


## Book Review

# Beyond Twinship: Unraveling Societal Biases: A Review of Nancy L. Segal, *Gay Fathers, Twin Sons: The Citizenship Case That Captured the World*

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Twins have always captured the curiosity of scholars and hold a special place in the collective imagination. Defined by mutual life experiences and an innate understanding, twins are cherished for their unique and profound bond. With advancements in assisted reproductive technology (ART), especially the increasing prevalence of in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures, twin births have surged, leading to a rise in nontraditional twin families. Dr Nancy L. Segal, an eminent figure in twin studies and acclaimed for her deep insights into the world of twinship, harnesses her vast knowledge to address the evolving social challenges these families face. In her most recent publication, *Gay Fathers, Twin Sons: The Citizenship Case That Captured the World*, N. L. Segal artfully melds the dynamics of twinship with the multifaceted issues of same-sex marriage, legal hurdles, and societal biases, providing readers with a comprehensive and enlightening exploration of these intertwined realms.

With a meticulous and thoughtful approach, N. L. Segal chronicles the remarkable journey of the inspiring couple: Andrew Banks, a native American, and Elad Dvash, originally from Israel. She paints a vivid picture, starting from their individual childhoods, traversing through their encounter at Tel Aviv University's overseas student office, to their decision to unite in matrimony in Canada in 2010. N. L. Segal masterfully unravels the complexities surrounding their bold decision to step into parenthood in 2016. She unveils the layered intricacies they navigate, from egg donation and surrogacy to the heartwarming arrival of their twin sons, Aiden and Ethan. The narrative takes a dramatic turn as the couple face an unexpected confrontation at the American Consulate in Toronto, which eventually spirals into a globally high-profile lawsuit. While Aiden's U.S. citizenship is seamlessly acknowledged owing to his biological ties with Andrew, Ethan, born of Elad's lineage, finds himself in a web of legal intricacies. This disparity, even in the face of Andrew and Elad's legally recognized marriage and shared parental rights over both twins, highlights the deep-seated biases embedded in the system.

N. L. Segal's expertise in twin studies offers additional layers to the narrative. She gives a comprehensive review of previous cases in which twins and nontwins are biologically related to only one parent and delves into the legal disparities that same-sex parents may face in comparison to traditional families. With a blend of

professional insight and deep empathy, she illustrates how the twins' situation in the book starkly amplifies the irrationality of legal biases to an unprecedented extent. Following the Dvash-Banks couple that used the concept of twinship as central to their media strategy and public appeal, N. L. Segal emphasizes the intuitive notion of twins' shared life experiences — from conception to daily life — questioning the logical basis for them not to have identical civil rights.

As a psychologist, N. L. Segal adeptly employs her knowledge to dissect and explain various human phenomena presented in the book. For instance, she weaves Andrew and Elad's biographical backgrounds to decode their unique personalities. Delving into their biography, it becomes evident how their past encounters, tainted by prejudice and harassment, shaped their resilience. This determination propelled them to fight unyieldingly for their son's rights, refusing to settle for easier, less just solutions. Facing past adversities, they recognized that their fight for their son's rights was not just their own struggle; it was a broader crusade with implications that could positively impact numerous families. Their hope was to spare others from similar tribulations. They understood that a victory in this battle would be a monumental leap forward for countless others.

A standout aspect of the book is N. L. Segal's use of her profound knowledge in evolutionary psychology and twin studies to enrich the narrative. For instance, she points to the seemingly unlikely meeting of Andrew and Elad at Tel Aviv University. Grounding her observations in twin research and mate selection studies, she emphasizes that shared characteristics often intensify attraction. N. L. Segal draws attention to the couple's aligned personalities, suggesting these commonalities were pivotal in sparking their connection. Shifting focus to the Dvash-Banks family, she imparts her expertise on topics central to twins. She explores the nuanced relationship between shared and nonshared genes to explain the twins' resemblances and variances in looks, temperaments, and behaviors. Building on her extensive interactions with twin families, she also approaches a frequently debated topic among parents of twins: the pros and cons of separating them in kindergarten and the later school grades. Consequently, the book transcends a mere chronicle of events and evolves into an insightful analysis, enriched by N. L. Segal's comprehensive grasp of twin dynamics and human psychology.

While twinship was the initial catalyst that drove N. L. Segal to write *Gay Fathers, Twin Sons*, she instinctively recognized that the extraordinary circumstances of this unique twin family highlighted deeper, systemic societal issues. Andrew and Elad's experiences, from enduring past harassments to the challenging consulate incident, underscore the enduring prejudices that the LGBTQ community faces. Their relentless fight for Ethan's rights not only champions their personal cause, but symbolically resonates with broader struggles for justice and equality faced by many in nontraditional families. N. L. Segal meticulously delves into the intricacies of the legal challenge, seeking insights from numerous legal professionals to shed light on the multifaceted nature of the case. Among the many enlightening discussions, her conversation with Aaron C. Morris stands out. As the executive director of Immigration Equality, an organization dedicated to advocating for



immigrants and families discriminated against due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status, Morris offers pivotal insights that add depth to the narrative. Reflecting on their dialogue, N. L. Segal articulates a nuanced perspective on the intricate interplay between law and politics, illustrating the profound ways in which these macro forces shape and influence individual lives.

In her earlier works, N. L. Segal meticulously delved into the nuances of twin studies and highlighted exceptional cases of twins.

However, with *Gay Fathers, Twin Sons* she artfully interweaves these insights with broader societal issues. This combination resonates deeply within today's socio-political landscape. Through the recounting of Andrew and Elad's inspiring journey, the book serves not only as an academic exploration but also as a clarion call for society to reflect and rally for justice and inclusivity.

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