past ithink its a beautiful thing, to see 2 pple in love in this case women and their friends and family supporting them. from my time doing A level Law i remember a case where a same sex couple lived together and when 1 passed away they did not have the same rights as a wife would have had, i didnt think this was fair and feel it is right that if 2 pple commit their lives to each other they should share the same rights. i say this and i am a practising catholic. i'm not 100% for them taking part in the sacrament of marriage but the should have the same rights by law as a married couple.

Having civil partnerships provides some recognition of same sex couples being the same as opposite sex couples, for example it will allow joint bank accounts, mortgages etc which may be harder to obtain if the couple were not married or in a civil partnership.

Having had our CP in July this year, we felt that this was important for various reasons. Firstly that our commitment was made publicly in front of people we care about and to each other. By law we now recognised as a "married" couple and are intitled to protection in the form of death, benefits etc. Also we hope to adopt and so feel it would bring more security for our children.

Having seen films like 'If These Walls Could Talk 2', the idea that one partner could be left financially vulnerable against the wishes of the other was a very upsetting one. Civil Partnerships do provide a solution to this problem, which is a huge step forward. I should imagine it makes it easy to adopt children, as it demonstrates a mutual commitment within the relationship.

I agree in civil partnerships for both affirming my love for a person and to also have the legal benefits which a civil partnership offers. The benefits can range from being able to claim more in terms of benefits etc as a married couple, to giving more legal protection to a couple or legal protection to both parties if they decide to separate. I also believe being in a legal arrangement can give a couple more reason to stay together and to try work things out since it is easier to walk away from a relationship if they're not in a civil partnership. I don't believe a couple have the full rights of married heterosexual couples especially when it comes to adopting children and the parenthood of children than are born via artificial insemination but a civil partnership would hold stronger legal ground.

I am a gay man who in May 2006 entered a civil partnership with my long term partner. Our main aim was to celebrate our love and commitment to each other in a formal way in front of all our friends. As older people - me 63, he 55 - the financial security of the remaining partner when one of us dies is very important, and a second benefit of the legal partnership for us is the financial benefits given to partners. A third reason to celebrate our partnership was the achievement of a change to the law for which we have campaigned since we met 33 years ago. It is a pity the established church succeeded in obliging partnerships to be formed with no mention of religion, and not to be called marriage - in our view the church loses more than it gains in that matter. We might have used a church and a gay priest / ess to celebrate our partnership if that had been allowed, although we are not very religious or church goers. As it was, we had a big secular celebrtion and the church lost the congregation and the fees.

I am an old romantic. If I were to ever get married, it wouldn't be to be recognised in the eyes of the law, but to make a vow to my betrothed. the only issue for me with both is the love declaration.

I am completely satisfied with the phrase civil partnership and do not wish to use the term 'marriage' for the relationship which I have enjoyed with the same partner for 43 years. In my view the word 'marriage' is by long accepted custom used for opposite sex relationships and the laws governing this respected form of union were devised to protect the expected off-spring of such unions. I do not consider it necessary or reasonable to hijack the word for a different form of union here children although not impossible are less likely. Please, please supporters of the term 'gay marriage' grow up and move on!! It's as tedious an argument as that I recall about the 'fitness for purpose' of the word gay vs. queer.....No wonder the world at large frequently queries our suitability to have any fresh legislation for advance our various sauses!

I am in a civil partnership and did so to a) show my committment to my partner b) give my friends and family the opportunity to recognise us as a 'valid' couple and c) for legal protection re: next of kin and inheritance rights. I would prefer the partnership to be called marriage and most of my frinds call refer to us as 'married'. As far as we are concerned they are the same thing, however, I do understand that there are differences in tax and legal issues.

I am married myself and there are certainly some legal benefits to being married - and I see no reason why these shouldn't be extended to same sex partnerships which are long-term/serious enough for participants to want them formally recognised. The word marriage implies a male/female relationship and so if same-sex partnerships were also called this, some mis-assumption may result. Other than that, I see no reason why the

two unions should not be called the same thing.
I am not aware of the actual benefits of marriage or civil partnerships and how they differ in law. I have heard that marriage allows for favorable tax benefits and makes it easier to get a mortgage, and that civil partnerships provide similar advantage. As marriage traditionally has a religious connection, I believe a system with civil partnerships, which avoid this, are preferable. As an atheist I would not seek marriage, but would like the advantages.
I am not entirely aware of the technical differences between marriage and a civil partnership, and so couldn't comment on any legal differences. From a moral/personal point of view, I don't really see what difference a different *name* makes. Part of the reason for the name change, as far as I understand it, is to appease more conservative people who feel that a marriage is between a man and a woman. This is perhaps a sad reflection on society, but at the same time maybe a workable compromise.
I am not especially familiar with the complexities of Civil Partnerships. Accepting this limited knowledge, I believe the concept of the partnership to allow same-sex couples to formalise the status of their relationship to be a good thing. However, I do not see why these partnerships should be seperated from marriage.
I am not sure
I am not well familiar with the law and with its advantages, if any over marriage, nor do I have much real life experience in the matters.
I believe all people should be able to marry who they want, if 2 people love each other why cant they be married. I think its wrong that the law stops gay/lesbian people from being properly acknowledged for loving someone. No-one should ask about other peoples sex life nor should they opinionate on others' lives and how they choose to have them. The law should allow any HUMAN BEING to marry whoever they want regardless of sex. It is a sham that it is not considered to be a marriage when straight people could do far worse things in bed than a gay/lesbian partnership. I get confused when straight people get married and when gay/lesbian 'marry' because the bible says so WHO RUNS THE WORLD??? PEOPLE OR BOOKS???? we accept it in society so why cant the government???? BENEFITS - everyone is equal, or should be? so why isnt this? The other partner is actually a partner not just on paper, Same rights are given to all around the globe. ADVANTAGES - more acceptance in society, the integration of society and understading and well needed education about these matters.
I believe civil partnership gives some of the same benefits as marriage (e.g. partner can be considered next of kin) but doesn't have all the same financial benefits as marriage. I'm not clear on the details though.
I believe Civil Partnership is a good thing because it means the relationship is recognised by law and society, so for example, they are recognised as next of kin in emergency situations and can make decissions that are more in line with what the other person wants. However, I do not believe that a Civil Partnerships should ever be reffered to as 'marriage', as this is a religious bond between man and woman.
I believe it is a good thing, because you are recognised as a couple.(long term) It is a lifelong commitment to each other. You get same benefits as marriage, so tax, living, children
I believe it is a way to show the world that two people of the same sex are committed to each other.
i believe it is beneficial to anyone to have an individual as their emotional outlet in life and someone who can be relied upon fully.
I believe it provides greater security for those involved.
i believe marriage is an important step in a relationship, and means more than a civil partnership. im not religious, but i dont think you have to be anymore for marriage to mean something. to me being married implies a larger commitment to the relationship than a civil partnership.
I believe most of the benefits are legal and especially financial but these benefits only accrue to people in very specific types of lover and famillial situations [monogamous couples and nuclear families]. these include in inheritance, responsibilities and security in parenting, decision making in cases of injury and death etc. I think there may also come to be liberal benefits of assimilation in the future recognition of certain types of lesbian and gay couple and family relationships of a specific type from wider society... e.g. more acceptance "see they are just like us darling". They should also offer some further protection for specific types of parenting arrangements i.e. two mummy households From my experience so far the benefits are much more pronounced for middle and upper class lesbian and gay couples. There are also emotional benefits for some lesbians and gay men who have wanted recognition for marriage type bonds and who personally have found security and validation from this legal status. A good example being older laesbains and gay men who 'came out' before 1967 and see civil partnerships as a dreamed of legal milestone they never thought possible
I believe same sex couples should be granted the right to marriage and that the idea of civil partnerships is a political compromise to offend some groups (mainly the religious) as little as possible.
I believe that a traditional nuclear family is the best environment for children to be raised and is the basic

building block of a happy, tolerant and strong society. I also believe, therefore, that society and its laws have a duty to recognise and reflect the necessity and importance of marriage. I also believe that people who do not fit the traditional 'building block' (eg gays, lesbians, bisexuals) can and do contribute a tremendous amount to society and that people with an inherently different perspective are also vital to a happy, tolerant and successful society. I believe that couples (two people) of such individuals should be allowed to make a lawful commitment to each other such as a civil partnership which guarantees many of the rights and privileges enjoyed by married couples (eg next of kin). Civil partnerships are important to the happiness of the people who make them. Marriage is important to the happiness of married couples BUT ALSO vital to a strong and happy society.

I believe that any long term partnership, involving two consenting adults who love each other deserves to be recognised as marriage.

I believe that any partnership should be recognized in the manner that the parties prefer. Using two separate names furthers the notion that they are not the same and should be treated as different entities. It points out the differences rather than celebrating the commitment, which is what it should be. One possible benefit, however, could be that society as a whole might accept "civil partnerships" long before they will accept marriage for same sex partners.

I believe that civil partnerships and marriages should have the same name eg marriage or partnership. Giving a different name is a way of identifying a civil partnership is not as important as a marriage and identifies those in a partnership as 'different'. Giving all the same rights is a positive move.

I believe that Civil Partnerships should be referred to as a Marriage. Two people, regardless of gender or sexual identity are committing to each other. There should not be a distinction because of this. It is obviously an advantage to have same gender relationships recognised in law but there are still some shortcomings.

I believe that civil partnerships simply allow same sex couples to have the same rights as opposite sex couples and as everyone is equal that should be a given in life. Civil partnerships also may promote less transient and sex-orientated homosexuals and decrease the stereotype that all gay men and women like is sex. Hopefully it will increase the number of serious relationships and give young gay men and women better role models and aspirations and hopes for relationships too.

I believe that if you love someone and you are formally together then you should have the same benefits as marriage. This way, they will get the benefits.

I believe that in a society like ours today which is developing quickly and is becoming more and more open and welcoming of same-sex partnerships, civil partnerships are ideal, and actually serve to keep a form of harmony in society. Those who want to commit themselves to their partner as an eternal vow can do so, regardless of their sexual orientation. However, upon allowing civil partnerships to take place, it is essential that the government then views both marriages and civil partnerships as equal under the law. Therefore, policies which relate to married couples should apply in the case of a gay couple, joined in a civil partnership and a straight couple unified in marriage. However, I do not believe that at present it would be right to conduct civil partnerships in churches. It should be the choice of the church to decide when and if this will happen. Equal opportunities is important and it is important to promote a society which is inclusive and doesn't tend to homophobia. However, with a delicate issue such as this, it would be unwise to punish religious leaders for refusing gay couples to marry in a church. Benefits as already mentioned are the fact that people can make a commitment to each other no matter what their sexual orientation. Even though some people (be they religious or not) may be against it, as a general rule, society will be happier. If civil partnerships were to be recognized equal to marriage, then of course it would be essential that the government applied all policies of marriage to civil partnerships.

I believe that marriage is a rite of the Church and should only apply to those who wish to marry in Church. All other 'marital' relationships should be deemed 'civil partnership', whether same sex or opposite sex. This would please many in the straight community and be seen to give equal status to gay and straight relationships. Civil marriage would cease to exist..

I believe that marriage should be a religious commitment and should only take place in a church. Any ceremony at a Registry Office is automatically a civil union and should be called the same whether it is same sex or opposite sex. The recognition by the State of same sex unions via civil partnerships is important because it sends out a message to society.

I believe that the civil partnership system has advantages in that it recognises the life commitment of two people. I think it should be kept separate to marriage, as the word marriage to many people has religious connotations that some people may want to keep separate from their union.

I believe that the only reason civil partnerships are not called marriage is because some people think they have the right to interfere in other people's lives. So the only "benefit" is those sad people will hopefully not complain as much

I believe that where a Civil Partnership exists between two men or two women in a relationship that mirrors the type of relationship that in the heterosexual community leads to marriage, then the Civil Partnership

should be called marriage. However, I think there is room for Civil Partnership agreements for people not in a sexual relationship (eg two sisters living together in the long term, or two people not related but living together in the long term) and these people who make some sort of a commitment to each other should have the some rights that marriage confers (eg inheritance and next of kin recognition rights)
I believe the civil partnership system is good because it will cause less controversy than if it were recognised as marriage, especially with Christians (Catholics in particular).
I believe the legalising of civil partnerships to be one of the most important liberal acts by a government in my lifetime. People should be able to make a legally recognised commitment to each other in this way. It is good that inheritance and "next of kin" rights are now accorded to civil partners.
I believe there should be equal recognition for marriage and civil partnership - civil partnership provides same sex couples with this chance
I believe that if you're in love with someone nothing else matters
I believe that we should all be equal whether we are gay or straight, after all we are all the same at the end of the day... civil partnership should be changed to marriage... gay relationships are no different to a marriage... people go into marriage because they love each other, why to people think it is wrong for the same sex to love each other, if you ask me it's clear discrimination, something should be done about it.
I can see no advantages of having civil partnership as opposed to marriage for everyone. As a member of the LGBT community, I would much rather enter into a marriage on equal standing to heterosexual couples than a civil partnership.
I can see no benefits of the CP system over 'gay marriage' apart from that it seemingly placates political opposition.
I can't see any
I can't see any advantage for the individuals entering into a civil partnerships. The only reason I believe that civil partnerships were introduced as opposed to widening marriage to include homosexual couples was through fear of causing offense to more conservative elements of society.
I can't see any advantages?
I can't see any benefits of having 'civil partnerships' over 'marriage'. I don't see the point in classifying the two ceremonies differently.
I can't think of any benefits or advantages to it being a civil partnership rather than marriage
I cannot answer this question as it is formulated. I can however say that civil partnerships have finally allowed same-sex spouses access to very important rights that were never in question under marriage (such as the sharing of duties related to children, belongings etc).
I cannot see any advantages that civil partnership has over marriage. I don't want to be treated differently from anyone else. I am not different to anyone else. If I marry a man I have one set of rules, laws and legal names yet if I marry a woman there is a totally different set.
I cannot see the benefit of this. We need a system that is not discriminatory to any parts of society.
I do hope you're doing some proper in-depth interviews as well as this survey. My views are the standard, slightly libertarian, pro-queer package. Yes, CPs are a Good Thing. I'm glad they're there. I could imagine becoming part of one. However, I have no special experience or knowledge to say anything else, or to support these comments.
I do not believe that a civil partnership should be known as a marriage. I have a number of homosexual friends who would probably disagree. However, to me, 'Marriage' infers a relationship that is completely committal and is stable enough for children. I do not believe that same sex partnerships can provide the same foundation for children. Nevertheless, there should definitely be a system for same sex partnerships to commit, in a similar way to marriage.
I do not believe that civil partnerships have benefits or advantages over marriage. I am aware that it has made a lot of people happy to be able to have their relationships recognised but think they would have been equally happy if they had been able to get 'married'.
I do not bother about the names of the relationship. A relationship basically grows on the liking and personal attachment and caring of each other. It is not mandatory that it has to be opposite sex. In civil Partnership the main advantage is to be able to continue your commitments to each other. And maybe it will sound very funny but it can control the population of the planet as a by-product
I do not know the difference between the two. Does the term 'marriage' have some religious basis? If so, I think it is good to have a way to confirm a long term relationship without religion having a role.

ago. The benefits are that 2 people of the same sex can make a legal commitment to each other.
I do not understand enough about the civil partnership system to make a more informed comment but I see no reason why all unions should not be called and recognised as marriage. I don't like the fact that people feel we need a different name for a same sex marriage. It doesn't seem that far from proposing that mixed race marriages ought to have a different name to same race marriages and that would be insulting to larger areas of the community and never be proposed. In the past it has been socially unacceptable and in some areas still is to have a mixed race marriage and this seems to be a similar argument because there is still a lot of stigma surrounding same sex marriages/relationships as there was for mixed race marriages/relationships but if people made no distinction between the two then there would be less stigma surrounding the issue.
I do not understand why all the partnerships are not called marriage. therefore i would be unable to comment on the advantaged and benefits. Allowing all couples to be recognised as partners has an advantage if splitting up occurs as it will be possible to divide assests using the law.
I don't beleive there are benefits to recognizing all unions as marriage.
I don't believe there are advantages or disadvantages compared to marriage, I see them as the same thing. Although I understand that the fact that they are called different things is a problem to some - I regard the Act as progress, I celebrate it and think we've come a long way. All I expect are the same legal rights as any person regardless of whether or not they are a married heterosexual. I don't care what you call it. As far as I'm aware marriage by legal definition is between a man and a woman, and that can't be helped unless homosexuals want the additional right to alter word meanings.
I don't believe there are any advantages of civil partnership over marriage or vice versa. What others think does not bother me.
I don't feel I have enough knowledge of the legal rights/benefits of civil partnerships to give an informed response.
i don't know any differences. its not a subject i have ever really talked about. i assume it give them similar legal status as a marriage, which i see as an advantage.
I don't know of any advantages civil partnership has over a system where all unions are recognized as marriage.
I don't know the exact difference between a civil partnership and marriage but i am lead to think that a civil partnership is where a couple has been together for a certain period of time (i think 3 years), but not married. However, they now have the same rights as if they were married, for example in a separation. In a way I think this is a good idea because if people cannot afford to get married, then the civil partnership system could be seen as a good idea. As it means they can be seen as being married, and 'legally binded' without needing the funds to make people aware of their relationship situation.
I don't know why it has been introduced as different to marriage, but it is an improvement on having nothing. I am unaware of any benefits over marriage since it merely serves to reinforce the opinion that different relationships are not equal, rather than accepting and welcoming them.
I don't really see what the difference is between civil partnerships and marriages.
I don't regard CP any differently to marriage. I think of that day as our wedding day, I call her my wife and say that I'm married. It is still amazing to me to look at our CP certificate - I am only 36 years old but I never imagined that in my lifetime my relationship would have that recognition from the state. I don't really care about the semantics; to me it is marriage.
I don't see any advantage to civil partnership over 'regular' marriage. I think everyone should have a civil marriage/partnership to cover the legal side of things (inheritance tax, pensions, etc) and a separate religious marriage if they choose. The system seems to work well in other European countries and I think the the UK government missed an opportunity.
I don't see any advantages in having a separate legal commitment for same-sex and opposite-sex couples.
I don't see the advantage of civil partnerships, other than perhaps some people do not want the religious connotations of a marriage.
I don't think that calling it Civil Partnership has any real advantage over calling it Marriage... For some reason, I believe some people who allow gay marriage if it's called civil partnership wouldn't allow it if it were called marriage. I don't understand this, but if the choice is between upsetting enough people that it would still be entirely forbidden or calling it something faintly ridiculous, then I suppose calling it something faintly ridiculous must win out. (I'm not aware of uses of the civil partnership system to create unions that would not be called marriage if the participants were of different genders... perhaps that is possible, and if so I should say that there should be some allowance for it. But I don't know enough about it to be sure.)

couples should have the right to civil unions and that LGBTQ couples should have the right to marriage, if their faith allows it. Mine does, but the law wouldn't let me marry another woman in a ceremony of my own faith. How fair is that?
I don't think there are benefits in having a separate Civil Partnership/marriages they should be the same for everyone
I dont know. I don't agree with it
I dont really have much knowledge of Civil Partnerships other than whats on the TV. I do believe that it should be viewed in the same way as a same sex marriage and nothing less than this from all different peoples in society.
i dont think it has any advantages or disadvantages
I dont think there are any benefits or advantages as such, Its very hard to describe, but if I analyse and summarise it, it means non - discrimination to me and this empowers me to feel more normal and part of society. I believe that it will help to reduce homophobia in the long run
I dont think there are benefits to this system, i have used it myself as this was my only choice and i was thrilled to have my relationship recognised.I understand that the system of civil partnership was what the government could get passed more easily at the time and it was a huge step forward and enough for those who do not want to be lumped in with the 'straight population'.
I entered into a civil partnership with my partner in July - in the British embassy in Sydney, Australia and the way in which it had to be conducted where a little odd. We had to do the ceremony in an office, with the door open to the public - it was a little demeaning that it HAD to be carried out here, as tourists were walking in and out the office etc...This is why i believe it is not equal to marriage!! Civil Partnership is a step in the right direction to equality.
i find it hard to find any benefits or advantages with having two names on the same thing since they in a legal sense are the same (marriage and civil partnership). Seems to complicate things. The only benefit I can see really for calling gay marriage for civil partnership is to kind of ease it in to the religious world. Marriage is strongly connected to religion and to calling gay marriage for civil partnership in the beginning might be a good idea as a kind of transition time for the church to adapt to new tidings and in the long accept gay marriages. But as I see it it's nothing but discrimination calling gay marriages for something else just as black people were not allowed onto white busses in america several years ago.
I had a Civil Partnership with my partner of 10 years (now separated) - it was important because of the legal recognition. Initially I felt strongly that all legal unions should be referred to as marriage - I feel less bothered now. I think that the important thing is the legal equality and recognition. there are more important rights.
I have had a civil partnership and luckily both my partner's and my families are all accepting of our sexuality/relationship and all attended our ceremony. Which was a real celebration of our love and commitment. I feel more secure to have pretty much the same rights as my heterosexual counterparts engaging in marriage. As a civil partner I feel more confident about showing affection to my partner in public i.e. walking down the street holding hands, kissing etc.
i honestly do not know very much about the civil partnership in england. So i feel i cant really answer this question.Although I am all for it, and beleive that ones sexuall orientation should not stand in the way for making a commitment to each other.
i know of many civil partnerships, I feel that they are as valid and the participants in such relationships should be under the same protection as married couples. in saying that, when a civil partnership dissolves there are benefits, in that there is no legal wrangles in severing the ties - unlike marriage.
I love that society is starting to recognise same sex couples. The civil partnership is the first step in this and benefits same sex couples legally. I don't see how it has any advantages over a system where all unions are called marriages.
I love the idea of a "partnership" as it implies a more equal joining of two people than a traditional marriage, especially with a lot of the Christian traditions of fathers "giving away" their daughters to their new owner! I think that the term "partners" has a lot of positive connotations which are not implicit in wife or even husband. The implied suggestion in the legislation that any relationship needs public recognition in order to be considered significant seems ludicrous but I think that the option for a public declaration and recognition should be available to people if that is what they want. The new Civil Partnerships do imply that similarly committed relationships existing before the legislation are in some way less real, which is insulting. Relationships do not need a certificate to prove their authenticity, but it is nice to have the option. I also believe that the legal benefits are extremely significant and it is shocking that such basic rights have taken so long to be recognized.
I only went through with the civil partnership in order to protect my partner and myself should anything happen such as death, i.e. to protect one another legally and financially. Otehrwise I wouldn't have felt the

need to be civilly partnered, as most of my family wouldn't really recognise it anyway.
I passionately believe that all people should have the right to have their relationship recognised by the state. It confers equal benefits in law to same sex couples which they should not be denied; gay people contribute to society and pay taxes, they should expect to be treated fairly by the government. Civil partnerships need to be recognised as marriages because that is what they are. The only reason they are not called so is because of homophobia from religions, which should have no impact on the laws of a society whose legal system is founded on the secular principles of utilitarianism
I personally don't think same sex relations are normal so I can't see any advantages of such system.
I see no particular advantages to civil partnerships as opposed to marriage particularly when civil partnerships provide all the same benefits as marriage except for the name
I see no particular advantages to the civil partnerships over formally recognized marriages. I would prefer to have a single category, called marriage. Having said this, I am happy to have civil partnerships that are recognized under the law in the same way as the law regards marriages. I understand that not calling same-sex civil partnerships makes it easier for some people to support their legal recognition, so I am content with this system. The legal rights are the important thing.
I think a civil partnership is less formal than marriage so does not have the attached pressure (and therefore stigma when if you divorce).
I think calling it 'Civil Partnership' is a compromise position, in that it means that gay people can have the rights that straight people have in a marriage, without creating such a stir among the people who think marriage should be for men and women only. I think pushing for marriage might have caused the whole bill to fail entirely.
I think civil partnership and marriage should have the same rights and responsibilities involved. I am not particularly keen on the institution of marriage, it has a lot of patriarchal baggage attached, so in some senses the title civil partnership is preferable.
I think civil partnerships are a excellent idea. I do think they should be called marriage. I think they should be available to heterosexual couples also, and marriage should remain in as its original religious origins, leaving civil partnerships as a legal/governmental relationship recognition for all who chose it.
I think civil partnerships should be the same as marriage and both called a marriage. having to call it a civil partnership still singles you out and therefore you are not equal. If we can't call a civil partnership a marriage due to religious reasons then a straight couple who get married in a registry office shouldn't be allowed to call it a marriage either.
I think commitment is a beautiful thing and it shouldn't matter what sex you are as to whether you deserve to have something that recognises your commitment to one another. Stable partnerships benefit everyone in society so if people want to commit to each other then they should be permitted to do so. Not sure that I can get passed the term marriage being used for same sex couples though for some unknown reason.
I think it is important that same-sex relationships are recognised by law, and that people can show their commitment formally, and involve friends and family.
I think it's great the same sex couples can now unite their love in a civil ceremony and that same sex couples can almost have the same rights as opposite sex couples
I think marriage is an antiquated terminology that conjures up a religious ceremony that imparts that the male is more important than the female within the relationship. I believe in long term relationships both gay and straight and find that the term civil partnership is a far more appropriate and modern slant on marriage even my straight friends have been asking if they can have a civil partnership rather than a marriage as they have no religious beliefs and find the ceremony celebrates and expects both sexes to uphold the partnership equally
I think that a civil partnership is just as valid as a marriage but perhaps should be identified as different as marriage has many religious links. saying this, nowadays many within the church accept gay 'marriage' so they both boil down to the same thing really, the legal and money side of it. although of course gay marriage will not be largely directed at producing children. differentiating between marriage and partnership may be beneficial as it keeps fundamentalist Christians happy and could prevent confusion.
I think that all relationships provided they are long-term and genuine should be considered as marriage (even if commonly termed differently) regardless of gender preference. It provides legal and financial protection for the couple should there be a separation, as well as protection should one or both of the couple die.
I think that civil partnership is a human right that all gay people should have. I'm not fully aware of all the advantages and disadvantages it holds but it's just nice to be able to legally declare our love for each other.
I think that civil partnerships are a step in the right direction but true equality for all will only happen when

marriage is available for two people regardless of their sex.
I think that civil partnerships are not accorded the same respect as marriage and I do not see any benefits in them at all. I do not think in cases of maintenance the same importance is given to civil partners as is given to marriage partners and I somehow feel children are not as secure.
I think that marriage is a religious institution and would prefer civil partnership be possible for any number/gender combination of couples - I dislike religion, and the traditional anti-woman attitudes surrounding marriage. If kept at all, it should be a purely personal event with no civil attachments (like say, a christening)
I think that one term should be used - either 'civil partnership' or 'marriage' to denote equality under the law and in the eyes of society. This is particularly important for children. We also need new terms other than 'husband' and 'wife' - I guess 'partner' is becoming more used but could refer to a business partner and cause confusion. One advantage of 'civil partnership' is its separation from religion - however, this could be a disadvantage for religious gays and lesbians.
I think that the civil partnership is a huge step forward in terms of gay rights in the UK. I do understand that just because we have a civil partnership our relationship may not be recognised by other societies in the same way that an opposite sex marriage would be. For us the civil partnership was about being recognised as each others next of kin in law and having the responsibilities as such. Until a civil partnership is recognised internationally the benefits it brings will be limited to places where it is recognised. I am not convinced that the great British public is ready for the term marriage to be used for gay couples ... I feel strongly that civil partnerships provide an excellent introduction to the idea of marriage whilst giving gay people the rights and benefits that marriage gives opposite sex couples.
I think that the introduction of the civil partnership is very beneficial, as it provides all committed couples with legal recognition. I must admit I do not know enough about the differences between marriage and civil partnership to draw a comparison.
I think the advantage is the separation from the Church that 'civil partnership' brings. In my eyes this would be a huge positive as having the word 'marriage' draped across you suggests an alignment with the church, something that would go against my personal beliefs. However aside from this I believe that little else differentiates marriage from a civil partnership; both now offer legal rights for the couple.
I think the civil partnership system is a good way of making it possible for same sex couples to form a legal bond. Since marriage has been historically a heterosexual union with views to procreation, calling it something else (as long as they are viewed as equal under the law) may be a way of introducing the idea in the society and making it less upsetting to groups that are against it. In my opinion, it is a good compromise.
I think the civil partnership system is an excellent move forward for civil rights in this country. I think it has not only bureaucratic benefits but also shows a healthy increase in tolerance (at least by the government, and it is to be hoped that the populace as a whole will eventually follow suit). Marriage has such a strong religious association that I do not think it is appropriate to call the formalisation of homosexual relationships marriage. From this position I believe the civil partnership system has an advantage over a blanket marriage label.
I think the CP/marriage comparison is a little redundant over 2 years on from its introduction (it's an old debate - see 2004 special issue of Feminism & Psychology)
I think the introduction of the Civil Partnership is fantastic. I think the system set apart from Marriage is not absolutely ideal but the gay community consider it as such and I think the fact that we are able to register our relationship in a legal manner is a great step forward.
I think the only advantage of differentiating between "marriage" and "civil partnerships" is that the government managed to get the bill through the houses of parliament. If civil partnerships were called marriage I think there would have been much more opposition by religious groups and some members of the public. I would prefer it if they were both called marriage, but you can't have everything! It's splitting hairs to get bogged down in what civil partnership is called, it won't stop me from committing to my girlfriend. It's really good to see things like civil partnership and engagement cards in high street shops, and businesses meeting the demand from same sex couples for things like event planning etc. I think civil partnerships have helped improve acceptance from the (heterosexual) general public by bringing same sex issues more into the public eye. My experience has been positive since civil partnerships became legal.
I think there is an advantage to having marriage for heterosexuals and c.p.'s for homos. C.p.'s are needed to protect the rights of those in same sex relationships (next-of-kin, pension, etc.) but some people of certain religious persuasions (I am 'low' Church of England) could never cope with it being called marriage. People will always hold a variety of differing views, and none must be made to feel attacked or dismissed as 'irrelevant'. Heterosexuals who have no truck with religion are free to have a registry-office job, homos who have c.p.'s done can find clergy who will bless their relationship. I think some campaigners working for 'equal rights' revel in making the 'religious right' feel threatened, but I see this as no more than revenge for years of perceived injustice, and it will do our cause no good. Indeed, it may directly lead to a public-opinion backlash. We must present ourselves as mature and reasonable.

them their special day. It is like marriage a commitment to each other.
I try to be open to people's decisions. I do not think it is helpful to demonise the notion of marriage as this survey appears to be doing.
i wanted to do it so my partner becomes my next of kin - important to us as neither of us has strong family ties
I was able to stand in front of my family and friends and make a public commitment to my partner and her to me
I was brought up in the strict RC family, for me by showing your partner that you are committed to them and the relationship and sealing this with the "Marriage" is the ultimate 'till death us do part'. Yes, love it. The fact that we can now do this and have certain rights as others is as it should be. The advantage is the option is there if i so wish it.
I was of the opinion that the reason that civil partnerships were not called marriages was because of heavy opposition from religious groups. As far as I am concerned, calling gay unions civil partnership smacks of designating them second-class relationships. I imagine that part of the reason this happened is because of a belief (not shared by me) that marriage is a union sanctified by God and, as homosexuality is viewed as an abomination by most religious groups, a gay union would not gain this rubber stamp. I supposed that if one's idea of the purpose of marriage is the 'procreation of children' (or whatever the church says it is) then I can understand that gay relationships wouldn't fit into this definition whether they are accepted or not. However, if marriage is to do with a life-long commitment to another person forsaking all others, then I don't see any problem with calling civil partnerships marriages. I can't see any immediate benefits from choosing a different word for what, in my mind, is the same thing in a different context. Indeed, differentiating the two runs would seem to make it easier for society to deny benefits/status to homosexual partners.
i would like for CP to be referred to as marriage so that its not seen as such a big deal/different by some people. it is not yet legal in ireland but i hope it will be, as i plan to marry my partner in the future. she is british, we could do it there but it want it legally recognised here as she is moving here next year. legally i want her taken care of and recognised should anything happen to me but above all i want to marry her because i love her and want to show her my commitment for life.
I would say the benefit is that previously same sex relationships were unavailable and as such there was truly an inequality in society. But I would not say there are true advantages because it is still not called marriage and British society on the whole seems to disregard legal and symbolic nature of long term commitments. TEST
I'm not sure if there is an advantage of cps over marriage. I believe it's important for LGBT people to get their relationships officially recognised if they so wish. By refusing marriage to LGBTs however, you are re-creating/reconfirming a two-class system where straight unions are considered the real thing and cps accepted in order not to be seen as non-pc in a pc conscious society. If all unions would be called cps henceforth and treated as such, then I would have no objection.
I'm not sure of the technicalities, whether legally they are both the same or not. There shouldn't be a difference legally, in terms of mortgages and life assurance etc. All types of unions should be entitled to the same basic rights.
I'm not sure that there are any advantages to separating "marriage" and "civil partnerships". Surely they should both be recognised as the same thing, with the same name. I think that separating the two will just encourage people to take marriage more seriously than a civil partnership, which I don't agree with because either you do it properly (i.e. agree to all the responsibilities and connotations of being married) or you don't do it at all. You can't have a "sort of" marriage, that completely opposes the point of getting married in the first place.
I'm not sure there are any - and I'm civilly partnered (or whatever the term is).
I've been in a committed relationship for almost 35 years - not yet had civil partnership ceremony but are planning it. Misgivings are that we are both old style feminists & have long misgivings about 'marriage' & power relationship etc. BUT given increasing age we think that the need to be formally recognised as next of kin, not having to pay inheritance tax etc. outweighs this. Should be an absolute right to recognise long-term relationships though there should also be provision for nominating other person/s as next of kin e.g. friend, niece etc, not just significant other.
I've never been exposed to a system where all unions are considered marriage so I can't comment.
If someone is that close to another same sex person, good luck to them.
im not homophobic, i don't believe in it for myself (or it being our initial purpose), but i also don't oppose my beliefs upon others and dont expect others to conform to my beliefs; therefore i haven't really formed a opinion enough to write down, well i have i guess, but i certainly haven't thought about benefits.

In my opinion, marriage still does hold a strong connotation with a religious ceremony. This may not be the ideal for the a straight or gay union. So, the option of civil partnerships is an alternative that makes this distinction more clearly than a civil wedding. A civil partnership is also a very important stepping stone towards society recognising 'marriage' within a homosexual relationship. It is small enough for the more conservative individual to allow, and a big enough step towards equal rights for the gay community.
In terms of legal rights and responsibilities the two are and should be equal. The term marriage however has religious connotations that cannot (or are difficult to) be resolved with same sex partnerships. Non-religious same sex partners should be offered the option of civil partnership, although in practice it's probably not worth the effort of changing the law.
In the event of death of partner the estate will legally pass to the other reather than family. A distinction need to be made between civil partnerships and marriage as marriage in intrinsically a religious institution which became adopted into law. Therefore same sex partnerships could never be married without changing belief systems.
In the same way that certain legal principles and benefits, such as tax allowances, are applied to married couples, people in civil partnerships enjoy the same rights. Not calling it marriage keeps religious folk appeased - hopefully.
Is this a marriage vs. Civil partnership question? If so, I suppose civil partnership would give the legal rights and benefits, whereas I view marriage as more of the emotional tie
It allows a formal and legal recognition of a relationship for those who previously could not express it
It allows for people in same sex relationships to be recognised as having a serious long term relationship and allowing them to express their wishes to spend their lives together.
It allows gay people the right to share their union with their family and friends and have the same inheritance benefits. I am not 'out' to all my work colleagues and having had a Civil Partnership say that I am married. Apart from the religious aspect Civil Partnership is the same as marraaige to me.
It allows people to be officially recognised as a couple who would not have been able to before, and this removes the discrimination between heterosexual and homosexual couples. Calling all partnerships marriages would give all couples equal standing (as not everyone presently has the choice to be "married") - not that marriage is necessarily a better to word to use, perhaps they should all be called something else. But why distinguish between the two "types" of union if they are essentially an expression of the same commitment?
It allows two people to personally commit themselves to one another
It can be a social recognition of the validity of a couple's relationship and the committment they've made to each other. It also gives the partner certain benefits and pension rights in line with straight couples who've got married.
It doesn't have any benefits over being called and recognised as marriage. I think both civil partners and married partners have equal rights.
It enables gay couples to formally show there commitment to each other in the same way straight couples have been able to for centuries ...I have lived in Spain untill recently there they have no civil partnership its Marriage accross the board...so why not here
It give the oppertunity for people with varying sexual orientations to be able to give a life commitment to one another, similar to that of hetersexual marrage. It encourages faithfulness between partners, reducing promiscuousness which has the potenton of being damaging to their health.,sexually transmitted diseases..etc.
It gives gay people equal rights, it makes them more visible to the general public, it shows that gay people can have long term loving relationships, it makes it more official and makes gay people feel recognized in law, it is a public statement of being openly gay.
It gives loving same sex couples who love each other the rights that other couples have when they get married. Also, where marriage can act like "the ultimate "i love you" same sex couples now have the power to do the same.
It gives the same rights to gay couples as heterosexuals, and gives gay couples the opportunity to be next of kin to each other
It has the advantage that it can already be carried out, even while there is still debate about the legality of gay marriage.
It is a public acknowledgement of commitment to one another, so is beneficial within the relationship, and symbolises unity between to people of the same sex. Advantages are internal.

women have. It is also a positive thing that the state recognises the validity of same sex relationships. In terms of commitment, civil partnerships are recognised by law so give same sex couples a chance to share their commitment with friends and family in a legitimate way. Marriage could be considered a religious term, and where many religions have a negative attitude towards same sex the couple involved may not want to be associated with this term, so a Civil Partnership avoids these associations.
It is a way to formalize a relationship in front of the society, meaning that the couples have now share responsibilities and rights. These things are important for the "couple" to develop in a better way in the society.
It is a way to show comitment to each other and other people. There are advantages too such as for financial reasons.
It is clear that civil partnerships will provide legal support that has not been in place for same-sex couples until this point, this kind of equality has been lacking for years. same sex couples are still experiencing inequality and i think that this is great step towards stopping that.
It is important to distinguish civil partnerships from marriage, as a marriage is a union between a man and woman, not man/man or woman/woman.
It is my belief that it is easier for same sex civil partners to divorce. A couple who sign up to a civil partnership are making the same commitment as a married couple. Civil partners should have the same rights and benefits as a Married couple.
it is not religious It is legally binding it is publically recognised it is equal to marriage the tax and inheritence side of things is really important
It recognises that both partners have made a commitment to each other
It serves as recognition of your relationship both to each other in terms of a long term commitment, publicly to your friends and family and finally in the eyes of the law.
It's about time same sex relationships were honoured, in the same way as opposite sex marriages. The unfairnesses over inheritance tax, pension rights and other legal matters needed to be put right. However, by refusing to call civil partnership a marriage (which it is) the law is still making a distinction. I believe there is the odd legal thing which is OK in marriage, but not civil partnership, but I don't know what it is!
its a step closer to equal rights for homosexual and bisexual people.
its disgusting and shouldn't happen. its adam and eve not adam and steve
legal and financial advantages of couples - especially with regard to death, inheritance, etc. Gives partner recognition of importance even if the parental family doesn't agree with the relationship
legal recognition of long-term relationship; no mention in ceremony of need to procreate - there are other reasons for wanting to spend the rest of your life with this person!; 'marriage' is a term with far too many religious connotations.
Legal recognition, recogition of our relationship by others as being "real", financial security
Legal regnition, security over pension and other rights, recognitin of the value of gay relationships
Legal rights - pensions etc
legal rights for partners
Legal rights, accepted by law. Allows long term commitment to be recognised by law and by society.
Lower taxes? - at least in Germany
main one for me was when partner died it saved a lot of awkward questions
Making a distinction between marriage and civil partnerships allows gay couples to make civil partnerships their own.
Many people today either don't believe in god or have flexible beliefs, as marriage is supposed to be in the eyes of God those who don't have strong beliefs will appreciate civil partnerships. It also allows those who may come from different religious backgrounds to marry easily as they're still lawfully married but without the sometimes messy God subject to be bought into the equation.
marriage evolved from christian background and represents a long tradition which the partnerships covered by the civil partnership cannot be part of (and don't need to be part of)
Marriage has a vast amount of political 'baggage', for example: the historical treatment of women and children as property, it has been a prime site of violence against and abuse of women and children, it represents religious norms around procreation/adult relationships, it is a governmental method for the neo-liberal

privatisation of caring responsibilities into the family. I could go on and on and on. Allowing civil partnership (if a truly radical departure from the institution of marriage, not a carbon copy with no mention of gay sex because that's just too distasteful for parliament to debate) which is available to same sex couples, different sex couples and anyone else who wants to formalise their relationship in that way holds great promise. Giving CP to queers and having straights marry is discrimination.
Marriage has connotations (sometimes imagined) of religious attachment. Civil partnership a union recognised by the state only. Both should be equally valid in the eyes of a secular state system (including same sex partnerships). System with both classifications allows those who have no wish to or do not fulfill marriage criteria (same sex) to have formal recognition of their relationship.
Marriage has cultural connotations and as such might be seen as having a higher status than a partnership. I can understand if the Church is not ok with gay marriages and that is their prerogative; however, the government should leave us all to our own devices. To the extent that the government does provide benefits to people who are formally married, then such benefits should be available to all persons, regardless of whether you are gay, left handed or a member of the BNP.
Marriage has previously been seen as an is to some extent currently seen as a unity blessed by God and by Law. Whereas civil partnerships are seen by society as limited to those in a partnership previously unrecognised by religion.
Marriage is a religious ceremony and so it should be done with two people availing by the laws in which they are married. In a civil partnership I feel it is people who recognise the idea of marriage also with no religion and still would like to participate. This also includes people who are religious but don't follow all the rules can be married also. (if that makes sense!)
Marriage is accepted all over the world, it provides stability and helps couples show how committed they are. Civil Partnerships at present seem still to be all media hype and jumping on the bandwagon, its a step in the right direction but its no marriage. I don't wish to enter into either at the moment as they both seem so hypocritical and the pressure it puts on any relationship can only be negative. CP's are a shout out of 'hey i'm gay' and Marriage is an institution not worth entering. Advantages? What advantages??
Marriage is an outdated system that is deeply rooted in religion. Civil partnership by not being recognized as a traditional 'marriage' frees same sex couples from association with a system that often makes married couples conform to beliefs about 'proper' behaviour such as religious activities and having kids
Marriage is part of the culture and associated with the religion. As most occidental religions do not recognize same sex relationships, I think we cannot call it marriage. I believe that all partnerships, regardless of the sex of the people, should be civil partnerships if people don't associate it with a religion. I think the term marriage is inappropriate when it concerns civil marriage.
Marriage is permanent (unless under special circumstances, i.e. abuse)and is linked to religion. civil partnerships are flexible and cater for all areas of society.
Marriage may be seen as part of a traditional system which has discriminated against homosexuals, and so civil partnerships allow them to express their love without formally taking part in that discriminatory system.
Marriage tends to be associated with the church, which makes it difficult for lesbians and gays due to Christian closed-minded "values". If the christian church was more open minded about same-sex relationships there wouldn't be a problem. As it is, same-sex couples could suffer discrimination in their attempt to be married, from the church, so an alternative civil partnership is probably a good idea.
Marriage, by nature, is a partnership between a man and a woman; therefore, one between a man and a man or a woman and a woman should not use the same term. However, the afore-mentioned unions all are created for the same intents and purposes, and should thusly reap the same benefits as one another. If a man and a woman can attain certain benefactors by coming together as one union, then so should a homosexual couple, even if they are legally unified under a different name.
My position is that Civil Partnerships should be seen as a step forward for straight couples as well as gay couples. 'Marriage' has too much religious baggage. Ideally, each couple (regardless of sexuality) should be able to choose between civil partnership and marriage, but I guess we've still got a long way to go!
my understanding is that there are certain people get married in order to a) affirm their commitment to one another consistent with their traditions; b) in order to have a wedding (and all its trappings); c) for legal/economic reasons; d) because they want to have children within some sort of framework they envisage as more "stable" when they wear rings. the only advantage in dividing "marriage" and "civil partnerships" is to keep religious bigots quiet.
N/a
n/a
No advantages over marriage

No comment
No idea. I dont do Law
no legal committment
No one should have any more or different rights to anyone else - if there are certain benefits in being married then the same benefits should be given to people who are in civil partnerships; but I don't really think someone who is married or in a civil partnership should have any more rights than someone who is not. However I don't know much about what the actual differences are between the two, or what rights people have when they are married.
No opinion.
No strong opinion.
NONE
none
None
none
None whatsoever
None.
Not being called a marriage means that I know it is in effect a marriage but by being called such does not seem to upset the general ppoulation. The state and eventually society will come to accept our unions more and so lang as the rights are the same what does it matter what we call it.
not biblical
Not entirely sure what the difference between Civil Partership and Marriage is, I thought they were the same but used under different names for religious/social reasons. Advantages would be that the parter is considered so 'officially' and gets all the benifits of that (e.g. share of estate if parter dies without making will etc)
Not much knowledge but in my view a civil partnership is either a stop-gap before getting married if the couple are undecided, or for other controlling factors cannot marry but wish to. It gives either partner more legal standing if there are children involved eg finacially, but is easier to break and less weight is put on the institution than on marriage. I think it is a good idea to have both as some people may have difficulties with marriage and simply prefer to have legal stnding without the associations of marriage. I do not beleive it should ever be given the same standing as marriage however as this option is quickly becoming open to all sexually diverse relationships and it is simply a matter or choice and commitment.
Not really sure, apart from it is a long-term commitment.
Not sure that there are advantages or disadvantages to a Civil Pertnership that are any different to a marriage, personal realtionships are dependent on circumstances, willingness to make the relationship work and changes and/or similarities in beliefs. Not interested in Civil Partnership/marriage personally as I think that there is a certain amount of feeling by people of feeling chained and owned. Difficult for exactly equal relationship to be maintained.
Not sure what the difference between 'civil partnership' and 'marriage' is anyway !
Official recognition Financially better (inheritance tax etc)
Only adavantage is that it doesn't upset people who think homosexuality is wrong, but that's not really an advantage
Only that it appeases those who disagree in same sex marriage, and therefore makes legislation easier to get in place, and can make it more progressive.
Our relationship is given legal standing and civil recoognition. We have the same legal rights and responsibilities to each other as married couples. The relationship is recognised as one based on mutual respect for and commitment to each other, not on genital consumation and exclusion of others.
Partners regonised by authority - ie partners to be consented in relation to emergncy medical treatment and if married partners of employees recieve benefits, civil partners would too
Personally i dont see any great advantage of civil partnership over that of marriage, i believe all adults regardless of sexual orienation should be entitled to marry. By marry i mean committ to each other (in a religious house if they wish) in front of family and friends, adopt or raise children with the same protection and

security as straight couples and for both spouses to be recognised both legally and financially as spouses just as straight couples who marry are.
Please see my response before. Being in a civil partnership gives pension and tax benefits as well as next of kin rights which are extremely important to me. I do not buy into the "marriage" thing but I want my partner to have access to the same benefits/rights that married people have.
provides legal benefits and recognition
Questions 12 and 13 are frustratingly confusing!!!! It will gain acceptance more easily from people who are not prepared to accept same sex long term partnerships as the same as marriage. It separates itself off from the baggage associated with the sacrament and long cultural history of marriage which some people might like.
rather not say
Recognition & Legal next of kin
Recognition as a loving couple. equal pension rights to married couples secure in property & inheritance of.
Recognition in law and attendant benefits, marriage still has vestiges of same-sex unions
recognition of love; public commitment; legalities of wills etc much easier; validation of life-style; fairness.
Recognition of relationship. Tax advantages. In sickness and in health.
Recognition of status for legal and financial reasons. For example, purchasing house, inheritance, Also social rights e.g. being allowed to visit or be involved in partner care in hospital.
religion
religious exceptions aside; none
Removes religious connotations.
same benefits straight people have
Same sex couples can engage in unions similar to marriage allowing same sex couples to feel a little less separate from heterosexual couples.
Same sex relationships are just as meaningful as heterosexual relationships but marriage is a religious ceremony so marriage and civil partnerships are different.
security and stability
security relationship-wise (i.e. less likely to break-up) and financially no benefits as far as i know over marriage
See my comment on 'other' above. If there is no difference between same sex love and heterosex love, what justification can there be in differentiating between the corresponding partnerships? My answer is NONE.
Showing your love and commitment to your partner, and sharing it with loved ones.
Single most societal advantage is to provide an avenue for safe sex. Civil partnership's bring stability to partner's and provide a means to share life's concerns/worries with a like minded being. Although I am opposed to recognizing these type of non-conformist union's, I would not discriminate against those who think an official union gives equal credence to the natural perpetuation of life.
social recognition of mutual commitment/responsibility/love in the most firm manner possible. Mutual security, protection for children as well as partners, legal and monetary benefits. CP are religion free
Society is currently more in favour of the institute of marriage, though this may change in time, and the law favours marriage over a civil partnership, or that is the impression I get. I think that an outward expression of your feelings, commitment etc towards your partner, of whichever sex, is important.
Some parts of society are still to backward-looking to be able to cope with the idea of gay marriage, I don't think it would be easy to have that legalised at this stage. With civil partnership, at least the gay couples get something.
Such a system is closer to the form of contract mentioned in my answer to (9) and may therefore suggest to people that the traditional system of approval by the dominant religion is not necessary.
tax
tax advantages
Taxation, inheritance and immigration rights

various religious and conservative groups over the name. Also, your local parish church (CoE) is -- legally -- obliged to let you get married there, and this is one way to keep from forcing the CoE to perform same-sex marriages. Of course, one could imagine such novel other methods as separation of church and state, but that would be crazy talk.

The benefits are the legal ones. Being able to nominate your partner as your will beneficiary and knowing that it will stand is a huge relief. Knowing that legally they have the right to make decisions if you become incapacitated etc.

the benefits would be that the civil partnerships would be accepted by most members of society. as long as the rights and benefits of civil partnerships are equal to marriage it would be fine.

The Bible is very clear that God says homosexual actions are wrong. This obviously speaks against the recognition of such relationships. Some people may choose to have such relationships, but then some people choose to murder people; homosexual acts are no less wrong in God's eyes than acts of murder. It is hopefully obvious that we shouldn't have laws to allow people to carry out their desires to murder people - Why then should we have laws which recognise homosexual relationships? However, if society really deems it necessary, the advantage of Civil Partnerships is that it distinguishes between marriage (which was created by God) and Civil Partnerships (which permits that which God says is wrong).

The biggest advantage to civil partnerships is that same sex relationships are legally recognised and that civil partners gain the same protection as married partners. Another is that you only need to sign a register, there is no need for vows or following a set form of words. I don't think it's very important that it isn't formally called marriage. Most family and friends refer to it as being married anyway.

The civil partnership allows non-Christians or Christians who are currently not welcomed by the Anglican communion to have legal protection. There will always be sections of the Anglican communion that will not allow all unions to be recognized as 'marriage' so I think in reality we'll always have two sets of terminology.

the couple is acknowledged by society and the government in things like taxes and health benefits

The financial benefits e.g. tax etc are better as people now have some option if they want to be recognised. but it should still be called marriage.;

The label of marriage for same sex couples would help move forward any angst still felt towards the gay community, bringing such unions on the same level as heterosexual marriages is similar to an acceptance by society.

the main advantage is that people who do not want to buy into the institution of marriage (for whatever reasons - its religious meanings, connotations of ownership, etc) can still have legal recognition for their relationship.

The main advantage of a civil partnership system over an equal marriage system is solely politically-motivated: it placates those that would seek to denigrate and devalue a homosexual relationship over a heterosexual relationship. The only remaining advantage is that it allows those homosexual couples who do not believe in marriage as an institution to share the legal benefits that married couples do.

The main benefit is recognition by society that a CP is legal, binding and very real. There appears, by the wording of the questions, a slant on gay people disliking the fact that our union is not referred to as 'marriage'. I personally see it as a bonus that we are differentiated. In my line of work I am outed almost daily to new people I have to work with. Referring to my CP means I do not have to explain the fact that my partner is a woman and eases the explanation of having children that I did not give birth to. Referring to my CP gives instant understanding. Having a CP gives protection through law, the same rights as 'married' people, pension rights, next of kin rights, adoption rights, protection of assets, protection by the law surrounding the marital home, monetary protection for the kids should a split occur.

The main benefit is that it ensures that homosexual partnerships are not considered the same as heterosexual partnerships. Gay people consider themselves different from straight people, so they should be glad to have a system that allows them to give a different label to their union.

The main point for me is to ensure equal recognition, particularly where partners have been in long-term relationships. They deserve the right for their relationship to be recognised in a legal framework.

The only benefit I can see is where some couples regard marriage as an institution they would not wish to join, perhaps because of its historical practise, male dominance issues or religious links. A Civil Partnership would therefore be a modern institution based on equal participation.

The only benefit I feel is that 'civil partnership' lacks the attendant religious and historical connotations of the term 'marriage'. I am a heterosexual in a long-term relationship, but would prefer to enter into a civil partnership than a marriage, as I would rather avoid these connotations. I see no benefit in making a distinction between them in terms of sexuality.

The only benefit of civil partnership over marriage is that religion does not need to be involved.

The only possible benefits in civil partnerships are tax benefits. Society as a whole have strong beliefs that same sex marriages or civil partnerships should not be allowed. These beliefs will never change in the United States unless reproduction can occur homosexually.

The public tends to think that legal marriage should share characteristics with religious marriage, when the two in my view are completely separate ideas.

the recognition of our relationships. the first step towards legal marriages in this country. It allows my partner to be recognised legally and takes away worries such as what would happen if one was ill and unable to express our wishes, what would happen after death with my partners brother (who lives with us) if she died before he was 18. It also means she is entitled to my works pension etc

The STATE should confer the same benefits/detriments on gay and traditional partnerships.... what exactly is a civil partnership??

The state should only have a role in recognising the legal consequences of a Civil Partnership, whereas any religious group can recognise a Marriage, but attach no legal rights/responsibilities to the recognition. In this sense the Marriage is the endorsement from a particular religious group of a particular Civil Partnership. It's a bit like throwing a birthday party- socially important to some people, but should not affect the rights/responsibilities of the people involved. Having separate definitions of Marriage and Civil Partnership gives everyone equal rights while allowing those with mainstream religious beliefs to exercise their rituals and endorse the relationship/integrate the legal aspects into their existing social framework. Those who do not share the mainsream religous beliefs can have equal rights without having to take part in rituals that they don't believe in.

The word 'marriage' is traditionally defined in a heterosexual way.

There are advantages in terms of protection under law e.g. of benefits, pensions, wills, children and so on. It's good and important to have a formal recognition of a couple's commitment to one another and shows this commitment to others. As I've said I don't think same-sex couples should be 'married' because I don't see marriage as a desirable institution to be part of. i see it as old-fashioned, unrealistic, religious and patriarchal. Why would we want to be part of this?

There are legal benefits in terms of rights of will, pensions, and emergency situations. Being civil partners can also make having a family easier, either through donation or adoption. It can provide additional emotional security to some people as well - although I'm not sure this is an incentive for me personally.

there are no advantages or benifits other than being able to say i have a fake marriage

There are no advantages. People in civil partnerships are recognised as having the same legal rights as those in a marriage, so it doesn't matter what you call it.

There are no benefits. "Different and equal" just does not work.

There would be legal benefits for l/t partners that were previously not recognised by law like if one partner died or was ill and getting time off etc. The gay community shouldnt be penalised for their own orientation, its not like they chose it, nor is it their fault. BUT they should be entitled to the same respect and treatment as hetero peeps. Civil partnership does this.

This is too complex an issue to give an adequate response in this box.

to demonstrate long-term commitment between two people in the presence of knowledge of family and friends. in addition, equal benefits such as pension and adoption rights to those of married couples.

To have their commitment recognized by others. To have the same legal rights as a married couple.

To me marriage is a religious term, long synonymous with the church. I have been married (to a man) and am about to undertake a civil partnership with a woman. They do not feel different to me, but to my father who is very religious the delineation between the two has proved enough to allow him to agree to attend our ceremony. Legally I believe we will receive the same benefits as 'married' couples.

To my mind, marriage is the union between man and wife, whereas as civil partnership isnt, so it shouldn't be called the same thing.

Using the same term for heterosexual and homosexual partnerships is the only way these will possibly be regarded as equal. Whether homosexuality is right or wrong is not for me to judge, so the terms should be equal.

We have done it for our future security regarding property, pentions, also for the next of kin status incase my mother claims it, if I was in a bad accident, who would I want at my bedside my 20yr partner or a mother who has not contacted me in more than 10 yrs but would be twisted enough to keep him away as the law says she is next of kin. Although we didn't rush into it as soon as it was new law we were the first to do it in this area which is not the most accepting, we publised it in our local paper & had a great response, we only heard of one person who slagged us off, our day was very special & absolutly everyone enjoyed them selves even my

partners cousins from Orkney we had not expected them to come but they all did, our event was so popular that we had to change location as the 1st place we booked only held 24 at very tight squeeze, we changed to a 60 seater venue, our registras couldn't have been more friendly & helpful they were excited for their first CP, we had wondered at the time if being in the paper may encourage protesters as it is an area with many religions(many more church's than pubs!)All our friends were just so overjoyed for us, the music we chose went down well, Michael Balls 'You Raise Me Up' on entering 'Bridge over troubled water' 4 signing & a camped up live version of 'I am what I am' by Shirley Bassey all went down well, we were very unsure whether we would kiss after the ring exchange as we do not show these feeling in public, my partner at the last minute made it fun by changing his mind from a cheek kiss to a quick mouth kiss. I would like to think that we are given more respect due to our long term relationship & CP.

What on earth is a civil partenership system?! I don't believe in marriage, I don't really understand what you're asking. Do you mean living together without getting married? If that's the case then that's the best way to have a meaningful long-term relationship in the 21st century in my opinion.

When they were first introduced I almost wished that they were available (under the name civil unions and not civil marriage) for men and women in 'straight' relationships. I liked the idea of a recognition of a relationship which gave it legal status, gave both partners rights that safeguarded them (for example when one partner is ill) but was not referred to as marriage. I didn't like the idea of being married because of how it is seen in society and what the position of women has been in marriage.

When you love some body ,it should not be anyboby else concern.

While marriage is viewed by, arguably, the majority of society as a secular bond, homosexual relationships are excluded due to the religious instruction that the union should be between a man and a woman. While this remains the church's prerogative, the civil partnership now fills the vacuum where the non- religious homosexual union once was.

Whilst I support civil parnterships, I am apathetic

Why should civil partnership be called marriage and not vice versa? In an increasingly atheist country and a non-secular state why should the most recognised form of union be in religious terms? For most people marriage is about a couple and not a god. Civil partnerships are recognised but in official forms such as applications where an individual does not want to disclose their sexuality require the section on marital status.

Would personally tend to call all legally formalised relationships marriage; after all, many heterosexual partnerships don't go as far as legal formalisation; respect any couple who are sufficiently committed to make the legal tie.

you are entitled to the same laws applying to married couples. for example if your partner dies etc.

You are making a formal commitment to each other in a recognised manner

You can call it what you like, the rights and responsibilities are the same. "Marriage" is such a loaded term, it is probably right to stick with civil partnership. I am planning a civil partnership with my partner and I intend to call him my husband anyway!

You have more legal rights, you can celebrate the fact that you want to be together for the rest of your lives

you've spelt "beliefs" wrong

Your partner has the same legal status as your spouse - this brings benefits such as your partner being your next-of-kin, hospital visiting rights rights over your partner's children, property rights etc.

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13. Please provide YOUR own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the civil partnership system and any possible DISADVANTAGES or NEGATIVES such a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE under the law. "your responses in this section may be used in the written dissertation -- so by answering you consent to the use of your response anonymously"

"a system has over a system where all unions are called and recognized as MARRIAGE" I really think I've misunderstood you. These survey questions are not clear

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-this is making people assume that all queer people want to get married. that they are all monogamous. that they feel like they need a similar system as straight people -- because it has worked so well for them... it furthers a government institution that is clearly failing and unethical in its current stances. we are a Christian country and so when you decide to get married under this system, you are supporting a lack of separation between church and state. "gay" marriage will not solve everything!! i believe it will only perpetuate the problem. there has to be an alternative solution that pleases everybody and benefits from the protections it offers.

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1: many straight people don't have the foggiest idea what 'civil partnership' means. 2: In our society, 'equality' means formal equality; this is an entrenched, normative view and very difficult to reverse. 3: A two-tier system is discriminatory 4: Article 12 of the ECHR is about the "right to marry", not the right to enter into a civil partnership 5: It leads to misunderstandings...for example, I recently purchased a new car, using credit. When filling in the credit application form, the car saleswoman asked me "are you married or single?" I responded "I am in a civil partnership" (my partner was with me at the time) She said "Is that like 'single' then?" I said: "No, it's like married"

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A civil partnership can become more of a legal binding than that of a proclamation of love and unity. It can also be seen as adhering to a legal system that does not yet fully give homosexual couples the same right and benefits as heterosexual couples. It also can take away the religious aspect of a union and again turn it into that of a more legal ceremony unlike the marriage equivalent when it may be wished by the couple to be married in the eyes of their religious beliefs than that of the legal system.

A civil partnership is not seen as being equal to marriage and so is taken less seriously by society. It is a watered down version and it comes across as a token gesture to so called equality. If it were not for the next-of-kin recognition, very important to us after a hospital refused to take my partner as a contact when I was admitted as an emergency patient - despite her being on her way to the hospital - and insisted on taking my sister's name, even though she was 200 miles away. If it were not for that, along with the inheritance tax

implications, my partner and me would have waited until the government/society decided to treat us like grown-ups and allowed us a civil marriage/partnership equal to heterosexuals.
A civil partnership may be regarded as less significant than a marriage.
A Civil Partnership, because it isn't called a marriage, is separated from the traditional form of legal commitment and could therefore be perceived as less valid. In administrative terms, it should be at one's own discretion whether someone chooses to disclose their sexuality, and if they have to declare that they are in a civil partnership this necessarily makes them stand out. The term Civil Partnership implies a purely legal commitment whereas marriage has all of the traditional associations of love and religion. If men and women can marry each other in a non religious ceremony and it still be called a marriage then why shouldn't same sex couples?
A different name could bring prejudice, obviously a disadvantage.
A disadvantage is that whilst the civil partnership is an important stepping stone, it is simply not enough. In particular, a civil partnership is available for people who are not intending to be life partners, eg between siblings, and is therefore not equivalent to 'marriage'. It would also be inadequate to leave the progress made in obtaining equal rights for the LGBT community where it is. As a result, the safe compromise of a civil partnership can also be seen as disadvantageous.
A disbenefit is that by having two distinct types of union it automatically puts them up against each other for analysis and discussion of difference. As one is older and more widely practised than the other it is obvious that marriage is seen as the norm and partnership as a threat.
A marriage has more rights and status, whereas a civil partnership is by definition less than a marriage. This is insulting.
Again i do not feel able to respond to this question as my knowledge on the subject is limited.
Again, as stated above, I'm not qualified to state any disadvantages, and I don't know any, but I'm sure legally civil partnerships aren't as well recognised by the state. Meaning, by having a civil partnership, I wouldn't have thought you acquire as many of the rights of those of a married couple.
Again, I don't know what the difference is between civil partnerships and marriages.
All covered in the above.
am pro civil partnerships and do not see a problem with them standing alongside marriages
as above
As above (sorry!) :)
As above, essentially.
As above, my only criticism of civil partnership is that by law and a lot of society it is not recognised as the same as marriage. I believe by deliberately refusing to acknowledge same sex couple's commitment ceremonies as a marriage but rather civil partnerships this only segregates homosexuals further and although a step in the right direction it seems to have been something put forward almost to "keep the gays happy" rather than genuine equality! If i as a gay woman am not allowed to marry my partner just as my straight friends marry theirs with the blessing of the church and all the legal entitlements that marriage includes, then i am being discriminated against simply as that!
As above.
As above.
As above; the nomenclature is discriminatory.
As Civil Partnerships are not recognised in the same way as marriage is in law, there is still a tiered system with heterosexual relationships seen in society as 'the right way' and other relationships being considered 'wrong'.
As I answered above, I do not know enough about the differences between marriage and civil partnership to draw a comparison.
As the civil partnership laws do not differ from civil marriage don't believe there are any disadvantages. however the fact that it is called a civil partnership and not a marriage requires people to constantly out themselves when asked about their marital status, ie when getting insurance, mortgages etc
As with marriage people are penalised financially when it comes to state benefits. Two individuals separately are better off than a legal couple.
As yet we have not found out any disadvantages but do often see things in gay press where solicitors are giving warnings, it does make me curious We were not sure about the tax system but I believe they do not

class us as a married couple, so I believe we are still paying single tax! but if it did change we may be worse off I have no idea. Some times it is annoying when you are filling in things like financial forms & there is no CP choice for marital status, the only place we have come across that has it is B&Q surprisly I think it is fair that if we split we would have to go through a normal divorce. Something we were both very disappointed about when this bill went through was that un-married straight couples had less rights than us now & we find that embarrassing as we have friends like this.

At the moment I can't think of any disadvantages that have impacted on me... only people's reactions when they ask of you are single or married, and you respond with civil partnership, and they don't know how to respond, or what box to tick.

b

Because marriage is a historical institution, everyone understands it's status. Civil partnership, does not have that level of understanding and as such is thought of as a institution that is less than marriage.

Because the heterosexual union is intertwined with the concept of marriage, the civil partnership, despite giving all possible equality of rights to a couple as they would have after marriage, is seen to be lacking due to not having the added gravitas of being recognised by the Church, however anachronistic this recognition may seem to many members of society.

Better than having partnership would be to abolish all mandatory laws in relation to marriage/p'ship and instead allow citizens to contract amongst ourselves as we deem necessary/desirable.

Bit of a poor man's weddin.

Both classifications should be equally valid - any distinction in name implies a difference in the status of the relationships where there is none.

bvx

By being in a civil partnership you do not legally vow to be faithful to your partner, so by receiving the benefits of being in a partnership, but without the commitment made in normal marriage (religiously or legally) should not be allowed. The civil partnership should be changed to include this and then allow itself to be called marriage.

By calling civil partnership anything other than marriage it is creating another division between us and the heterosexual population. I think it gives people the wrong message about same sex relationships. To me it says there is something abnormal about us, & it undermines the importance of my relationship.

By having 2 different names, people perceives marriage and civil union as "different" and civil union as "less" real/important than marriage. Legally (I am not commenting about religion) they both are a "contract" between people wishing and willing to share their life as a couple. They both should provide the same benefits and neither should be made to be perceived as 1st or 2nd class.

By naming one a marriage, and one a civil partnership a difference and distinction is made and I don't think there should be one. The principle is meant to be the same, the legal advantages the same, so why give it a different name. For those who are committed Christians or any other religion, it also precludes them from tying the knot in church.

By separating out the two there is a continuing difference of value given in a society where marriage has been sanctified and honoured for generations. Civil Partnerships may give legal status now but still may be perceived as a second or lesser type of relationship than marriage. Also I believe that all couples who don't want to have a religious/christian wedding should be able to choose a Civil Partnership - this would remove the lesser status of same sex partnerships as Civil Partnership would just be a choice for non religious couples whether straight or gay.

Calling the union a Civil Partnership suggests that it is different from and unequal to marriage - this wouldn't be a problem if 'different from' didn't equal 'lesser than' in people's minds, but I'm afraid it probably does. I think it is also, as I've suggested above, a stupid name, suggesting convenience and bureaucracy - apart from the aesthetics, I believe that this actually promotes inequality by suggesting that gay marriage cannot be romantic or traditional... after all, if something is not normal, you can brand it abnormal.

Cannot reproduce

civil partnership = marriage only difference is the name; separates out homosexuals from 'normal' people so that they can be made to feel different. I'm glad that civil partnerships are allowed- if two people wish to become 1 legal entity then that should be their choice, not society

Civil partnership implies that it is worth less than marriage, at least to the eyes of those who are religious.

Civil partnership is seen as something 'different' from marriage, because the name is different. In reality, both are the same. Two people committing to each other publicly.

depend on the relationship of his guardians?
Civil partnership segregates and alienates same sex couples. I want to marry my fiancée, I want her to be my wife. I don't want a civil partner. I am not entering into a business relationship, I am committing my love and devotion to someone for the rest of my life. My main issues surrounding this area is that homosexuality is always viewed as a sexual or legal matter by the rest of society, never about love and devotion. "Gays need to be legally covered if they want to let their partner inherit" Society needs to see, through semantics, that homosexuals have the same feelings and emotions as any other person. When I introduce my wife, it should say to others "here is the love of my life, here is the wonderful person I have chosen to share my life with, until death us do part, in sickness and in health etc etc" not "Hi, I'm a lesbian and I'm choosing to make a statement that I'm the same as everyone else by doing this looky likey marriage thing. I entered into a partnership with this woman so that she can make decisions about me if I fall ill and inherit my house without paying inheritance tax" Marriage isn't about money, it's about love. Semantics are a very powerful and dangerous thing.
Civil partnership should be open to exceptional circumstances, such as siblings living together who do not wish to lose out when one sibling dies. (There was a story in the news about this earlier in 2007)
Civil partnership, for same-sex couples, is the closest legal status to marriage that can be achieved in the UK, but this gives the feeling of it being a financial arrangement rather than a bond of love and unity.
Civil partnerships add legitimacy to the whole concept of being Gay. Some people may not think that is such a good thing, but it is ok with me.
Civil Partnerships are considered by some people to be of second class status to marriage. Although is not true, legally, it is perceptually.
Civil partnerships are divisive - creating a previously un-existing category of respectable and non-respectable queers. LGB+T / queers who choose not to CP/ marry are having the validity of their relationships additionally presurised, attacked, devalued and questioned. Civil partnerships are neither one thing nor another - they make visible how much of a legal contract marriage is but fail to signal equality because of the name difference. CPs assume a hetero-normative lifestyle and deny the possibility of many family forms that lesbians and gay men have developed - and that other queer people are a part of. For example that assume financial merging when many lesbians have previously managed their financial affairs separately. They assume a partner will be a person's primary carer. They exclude other bonds of chosen family except to choose a single life partner from among your lovers. Other friends, lovers, co-parents, comrades etc. are excluded. CPs encourage dependency upon one other individual not a wider clan or community structure. All this is particularly evident in the welfare state which is treating all cohabiting lover relationships as defacto CP/marriage even if people have not chosen these bonds. Why should a disabled person become financially dependent on a lover because they live in the same house? Why should anybody, LGB or heterosexual be still living under a welfare state designed for heterosexual nuclear families in the fifties with one wage earner and one stay at home domestic and childrearer? LGB+T people have been excluded from this scenario till now and have developed a different tradition and culture which includes many more relational forms than monogamous sexual union and nuclear family
Civil Partnerships are easier to dissolve than a formal marriage arrangement, and as such may be entered into without the same level of commitment.
civil partnerships are not viewed by most to be equal to marriages. civil partnerships are still discriminated against and are not recognized or allowed in many instances. In general people don't want to, or are hesitant to admit to others that they are in a civil partnership because of the stigma still attached.
Civil partnerships may be seen by some people as 'lesser' than marriages, or as somehow less legitimate. The use of a different term could be seen to single out homosexuals as socially 'different'. Civil partnerships may be used as a way of subtly discriminating against homosexuals by giving them the appearance of marriage without all the attendant rights.
Civil partnerships represent a great step forwards - my partner and I have been together 21 years now and it is only now that this can be legally recognised. This is despite us having three children and eight grandchildren! I would like us to take a further step and equalise it fully with marriage.
Committed relationships are committed relationships - we have a legal civil partnership but got married in church and refer to ourselves, unofficially and officially, as married, since that is what we are.
continuing discrimination of marriage vs civil partnership.
CP is not treated seriously. Gay/lesbians doesn't feel like "married".
Currently I believe there are prejudices against civil partnerships whereas marriage has been accepted by society.
Differentiates between same sex and opposite sex relationships

society of equality.
Disadvantages are that some people, possibly those more religious, will see same sex relationships as getting similar treatment to opposite sex relationships and may disagree with this- could cause tensions in society.
Disadvantages could be that certain sectors of society show cracks, and maybe homophobia could become more noticeable.
Disadvantages include things such as the idea that it is 'less serious' and recognisable in society at present, when it shouldn't be. They should enforce an act which over rules Civil Partnerships and introduces same-sex marriage, just to see what these people have to say!
Don't feel there is an advantage to not being called a marriage. Just makes it sound less valid.
Don't know of any
Don't know.
For me, the important distinction between heterosexual 'marriage' as opposed to a heterosexual 'civil marriage ceremony' is that the civil ceremony is not religious. I believe that civil unions should offer the same benefits to same sex couples as they do to heterosexual couples. I think calling all forms of what we currently refer to as marriage, civil ceremonies, or civil partnership, 'marriage' might be problematic because I think it is important to distinguish a civil ceremony from a religious one; and I think 'marriage' has more religious connotations. Therefore, I think civil unions should be called either 'civil partnerships' or 'civil marriages,' regardless of the gender of those involved. To me, marriage has religious or spiritual connotations.
For me, there are no disadvantages or negatives per se - though the benefits could be enhanced to have a clearer understanding of the equality between both civil states (same and opposite sex civil ceremonies). What needs to be done is to encourage religious institutions to rid themselves of their heterosexism and homophobia and recognise that relationships are valid, welcomed and affirmed in their communities and that to ignore this, pretending they are not happening and LGB people aren't there means that the institutions are becoming significantly less valid in society.
for those who want parity with marriage, it does not have the same status as marriage.
From the way this survey is worded, it would seem that some people do not see them as equal - that a civil partnership is seen as lesser.
Fuels the debate of whether gay adoption is right or not; i.e marriage signifies starting a family and therefore may open up issues on that front.
Gay is like AIDS it will never become a popular trend among nations with health education. Statistics show that homosexuals have a higher risk of STD'S-AIDS this is a major disadvantage for the civil partnerships. Civil partnerships are so far from the norm it will forever be challenged.
Giving it a different name automatically creates distinction as something different and not the same as marriage.
Good idea, possibly provides less financial security than marriage (not sure of this), however some people would not recognise it as it is not in the eyes of god etc.
have no personal experience of it
However on the other hand, I don't actually think that this (what I said at the beginning of question 12) should be the case because I think it degrades marriage in a way. As, if you had been in a relationship and living together for however long it takes for it to be regarded as a civil partnership then it may seem pointless to some people to get married, because, legally, there would be hardly any difference. I believe that marriage should be a step forward from civil partnership.
I am irritated by the lack of recognition given to the sexual intimacy between two partners in the CPA - as if it was too controversial a topic to bring up. Consummation/adultery inequalities serve to consolidate the view that same sex relationships are inferior. Admittedly, the CPA is better than nothing - but I would argue that it is a token piece of legislation which fails to address the prejudices endured by the gay community by the state and legal system in particular.
I am not sure
I am not sure that I see disadvantages of having a civil partnership rather than a marriage at this time.
I am not well familiar with the law and with its advantages, if any over marriage, nor do I have much real life experience in the matters.
I believe that terming all cohabiting relationships as marriage is dangerous as it doesn't distinguish the choice factor involved. It could lead to unlawful consensual partnerships or force people who just aren't ready to

commit to something, possibly leading to more broken homes. The civil partnership is a good idea and should always be recognised, and perhaps allow each individual couple to decide what lawful entitlements they want associated with their partnership.

I believe having two separate acknowledgments of civil union gives the impression of them being viewed differently by society, and that this is a negative thing.

I believe it is different for same sex couples and unmarried heterosexual couples. unmarried couples have made a specific choice to not get married, gay people were denied that choice for a long time. to me a civil partnership is something which again separates gay people - they are not seen to deserve to be recognised as straight couples are. it further reinforces the separation and difference between gay and straight. marriage should be available to everyone.

I believe making it something different to marriage emphasises differences between same sex couples and opposite sex couples. The benefits of both should be put together and should be then used as a universal form of long term union.

I believe mostly on opposite sex marriage. Civil partnership is quite a new development in the society. For me it does not matter what is the name of the relationship. The important bit is the commitment and that has to be long term. But the main disadvantage of Civil partnership is biological as it can not produce new life. I think this is a very important bit in a long term relationship. It feels you more bound to each other by giving birth new life.

I believe that a legal marriage provides a stronger commitment toward a life-time relationship which I believe lead to more stable social structure. I personally do not want my children to be discriminated socially for being born out of wedlock either. Despite the fact that the civil unions are more and more accepted by the society, I don't believe that everyone accepts it as totally ethical. As I am from a traditional and conservative social background, I am more inclined to keep the tradition of legal marriages. My faith of Christianity reinforce this thought as well as the fact that I am naturally heterosexual. I do not intend to try to force this view to others either. I don't have a problem with civil partnership being lawful as I also believe in people having free will. Who am I to judge them?

I believe that any term which differentiates between heterosexual and homosexual relationships can only provoke tension between the two groups. However, as stated in the previous section, I do not feel that same sex partnerships deserve the same privileges / rights as a marriage. Consequently, I do not believe a same sex partnership should fall under the term 'marriage'.

I believe that civil partnerships are a start. they should not however be restricted to same-sex couples. Marriage no longer fits in with modern society, for example its regulations on prohibited degrees of relationship being too restrictive and its restrictions on polygamous relationships. It only serves to support the traditional family form which is becoming less and less prominent in today's society.

I believe that if someone wants to make a public and legal commitment to someone, they should get married. Even though I don't doubt the legitimacy of feelings or commitment in a homosexual couple, I don't believe it is how things should be. I also believe that God has a large role to play in relationships, and so marriage is a sacred and spiritual act as well as a legal one. That's why I am more in favour of marriage rather than civil partnerships.

I believe that marriage should be equally available to homosexual couples who wish to enter into that state as it is for heterosexuals. To have a separate scheme and to exclude a section of society from one part is, in the modern secular age, unnecessarily divisive.

I believe that there should be no distinction between civil partnerships and marriage but I seem to recall reading that there could be differences over pension rights and "divorce". Language is important - merely distinguishing by calling the legally recognised relationships by different names creates a disadvantage for civil partners - a feeling of a "two tier system". Marriage does not have to be defined as existing between a woman and a man. That notion may well derive from religion and religious domination over marriage ended with the legalising of civil marriage. It may have been due to fear of religious complaints that the government chose to set-up a distinction that could be seen as been putting on a mystical pedestal.

I believe the disadvantages of civil relationships are many, socially and legally. It is harder to establish your rights. If you immigrate you have to produce a lot more documentation. Children with parents of different names do not tend to feel so much of a unit.

I can see no disadvantage at all in civil partnerships, and recommend it to all gay / lesbian couples who are committed to each other. We sometimes travel to countries where civil partnerships are not recognised and where there may be hostility to gay people - in that case I am prepared to describe myself as single on a visa application where I presume that is how I stand in those countries in the light of their laws. I feel I can support other gay people in those countries better by being there than by being denied a visa.

I can see no particular disadvantages or negatives to a same-sex civil partnership over marriage.

legally recognised as a couple in terms of next of kin etc as a heterosexual couple
I can't think of any disadvantages
I can't think of any disadvantages that differ from that of marriage. Such as, you are in a committed relationship which is binding.
I can't think of any.
I cannot see any disadvantage to acknowledging one partnership in the same manner as another.
I cannot think of any disadvantages
I do not believe that civil partnership is the same as marriage. The whole concept of marriage is associated with a heterosexual relationship. Civil partnership as very different but should be afforded the same recognition, rights and financial benefits as a marriage would do.
I do not believe there are any disadvantages of the civil partnernship system, provided the rights of civil partner are equal to the rights of a spouse in marriage. I don't really know much about it.
I do not know
I do not really see any, although it could be frowned upon by religious members of society.
I do not see why there should be a distinction between marriage for a heterosexual couple, and a civil partnership between a same-sex couple. Allowing same-sex couples to marry, and therefore recieve the benefits implicit in this (in terms of legal entitlements etc.) seems a perfectly acceptable idea, and i can see no reason why people should be denied the legal status of marriage and the related benefits based on their sexual orientation. The idea of a civil relationship to offer homosexual couples something akin to the status of marriage is to be commended, but in my opinion it should officially be marriage. Seperating marriage and civil partnerships seems to imply that one is superior, and this undermines the entire concept, in my opinion.
I do not think a civil partnership system is more advantageous than a system where all unions are called and recognized as marriage because by calling it a civil partnership, and not marriage, you are differentiating people and automatically causing division which can lead to discrimination. If all unions were called and recognized as marriage under the law it would make everyone equal, and lead to a fairer society.
i do not think there are any
i don t have none
I don't believe there are any DISadvantages of civil partnership over marriage either, or vice versa. What others think does not bother me.
I don't believe there to be many differences technically, however there is the negative that one may have to face when calling there partnership a 'civil partnership' rather than the more traditional and accepted marriage. However this is simply a social problem that should disappear with time; the next generation will grow up with both so should consider both to be equal.
I don't know of any disadvantages
I don't know what the legal differences are. If someone who is married does have more legal rights than someone who is in a civil partnership then that is a negative point because differentiating between the two means there is still discrimination.
I don't really see a benefit in making a distinction between opposite-sex marriage and civil partnership; 'marriage' is a religious institution and should therefore have no legal status, but I have no problem with it being used as a name covering the same legal benefits as civil partnerships provide, I just don't think that the two should have different names.
I don't see any disadvantages of being in a civil partnership, but deciding on what kind of ceremony is difficult. I prefer to think of it as a different, more equal life long partnership than marriage, and I would want the ceremony to reflect that. But without a tradition of civil partnership cerremories (as distinct form marriage ceremonies) one is forced to re-write the rules, and starting from scratch can feel a bit overwhelming.
I don't see any disadvantages of civil partnerships.
I don't see any disadvantages or negatives, as long as marriage and civil partnerships have the same legal status.
I don't see why anyone would want to undergo a civil partnership if they were not gay as it seems to me that they may as well get married, although I'm not sure exactly what the legal and ceremonial differences are between the two. It could come across as a 2nd class marriage with less significance to some people.
I don't thing there are any disadvantages. It's nice to be distinguished from a heterosexual marriage.

undertaken likely; just like marriage.
I don't think there are any.
i dont believe the relationships are monogamous
i dont really think there is an awful lot wrong with the system. those who do have civil partnerships may obviously feel that they should be called marriages but i don't think the name is especially important, particularly as they become more common.
I dont see any disadvantages
i dont think it has any advantages or disadvantages
i dont think that anymore there are any dangers with a civil partnership. their is the potential for people to enter into one of these partnerships, as they are probably easier to get out of, so if people arent as willing to commit to each other indefinitely they are more likely to enter a civil partnership, meaning the relationship may not survive for as long, as there may not appear to be as much to work at, unlike a marriage.
I dont understand why gay people arent allowed to be married. having to have their own type of union separates them from the rest of society and misses the point of celebrating and formalising love and commitment.
I dont understand why same sex couples couldnt just get Married the same as heterosexual couples do, is the only difference for this religious grounds?
I feel it is the opinion of a minority in the population that civil partnerships are not as substantial as marriage and thus should possibly not be allowed. I also feel it puts pressure on the couple within a civil partnership to explain their circumstances to those who disrespect their choice. Having not researched into civil partnerships I do not know about them in detail but I would imagine in some circumstances they are not legally binding as marriage.
I feel that it is inappropriate to draw a qualitative distinction between relationships on the grounds of the sexes of the people involved. I feel such distinctions can only be said to make any sort of sense as a throwback to the idea of marriage as a state-sanctified means of procreation. In western society today, this concept is rendered meaningless by the tolerance shown towards children born out of wedlock, couples who choose to remain child-free, and couples who choose to adopt... and by the advances in medical science that are beginning to open up the possibility of same-sex couples having genetic offspring.
I feel that the civil partnership system takes a lot of feeling out of the union. It just seems so official. Civil partnership being recognised as marriage may cause more controversy but it would mean that it would feel more of a loving ceremony. I'd rather spend my life with a husband than a "civil partner"!
I feel that the only disadvantage to the system is that it is called civil partnership. I feel that the general public think it is of less legal standing than conventional marriage. Which of course it isn't.
I feel that whatever your sexual orientation you should not be discriminated against. I consider not allowing a homosexual relationship the same status as a heterosexual relationship to be indirect discrimination.
I got married in a Civil Partnership in December to my female partner. While it was one of the best moments of my life, it was also poignant. I have a strong spiritual belief system and not being allowed to get married in a church like any other christian person I found to be personally insulting. Yes, we have legal rights now. But in society's eyes I think there is still a sense of "oh they are not REALLY married" or "it's JUST a civil partnership". I just tell people I got "married" - because in my opinion, that's what we did. If the legal system in this country wants to split hairs that's their problem. My partner and I are MARRIED! I think that the legal system calling it a "Civil Partnership" is cowardly. They just didn't want to deal with the inevitable backlash from small minded people. I guess it's a step forward, but it's really only a half-step because it still isn't allowing people to be viewed as equal. Equality means you marry who you choose, where you choose, in the manner you choose - not being restricted to a registry office with a silly tag like "civil partnership".
I have experienced no disadvantages to civil partnerships although the time is still rather short for such things to show up.....What will happen for instance when one or other partner has to enter a 'care home'? Are the social services geared up to deal with same-sex partners sharing accommodation as surely they will wish to?
I have no experience of same sex marriages and can't think of any disads
I see CP and marriage equal, but I know mainstream society sees CP as fake marriage. I never wanted to copy a marriage, i simply want the same recognition from society and the legal system
I see no disadvantages with the system as it stands
I see no real disadvantages.
I suppose it allows people to say that a couple 'only' has a Civil Partnership, rather than a marriage, thus making it less real.

think that is the kind of message society should be giving to its gay population.
i suppose the fact that it is not fully accepted by society as a whole and therefore greater speculation is cast upon the morality of it.
I think all unions should be called marriage, as the term civil partnership seems to belittle gay marriage as less serious, like some mickey mouse ceremony when it is as serious to the couple as any straight couple committing themselves to one another.
I think by phrasing them as civil partnerships the religious implications are deliberately removed but although some people may see it as progress it shows there is still a level of homophobia implicit in some areas of british culture
I think children os same sex couples would be horribly confused by having two mummies, or two daddies, and either they should agree not to adopt/have children.
I think CPs being recognised as distinct to civil marriages (personally I have no interest in church or religious based ceremonies)is unnecesary and remains an unnecessary distinction between hetero and homosexual relationships. This distinction itself is unhelpful and still makes me feel 'different' from a 'normal relationship'.
I think it is sometimes still considered not equal to marriage as it has a different name/system. Some people I find also don't know what to call it.
i think its unfair that it isnt called a marraige as it feels like they are putting a label on our relationships
I think negatives would be the impact on religion. Marriage is seen as a religous union between male and female. I feel by allowing gay unions to be known as marriage, would de-value and undermine the church of england even more, as seen by the exposed gay priests.
I think same-sex unions should have the same rights and meaning as opposite-sex unions. People can invest a lot in a relationship, and this should be respected and recognised.
I think some sex relation means people involed in that relationship have (mental) illness, some psychological problem, maybe from childhood. Yes, it's not fault of that people, but it shouldn't be stated as 'normal relationship' by law system. That's my opinion.
I think that because civil partnerships are not religious they don't have the same meaning as marriage; they don't appear to me to be as 'serious' as marriage
i think that by giving it a different name you are making it different and in our heteronormative society this particular difference means 'less equal than'. if it were equal no one would question it being called marriage. look at local authority paperwork some 2 years after the first civil partnership many do not have paperwork that has a category for 'civil partners' - it just shows it is not taken seriously. p.s a person can call themselves married. what do you call yourself after a civil partnership? civilly partnered!
I think that having civil partnerships for one orientation and marriage for another is just segregating the community. Ok, so maybe churches don't want to marry same sex couples because it's against their beliefs. But for the state to then discriminate against them and not let them marry either reminds me of the US system of having a bus for black people and a different bus for white people.
I think that it's an 'easy' way in that someone can always leave if they want to. In marriage it is much more of a commitment and much harder to leave. I don't agree with living together without being married. I don't agree with the morals of it.
I think the disadvantages may be more so socially, with opposition from traditional views of marriage.
I think the disadvantages of c.p.'s would be people continuing to dismiss them as wholly inferior to marriage, when they are just different, and also homos dismissing them as useless because they are not 'marriage', and missing out on the benefits and security they offer.
I think two people, of whatever sex they define themselves as, should be allowed to get married. So from this I don't think there is any advantage of the civil partnership scheme..why not just make marriage available to everyone?
I was lead to believe that the only difference between civil partnership and marriage in the UK was the sex of the couples involved and the names. I don't understand why they have to have different names - it is demeaning to homosexual couples. Civil partnerships have the same disadvantage as marriages in that they fail to recognise that some relationships involve more than two people, same gender or not, and both discriminate against people who choose not to have such a partnerships, but are disallowed from gaining the financial benefits of marriage/civil partnerships with a close family member or friend instead.
I would like to say that the existence of these two separate entities (civil partnership and marriage) continues to maintain inequalities and the (in my opinion, wrong) belief that a union sanctioned by religion is somehow

more worthy than one which is not. Somehow civil partnerships are still considered less "binding" than marriage and that it wrong!
I would prefer it if civil partnerships were called marriage, i think the difference gives ammunition to opponents of civil partnerships and gay rights. They can say a civil partnership still isn't real, or it's second best. I don't believe this to be true, but having to listen to or read this kind of thing in newspapers or on TV, or the radio starts to grate after a while! When civil partnerships were first introduced there were stories in the press about same sex couples having the ceremony and not realising that if they split up they would need to get a divorce, as married couples do. I think there would have been less confusion if both were called marriage, although no-one I know personally had this problem.
I would suggest the main disadvantage is that it is NOT called marriage and therefore under the law can be taken away -- it is obvious that marriage will never be taken away. ---- TEST
I'm all for it.....can't wait to get hitched....the only disadvantage is not knowing who takes who's name!
I'm not aware of any diasadvantages to civil partnerships
I'm not sure if the legal rights are equal - if they are not, then this is a clear disadvantage of having the division.
I've been in a thirty year heterosexual relationship with children and this has less recognition in law, although just as much commitment or more so than some formally registered partnerships, hetero or same sex. I think if people want a formal recognition of their relationship that is fine, but to me personally I see no need. However, my understanding is that my partner has currently no legal right to my pension should I die, unless we are formally married.
I've never been exposed to a system where all unions are considered marriage so I can't comment.
idont really c any disadvantages to be honest.
If all unions were known as marriages this would show that committed relationships are equally valid regardless of the genders of those involved. Personally I find the power imbalance of "marriage" problematic so would prefer a different term for both. However part of me, the bit that is a Christian, would love to be able to be declared "married" to the woman I love. Rather than "civilised" or whatever!
If civil partnerships were to gain the same rights as a married couple, then particularly in relation to adoption this would bring about concerning issues. Children should be raised by a mother and a father, and any child not brought up this way is likely to have problems later in life. This can be seen from children raised by single mothers or from broken homes. Children raised by same sex couples will not have the contrasting relationships from a mother and father needed, no matter how loving a same sex couple would be.
If I knew what one was I could answer this question. It's not a commonly used term you know.
If it walks and talks like a duck, it is a duck. If we genuinely have all the rights and responsibilities of marriage then call it marriage.
If it's not called marriage, I feel it tarnished. Or, heterosexual marriage should be called civil partnership too.
if legally binding then divorce rates might go up
If people prefer to not disclose their sexuality e.g. job application, being in a civil partnership makes it obvious, may encourage discrimination
If the two systems are not equal (rights of adoption etc), then it indicates that one system is seen as less valid than the other.
In all honesty I can't really think of any.
In my opinion, society doesnt seem to acknowledge civil partnerships as being as important as marriage.
increases divorce rate
It encourages gays
It identifies you as being different and therefore you may suffer from stereotyping or discrimination.
It is seen as not being entirely equal and so laws can be made which disadvantage same sex partnerships. Can I call my partner my 'wife'? What is the word for this with a civil partnership? We need such a word because the commitment represented is more than just a partnership.
It is still not the same as marriage
it is still not the same as marriage.
It is still not viewed as a marrige in the eyes of the church, which i believe is wrong

family.
It may lead to discrimination against civil partnerships, if it doesn't provide the same benefits of marriage
It might stall the gay rights movement, there could now be a response of "we gave you civil partnerships, now stop moaning" to people who continue to fight for properly legalised gay marriages.
It publically labels you as gay/lesbian. Not alot of people want this, and would rather keep such an orientation private. Also other members of the public don't particularly want to know either. Its still considered taboo, and people find it hard to accept. Disadvantages are external to the relationship.
It's discriminating to use the term civil partnership instead of marriage.
It's discrimination and a breach of lesbians' and gay men's human rights.
It's insulting, and furthers the belief in some people's mind that same-sex marriage isn't "real" marriage. It also panders -- as I mentioned in the "pros" box -- to the Church of England's special legal status.
It's not called marriage - so some people may differentiate and give less importance to 'marriage'; a word they know and are familiar with. Stereotyping - most everyday, heterosexual people who don't know any better might think that a civil partnership is ONLY two effeminate men in pink suits. They might not recognise the legal differences, the other things that civil partnership gives and doesn't give.
it's unfair and not seen as a real or as life changing as marriage which is wrong.
its disgusting and shouldn't happen. its adam and eve not adam and steve
its not called marriage
Its not viewed in the same way as a marriage by both straight and gay people
its seen as less than a marriage
Legal rights are not currently equivalent to those of married partners.
Less legal benefits than marriage.
marriage is a forum for making families, homosexual relationships are not procreative relationships and thus differ, although i have no opinion on whether homosexual people should adopt/surrogate children.
Marriage is a union between a man and a woman in the eyes of God and i do not believe that same sex relationships are honouring to God in the same way. To this end, they cannot be classified as marriage. this is only a matter of language though and obviously I understand that this is not an opinion shared by much of society.
Marriage is the traditional system in this country and as prominent members of the church still have a fairly large input into the way the country is run and the policies and laws, civil partnership will never be equal to marriage in any social or legal standing
Most friends that have had them have broken up with their long term partner shortly afterwards!
my brother got married less than a week ago. It was so unbelievably stressful for the entire family and has caused rifts between several family members. Despite all this I don't think any of us would have objected to their marriage and when we look back on their marriage in years to come it will be with fond memories. Marriage is a strong bond and hopefully will overcome these petty family disagreements.
My partner and I are currently planning a civil partnership and, although people are supportive, we do feel that they do not take it as seriously as if we were planning a marriage. We would also like a church blessing but this is not possible which is disappointing.
My partner would have liked to have had a church ceremony but we couldn't even have 'God' mentioned in our ceremony or hymns. Also my partner wants to change her surname to mine but that is not automatic and requires individually changing the name on each form of id i.e. paying £72 for new passport then once that is done then changing it at the bank etc. Also we have to make a will to ensure that we are the benefactor of each other as this is not automatic through a civil partnership. I also am unhappy that 'adultery' is not a named reason for dissolving the partnership. If my partner was/is having an affair it is not a reason in itself for dissolution but perhaps it would be covered by 'unreasonable behaviour.'
N/a
n/a
no answers
No comment
No comment

No disadvantages
No disadvantages ,but is just the begining.
No disadvantages as long as the question,"Are you Married" can be answered in the affirmative by both groups.
No idea.
No obvious ones.
no protection,
No real disadvantages, except that it feels as though gay people are not quite good enough to deserve a proper marriage
No strong opinion.
None
none
None
None
None
None
none
None
none
none
none
None
None
none
None
None - I think it's brilliant and long awaited. Thank you to all the heroes who've fought for it over the previous decades, but have not been able to gain for it.
none as i know
None for me.
none that i can see?
none. I can think of nothing. Anything that promotes love and happiness is a good thing. There is nothing negative about accepting people for who they are and allowing them an equal oppurtunity to have a happy life-long relationship.
None. If people don't want to be in a long term relationship recognised by law then they don't have to be. If it was called marriage, maybe, once conservatives (small c) got over the shock of it, it would be better recognised than civil partnerships though. It might be seen as more 'proper'.
none?
Not entirely sure what the difference between Civil Partership and Marriage is, I thought they were the same but used under different names for religious/social reasons. Diadvantage would be that you can distinguish between the two by name, and hence make assumptions about a person e.g. sexual preference. This might lead to discrimination e.g. when applying for a job.
Not equal to marriage, or recognised as much in society
not having the same name as a marriage suggests that it is worth less, and that somehow homosexual love is not as deep as heterosexual. obviously heterosexual people who devised/ limited us to this ceremony can not understand that true love isn't an exclusively heterosexual thing.
not really disadvantages for civil partnerships

Not recognized by all as a valid union.
not significant to me - tho CP is clearly a poor relative of marriage
Not sure that there are advantages or disadvantages to a Civil Partnership that are any different to a marriage, personal relationships are dependent on circumstances, willingness to make the relationship work and changes and/or similarities in beliefs. Not interested in Civil Partnership/marriage personally as I think that there is a certain amount of feeling by people of feeling chained and owned. Difficult for exactly equal relationship to be maintained.
Not sure what the disadvantages are if you want your union to be recognised, this is a new way of doing it.
o
Obvious from previous answer.
Obviously that it's not quite the same - but I don't really know the subtleties of the differences and haven't time to find out now.
One disadvantage is that by limiting civil partnerships to same sex couples, one could criticise them as being discriminatory, whilst opening marriage to all couples regardless of their sexual orientation would be less so
One of my more frivolous objections is that civil partnership makes homosexuality conform just a little bit more to the hegemonic norm. Before, remaining unmarried was part of my rebellion, but now some people expect me to end up in a long-term, publically recognized monogamous union, just as much as they do my straight brothers and sisters.
Only disadvantage I can think of is for those who are religious and are unable to get married in a church
Only real disadvantage is having 2 get divorced as we gay men are a fickle bunch
Only that society hasn't yet fully got the concept that CPs are just as important to society & the individual & families as marriage.
Other people (particularly the older generations) treat you. Being given a different label helps this attitude, by making it seem different to a marriage.
Other people may view their commitment to one another as less 'real' than a marriage
Others have said that it provides a ready list of gays should any future Government wish to persecute homosexuals.
people don't understand what civil partnership means, that it is the same as marriage; there is a lack of equivalent language (wedding, engaged, honeymoon, wife etc); many forms do not have a box for it, or if they do it means you have to out yourself etc. before i had a civil partnership i didn't think the language mattered and even liked in a way that it was called something different, now i just think it's a nuisance and wish it was all called marriage
People might tend to view a civil partnership as "less" than a marriage. Force the church to recognise marriages between any two people regardless of gender and you might have a solution.
People might think gays are 'copying' straights by getting a civil partnership, people might think it's second-best to real marriage.
Perceived segregation is, I think, a major disadvantage, though this is offset somewhat by its similarity to registry office/non-religious marriages.
Perhaps a great disadvantage is for those couples bowled over by the thought of a ceremony and the day without giving the whole process deeper consideration. I personally have not found any disadvantages within my own situation and remain delighted at being in a civil partnership. Incidentally it is primarily our heterosexual friends and family that regard us as in a marriage!
Perpetuates the belief that same-sex relationships are not equal to opposite-sex relationships. In practice, I have found that most people refer to civil partnerships as 'marriages' in any case - having a separate term seems unnecessary and confusing.
please see above
Pressure to undertake a commitment ceremony if in a long term-relationships. Same pressure as straight couples.
Procreation is usually an option in a marriage, not so in a same-sex civil partnership.
promotes an environment counter productive to child birth and makes bisexuality/homosexuality a norm.
rather not say

religion
rights are not exactly equal to those of marriage
risk offending people who want to call their personal commitments by a name you'd rather not have them use for fear of tainting one's own relationship by association
same sex relationships cannot be wholly seen as equal to heterosexual ones unless they are both recognised as marriage and equal rights are given
see 12
See above
see above
see above
see above
See above
See above
See above for why I believe - starting from the Bible - that all unions should not be called and recognised as marriage (I actually argue for homosexual relationships to not be permitted under law, but this wasn't tabled as an option). Under the question, therefore, I would say that there aren't any negatives of Civil Partnerships.
see above, I've run them together!
See above.
See above. I should not wish to see same sex couples in 'marriage' nor, of course, does the Church.
see previous comment
See question 12 above.
See the response to q. 12.
Sets up a two tier system
short sighted people who find it weird may stigmatise
should have a more sensible name
should the partnership be dissolved, it is far more difficult that previously
Simple changes in wording, from "marriage" to "civil partnership", will not however fool staunch traditionalists for long and this will be but a short term remedy. After all, what is a traditional marriage but a civil partnership? Of course, none of this actually means very much. Seriously, who cares?
So long as it has a difference name it segregates people by their sexual orientation which, as something I believe you do not choose (in the same way you do not choose to be left or right handed), it is wrong to do so.
society doesn't recognise it as having the same value as marriage
some friends still regard term 'civil partnership' as somehow 'second-class'; almost as if you are not really able to have a 'real' marriage so have had to 'invent' a new label for tax/inheritance purposes.
Some of the tax benefits that are available to Married couples are not available to civil partnerships. Civil partnerships still have to endure prejudice from some sections of society and may do for some time. Civil partnerships will not be recognised as marriage until organised religion accepts same sex couples.
Some people believe that civil partnerships are not up to the same level as a marriage.
Some people consider it discriminatory or inaccurate.
Some people in same sex relationships are equally determined to have their partnerships recognised solely as 'marriage', even if their rights under a 'civil partnership' would be equivalent, and would not feel equal members of society until they were 'married'. I hope in time society on both sides of the debate can get past the semantics and feel suitably part of society whatever it's called.
Some people may feel that their union being called a civil partnership may make it "less" than a marriage.
Some same sex partnerships will feel they are not being treated evenly, even though rights and

responsibilities of marriage and a civil partnership are relatively similar. The slight lack of equality in civil partnerships (as opposed to marriage) is that titles cannot be transferred. In that if a lord or a sir had a civil partnership the husband would not get the title of lady. But, this does seem fair, as there is little one could do to address this issue.
Some same-sex couples are religious or monogamous and would prefer to be married as it better reflects their attitudes and beliefs to their relationship.
some, people see it as making a point. Some people believe we are doing it to prove a point. But a heterosexual couple getting married is a lovely thing.(not making a point- seen as done thing)
Somewhat covered in my response to Q12. My main objection to calling them by different names is that it highlights a difference in the way homosexuals and heterosexuals are treated. If we insisted that only white people could be married and blacks had to have civil partnerships this would rightly be denounced as racist.
sorry answer as above
Status is considerably lower than marriage - not worth as much in some people's eyes.
stigma of homophobia in the country
stigma of not having the 'normal' society recognition of relationship status
Still singled out as you have to explain what a civil partnership is. A lot of forms don't have this option even though I'm sure I read that it is now a legal requirement???
straight away there is inequality in marriage and civil partnerships, why can't gay couples get 'married' rather than have a civil partnership. I am not sure of the legal background involved such as do civil partnerships have the same legal standing as a marriage?
Stupid bigots use the difference in terminology to exclude homosexual couples.
Such a system reinforces segregation of people on account of sexuality, and thus exacerbates all the problems caused by this.
That in law courts, it is not exactly the same as marriage, and it should be the same
that is not labelled as a marriage
That society perceives it as second best.
The acceptance of same sex partnerships has a long way to go and by having the option of a civil partnership, rather than just extending marriage to cover same sex couples, it could be said to show the differences between the 2 options rather than the fact that the 2 are more or less the same.
The civil partnership system seems to be a label on gay/non-heterosexual couples. The only difference between the two seems to be whether the couple is same or different sex. Are there any other differences?
The civil partnership is a "positive right" granted by the state and therefore has various restrictions on who may or may not partake of it. Also, it is no business of the state to become involved in peoples' private relationships.
The complications of divorce and separation, as with heterosexual marriages, are considerable and painful.
The couple might not be accorded the same status in society, particularly if they are same sex couple. In many societies, it is seen as a 'fake' relationship.
The debate over whether homosexual unions should be called marriages or not is a rather inane one, in my opinion. Compromise is the key to winning such an argument, and how is it an unfair compromise to have a separate name for homosexual unions, if they still garner the same benefits as that of a heterosexual couple?
The disadvantage to having a civil partnership system rather than all unions being called marriage is that the term civil partnership seems less significant than the term marriage, as though a civil partnership was second to marriage in society, therefore making it seem as though homosexual couples still aren't equal with heterosexual couples.
The disadvantages of having two different systems for different kinds of relationships discriminates the same sex relationships compared to heterosexual relationships, which is considered as a norm.
The disadvantages under the current system, is that it creates a situation where relationships for same-sex couples have a different name than those for opposite-sex couples, when the nature of the relationship may be the same. That same-sex partnerships are somehow less valuable, so they are given a less valuable title, and fewer rights. Because of situation whereby marriage is for opposite-sex couples and civil partnerships are for same-sex. Also opposite-sex couples can't have a civil partnership if they want.
The disadvantage is that the CP only helps further alienate the gay community by not allowing us to have a

marriage it sends out the message that we are not yet fully accepted in society and we can only have what they allow us.
The fact that heterosexual 'friends' are allowed to enter into a civil partnership - for tax benefits. I find this ridiculous and invalidates the true nature of a civil partnership
The fact that they're not called the same name such as a 'marriage' makes it seem less valid to many people in society. We should have the choice of what to refer to it as - ie some are not comfortable with the term 'marriage', whereas others like me seek that same term as that to me would seem like true equality.
The general opinion of, in particular, heterosexual men is that a civil partnership is somehow inferior to marriage, so not having the title 'marriage' may, in the short term at least, promote that opinion. Those who are religious may be unhappy with the limited option open to them for a religious ceremony - as far as I am aware very few churches allow civil partnership ceremonies, although this would not impact directly on me.
The glaring problem with civil partnership is that it is blatant discrimination. Not only does it discriminate against homosexual couples by forbidding them from legally calling their life-partner their "husband" or "wife", but it also discriminates against heterosexual couples who do not believe in marriage as an institution. There is a real danger of stratification of society, so that there is "marriage for the gays", opposed by "real marriage".
The hearts and minds of Middle England can never be won over in the fight against homophobia until there is complete legal equality. Any difference in legal status implies a difference in value of people and their relationships, a difference which supports prejudice at conscious and unconscious levels.
The law doesn't go far enough The Church of England and others continue to discriminate against gay people.
The main advantage I see is that individuals will not have to disclose their sexuality if they are questioned about their relationship status.
The main disadvantages I've encountered are admittedly quite trivial: 1. People don't understand what it is (e.g. our accountant insisted on putting my partner down as 'single' on her tax return despite us showing him our civil partnership certificate). Who knows whether this was simply being ignorant or homophobic. I suspect it was the former. 2. The language one has to use is extremely clumsy. 'I'm in a civil partnership' rather than 'I'm married'. And I noticed at the register office (on a government produced leaflet) that the term 'widow' seems to be reserved for straight women. Astonishing!
The main problem is having to occasionally explain that technically we have a CP rather than a marriage. Or increasingly, that the rights it confers haven't always been available. Also having to explain to straight friends that there is no such thing as common law marriage, contrary to popular belief. After I explained why we were having a CP after 12 years, one straight couple we know sneaked off and got hitched without telling anyone else to get the legal benefits that marriage confers, even though they disapprove of marriage as an institution - because it is cheaper than making the alternative legal arrangements.
The name. It should really be called marriage.
The negatives of the civil partnership is that it still segregates same sex couples from society. by not allowing all unions to be under the 'marriage' umbrella society is still singling out same sex couples.
The only disadvantage I can see is that it could be seen as a qualitative difference i.e. marriage is the ideal, civil partnership is a sort of 'second-class' marriage.
The only disadvantage I can see is that when my partnership and myself entered in to our civil partnership many of our friends thought it was like a marriage, which as feminists neither myself nor my partner want!
The only disadvantage I have personally come across is when asked about my marital status. I consider myself to be married, but by having to say I'm in a civil partnership, it immediately identifies me as a lesbian. I'm proud to be who I am but there are still a great many places where I feel it would be safer for me to be more discrete about that.
The only disadvantage is that it is not recognised as marriage
The only disadvantage is the stigma created by society which causes the adopted children of same sex couples to get bullied.
The only possible disadvantage is that the civil partnership may not be viewed as equal under the law.
The only qualm I have is that I'm not sure whether homosexual couples should be equally preferable as adoptive parents because of the issues this can create for the adopted child.
The same as the disadvantages of marriage
The term 'Civil partnership' is bland and uninspiring, and so seems less valuable than marriage.
There are no different negatives over a 'marriage'.

there are no disadvantages about having civil partnership. the only disadvantage is that we class these people as different from heterosexual couples, by putting them in a little group known as civil partners. The law is an arse and should let them have marriage status like heterosexual couples.
There are no disadvantages I can think of.
There are no disadvantages, it is completely right that these unions are not called marriages.
There are no disadvantages.
There are none
There is a real social stigma around this not just by religious groups but conservative members of society which would prefer the separation btwn civil ceremony and marriage to distinguish sexual orientation. As powerful groups in society, this leads to a greater stigma. its not recognised by the church
There is an artificial distinction between marriage and civil partnership - using the latter forces you to specify that your partner is of the same sex, exposing you both to potential discrimination. Civil partnership is also seen as a lesser substitute for marriage.
There is no exact disadvantage you can take it or leave it however, i personally feel its very peacemeal and PC and that the government have thrown us a crumb and That it is not just common practice throughout the world. It should be discussed in schools as you would marriage and perhaps it may stop the homophobia which takes place,
there is still some element in society that views civil partnerships as being less serious, or the participants as being less sincere in their commitments. society is evolving constantly and there is much less stigma attached in the general public as in previous generations but marriage is still seen as superior.
there will always be a stigma associated with the term however i feel as this is a new concept, like divorce it'll soon become an accepted social practice.
There will still be social stigma for those who have Civil Partnerships but not Marriages. It leads to further segregation of mainstream religious groups and other groups. I can see no reason why a Civil Partnership needs to be between two monogamous sexually active adults, whereas making a comparison between Civil Partnerships and Marriage implies a necessity for sexual activeness. What to adults do (or don't do) in the bedroom should not impinge on their rights to share legal rights/responsibilities. I should, if I choose, have the right to enter into a Civil Partnership with a family member without implying anything other than sharing of next of kin rights/shared property rights/inheritance rights etc.
There would be no way to argue that a relationship affirmed by civil partnership was better than that affirmed by marriage, or vice versa. All relationships would be equal.
These type of capitulations provide another denial for the natural selection of human-kind.
They are not recognised by a religion.
they are still different from marriage meaning that they are not truly equal, with the current system.
They can lead to the feeling of exclusion for homosexual couples. But if civil partnership was available to all, this would remove the issue.
They don't have the same rights as people in a normal marriage do?
This is too complex an issue to give an adequate response in this box.
Those who do have strong religious beliefs may not be satisfied with a civil partnership. Also due to strong restrictions they can't get 'married' where ever they want, stricter regulations restrict civil partnerships in a way marriage doesn't.
To me it the difference it makes is positive in that having been married before and failing at that I can distinguish between those two times in my life by saying this time it's a CP and that is different. I am a different person now to what I was when I married and I appreciate the opportunity to have a slightly different ceremony. As far as our friends and non-religious family are concerned we are getting married and that is what counts.
Two laws - simpler if one law.
Unsure... differences in tax breaks? Visas?
until any couple has the option to choose how to have their relationship recognised in the same way, there will be some who will always see one system as more superior than the other.
use of a different name implies a qualitative difference over and above the sexual i.e. CP are 'lower' in some

respect. CP and civil marriage should be one and the same
Very few people outside the gay community seem to know what civil partnerships are - many people seem to think that gay people can get married. The language around civil partnerships is awkward - do you say I'm getting civil partnershiped? Civilled? Partnered? Or just married? Official forms often do not recognise civil partnerships so you have to choose between married or unmarried but in a long-term relationship.
Very few wedding companies understood what a CP is and kept asking for my husband-to-be's name! Not many professional forms have applicable sections for CP.
Well really just all of the above.
Whatever the semantics are about marriage, in common parlance it is seen as the most important formalised union. Whilst civil partnerships provide the same legal benefits and recognition, they will not be seen as equal in the eyes of many. As in 12 above, what do you call yourself when having had a civil partnership? Civil Partner is a bit clunky and businesslike, 'civilised' is another way that the gay community try to deal with negatives and make them sound better than they are. 'Married' is energetically true but technically wrong.
When I say I am married many friends (straight) say but you are not really married are you?
While there remains a difference between a civil partnership and a marriage (even if only in name) there is some condonement from society of prejudice based on difference. Personally I can see no reason not to grant full marriage rights to gays and lesbians. The current situation seems analogous to the previous compromise age of consent of 18 for gays, and hopefully as in that case, it is only a matter of time until full equality is achieved.
Why not get married and get recognised as husband and wife than going around having civil partnership
With the unions not being called marriage, it gives validity to those who think they are somehow less than marriage.
wsq
You do not get the same rights as married couples
you've spelt "beliefs" wrong
zcxz

**Gender Recognition Panel User Group Meeting
Wednesday, 5th November 2008
Fox Court, Grays Inn Road**

Chair: Jeremy Bennett – Deputy President of the GRP

Attendees:

Dr. Jane Rayner – Medical Member of the GRP
Graham Cresswell – GRP Team Manager
Vidya Wadher – GRP Team Leader
Tshanda Dube – GRP Administrative team
Angela Clayton - Press for Change
Marguerite Celiz – Human Rights Division, MoJ
Dr D Di Ceglie – The Tavistock Clinic
Dr T Olive – Norfolk Gender Identity Clinic
Dr M Perring – Optimal Health of Harley Street

Apologies:

Michael Harris - GRP President
Glenn Preston – Human Rights Division, MoJ
Dr N Jamil - Consultant Psychiatrist

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jeremy welcomed everyone to the meeting, who introduced themselves.

2. Minutes from last meeting

Approved. No matters arising from the Minutes.

3. Administrative Report

A report was circulated to those present at the meeting.

The administration team comprises of Tshanda Dube (GRP and Tribunal Caseworker), Vidya Wadher (GRP, Team Leader) and Graham Cresswell (Manager of the GRP).

The Team are based in Leicester and comprises 8 staff in total who also administer work for the Information Tribunal, Charity Tribunal and the Gambling Appeals Tribunal.

The Gender Recognition Panel is receiving between 20 -30 applications a month. It is currently running 33% above profiled receipts for the financial year. There has been an increase in the number of Panel Sessions to deal with the increase.

Angela raised concerns with the time that it has been taking from the submission of an application to the decision being made by the Panel; she quoted a period of 7 months. The case concerned was not identified.

This would be a “one-off” situation due to complications with the application. The administration teams target is 14 weeks from receipt to issue of the Panel's decision.

A majority of applications have their first hearing well within the 14-week period, but if the Panel cannot make a final decision and further directions are required, this may take the application over the 14-week period. On receipt of a response to the directions, the application is put before the Panel on the next available session.

Angela asked for details of the number of cases each month which have a first hearing within 14 weeks. Graham asked that this request and any further requests for information to be made in writing.

4. Judicial Report

Jeremy explained that His Honour Judge Michael Harris remains the President of the Gender Recognition Panel (GRP). Jeremy as Deputy President has day-to-day responsibility for judicial issues relating to the GRP. Five of the doctors are Fee Paid. The other Panel Members are all Salaried Members of the Judiciary. All also sit in the former Social Security and Child Support Tribunal and deal with legal issues arising from medical issues.

The Panel has eleven members, made up of the following:

- a President;
- a Deputy President;
- three Legal Members, and
- six Medical Members.

Applications are heard by a GRP made up of a Legal and Medical Member.

A question was raised regarding the number of applications which are refused. The Panel only turn down a small number of applications. The aim of the Panel is to assist applicants to be granted a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) wherever possible and use the power to give directions to promote this aim.

There have been 3 appeals to Higher Courts.

- 1) Was compromised. The individual provided the Panel with the required information which resulted in a successful application.
- 2) Has not been pursued.
- 3) Went to the Court of Session, who confirmed the Panel's approach to the President Guidance Note No.1. The decision was made confidential by the Courts and cannot be published.

5. The Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act

The Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act bring together a number of Tribunals under a new unified tribunal system, with the creation of two new tribunals (the First-tier and the Upper Tribunals). The new structure aims to provide improvement in the service received by users. For the time being GRP is unaffected by the changes.

The plan is to transfer GRP to the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal with appeals to the Upper Tribunal from 2009. This may be deferred to April 2010, but no firm decision has yet been made.

The views of the Transsexual community will be sought as interested parties. Those at the meeting supported the transfer to the Social Entitlement Chamber in general terms.

Further details are available on www.tribunals.gov.uk under 'Latest News'.

6. Anonymity of the judiciary

When the Panel issue a decision they are represented by a different number issued to each Legal Member. Dr Olive raised concerns about this and would like to have it changed so that instead of a number they can put their name at the bottom of the decision.

Jeremy will have a further discussion about this with the MoJ.

7. Married Applicants

To receive a full GRC, a transsexual person must be unmarried and not in a UK civil partnership. This is because, under the laws of the UK, a marriage is only valid if it is contracted by two people of the opposite sex.

Applicants are required to make a statutory declaration to disclose if married or single. If previously married a copy of the Decree Absolute must be provided.

In the last year, the Panel have found a number of applications where there is a confusion about whether the applicant is still married.

There have been cases where a full certificate has been issued when it has later come to light that the applicant remains married in their original gender.

If a GRC is obtained whilst still married, this will invalidate it and any rights or benefits arising in the acquired gender. Those advising applications are encouraged to alert applicants to potential problems. If in doubt they should consult the GRP Secretariat.

8. Applications being processed jointly

Angela raised concern with the procedure for when two separate applications are made by different individuals, which they would like to be processed at the same time.

This can be done, but the applicants must make this clear with their applications. The administration pointed out that if one application was to be delayed due to further directions being required by the Panel, this would delay the processing of the other application.

9. Young Applicants

The Panel have started to receive an increase in applications from young adults. The GRP are interested in the process for these individuals living in the gender for 2 years before their 18th birthday.

Dr Di Ceglie explained the process for those individuals and a general discussion followed.

10. Review of Fee's Rate

When the GR Act was introduced, a fees structure was put in place.

The fee has never been increased, but this is now likely to take place in the near future.

Details of the break down of application fees for applications received from 1st April 2008 to 31st October 2008

Full Fee	41
Reduced Fee	31
Exemption of Fee	109

11. Presidents Guidance Note No.1

Guidance was issued by the President on the GRP's medical requirements for evidence with each application.

Dr Olive raised concerns with paragraph 6 of the medical report form regarding the space provided for details and requested clearer directions from the Panel when further directions are issued.

The Act states that an applicant must provide two reports of medical evidence giving details of their diagnosis of gender dysphoria and any surgical or medical treatment.

The Panel cannot make assumptions and require clear evidence and confirmation of the diagnosis. These are legal requirements.

The form will be reviewed in relation to paragraph 6. Attachments can be made to the form, to allow more information to be provided.

12. Evidence of living in acquired gender

Dr Olive raised concerns with the application that have resulted in further directions being issued from the Panel and requested clearer directions from the Panel when further directions are issued.

Jeremy said the Panel often receive the bare minimum of evidence from applicants and issue directions to see more evidence. There has been no change to the threshold of evidence required for the grant of a GRC.

Further directions are issued in preference to refusing an application to enable the applicants to submit the required information.

The Panel is a judicial body. The Act states the evidential requirements and the Panel cannot make assumptions if the evidence is not present.

13. GRP statistics 4th April 2005 until 31st October 2008 inclusive

FAST TRACK Receipts (up to and including 31st October 2008) - 1542

Full GRC's	1443
Interim GRC's	46
Refusal	46
Withdrawn	7
Pending	0

STANDARD TRACK Receipts (up to and including 31st October 2008) - 947

Full GRC's	755
Interim GRC's	47
Refusal	22
Withdrawn	14
Pending	107

OVERSEAS TRACK Receipts (up to and including 31st October 2008) - 71

Full GRC's	45
Interim GRC's	0
Refusal	7
Withdrawn	13
Pending	6