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Families of Sexual Minorities: Child Well-Being, Parenting Desires, and Expectations for Future Family Formation

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Families of Sexual Minorities:

Child Well-Being, Parenting Desires,

and Expectations for Future Family Formation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Danielle Leanne Wondra

2017

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Families of Sexual Minorities:

Child Well-Being, Parenting Desires,

and Expectations for Future Family Formation

by

Danielle Leanne Wondra

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Megan McDonnell Sweeney, Co-Chair

Professor Mignon Moore, Co-Chair

My dissertation project uses a multiple methodological approach—unfolding in three substantive chapters—to ask how gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status intersect with sexual identity to create unique experiences for sexual minorities in terms of parenting perspectives and expectations for family formation. Perspectives on family formation may differ for sexual minorities because they are socially positioned differently than heterosexual people, yet previous studies largely address women's attitudes and not those of men and sexual minorities. Throughout this dissertation, I utilize an intersectional framework, theorizing that our social statuses interconnect to constrain and enable life opportunities, including related to family formation.

Chapter 1 draws on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey to examine the educational well-being of children with same-sex parents and different-sex parents. My analysis reveals that children with same-sex parents had greater household-based advantages than children with different-sex cohabiting parents, but had fewer advantages than children with different-sex married parents. Nevertheless, children with same-sex parents made progress through school at statistically similar or better rates than most children with different-sex parents. I show that parental sexual orientation is less important to children's educational progress than other factors such as parental education and family transitions.

Using the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Surveys of Family Growth, Chapter 2 examines the child desires and intentions of sexual minorities. Consistent with prior research, gay men and lesbians were less likely to report parenting desires than heterosexual peers; however, I found variation in parenting desires within sexual identity groups by gender, race/ethnicity and education. Moreover, I identified variability in sexual minorities' perceived barriers to parenthood, measured by gaps between reported parenting desires and intentions.

Finally, Chapter 3 is a qualitative study of expectations for family formation among 36 young gay and bisexual men of color in Los Angeles. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews, I show how Black and Latino sexual minority men negotiated multiple marginalized statuses while navigating family responses to their sexual orientation, forming romantic relationships, and developing expectations for future family formation. Furthermore, I found that young sexual minority men of color developed expectations about future family based on past family experiences and the structural barriers they faced.

The dissertation of Danielle Leanne Wondra is approved.

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I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the rest of my committee. I am grateful to Abigail Saguy for her mentorship throughout my graduate career. I thank Gary Gates for serving on my committee in the early stages and for helping me develop my dissertation project. Many thanks to Susan Cochran for her thoughtful comments on my work. And thank you to Marcus Hunter, who joined my committee in the final stages of this project, for his support in getting this dissertation to the finish line.

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DISSERTATION INTRODUCTION

Family Formation Among Sexual Minorities

Historically, studies on childbearing and family formation patterns have focused on women and have not considered the attitudes and preferences of men (Almeling 2015; Greene and Biddlecom 2000). As childbearing has become increasingly separated from marriage (Waller 1999), it has become more important to understand men's perspectives on family formation (Greene and Biddlecom 2000). Indeed, previous research has found important differences between men and women in their attitudes toward childbearing and parenting (Kessler, Craig, Sagal and Quinn 2013; Koropeckyj-Cox and Pendell 2007; Marsiglio, Hutchinson and Cohan 2001). Among heterosexual women, less-educated women tend to prioritize parenthood as necessary for a meaningful life, while more-educated women may view their highly paid professions as obstacles to becoming a mother (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Johnson-Hanks, Bachrach, Morgan, and Kohler 2011; Waller 1999; but see Musick, England, Edgington, and Kangas 2009). Studies of heterosexual men, however, have found a positive relationship between education and parenting desires, suggesting that gender intersects with education to create different opportunity costs to becoming parents (Kessler et al. 2013; Morgan and Rackin 2010).

Extensive previous research has shown that race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status shape meanings of parenthood among women (e.g., Edin and Kefalas 2005) and are important predictors of family formation patterns (e.g., Raley, Sweeney and Wondra 2015; Sweeney and Raley 2014). Less is known about future family expectations and desire for children among heterosexual men and among sexual minority men and women. Moreover, previous research has shown that children's well-being is influenced by parental resources (Kalil 2015; McLanahan

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2004). Indeed, growing up with two biological, heterosexual, married parents is associated with better overall outcomes for children than all other family structures (Brown 2004; Cherlin 2004; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Seltzer 2000; Sweeney 2010). These studies, however, typically compared biological children in different-sex, married-parent households to those in single-parent households and did not include children with same-sex parents.

Meanings of parenthood and perspectives on family formation may differ for sexual minorities because they are socially positioned differently than heterosexuals. Due to continued stigmatization and marginalization, sexual minorities are susceptible to minority stress, which promotes a lower sense of self-worth and decreased well-being (Meyer 2003). Historically, gay men and lesbians have been discouraged from having children (Mallon 2004; Mezey 2008), similar to patterns of stratified reproduction among heterosexual women that discourage poor and racial minority women from having children (Almeling 2015; Greil et al. 2011; Roberts 1997). Nevertheless, about one third of lesbians and one in six gay men have children (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, and Chambers 2007), as do over half of bisexual women and one third of bisexual men (Pew Research Center 2013).

Although gay men and lesbians face barriers to becoming parents—including that they cannot have children within a same-sex relationship without assisted technology—sexual minorities become parents in a number of ways: through a heterosexual relationship, step-parenting, fostering or adoption, alternative insemination with donor sperm, or surrogacy. Yet the pathways to parenthood among gay men and lesbians and the barriers they perceive in achieving their family formation desires are influenced by their gender, race/ethnicity, class status, family background, as well as when they came to identify as gay. Previous research has shown that, like different-sex couples, racial minority same-sex couples were significantly more

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likely to be raising children than their White counterparts and were more likely to be raising

children in socially conservative areas of the country (Gates and Romero 2009). This contrasts

with the experiences conveyed in previous research on same-sex parents, which has tended to

highlight the experiences of White, middle-class gay men and lesbians (see Biblarz and Stacey

2010). Among same-sex couples, adoption is more common among White same-sex couples

with high levels of education, as compared to their racial minority counterparts with less

education (Gates 2012). These adoption figures, however, do not include fostering and informal

adoption arrangements, such as parenting relatives' children, which are more common among

communities of color (Lewin 2009). There remain considerable gaps in scholarly knowledge

about how race/ethnicity and social class status shape the family preferences and family patterns

of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals.

Previous research on sexual minorities has been limited because of the difficulty in

identifying sexual minorities to participate in scholarly research (Moore 2011; Rosenfeld 2015).

Due to different understandings of sexuality, some sexual minorities may be less likely to adopt a

public gay identity and therefore less likely to be open about their sexual orientation to

researchers. Moreover, most nationally representative surveys on family life focus on

heterosexual people or do not ask respondents about their sexual orientation (exceptions include

the National Survey of Family Growth and the National Survey of Fertility Barriers). Although

recent population-based studies examine sexual minorities and same-sex families, a majority of

this work continues to be limited in one or more of the following ways: difficulty identifying

sexual minorities and same-sex parents with children; small sample sizes due to size of sexual

minority populations; inappropriate comparison groups; and failure to account for variation in

available resources or past family histories. This dissertation attempts to address limitations in previous research on sexual minorities.

Theoretical Framework of Intersectionality

Throughout this dissertation project, I utilize an intersectional framework to understand parenting preferences and family formation patterns among sexual minority men and women. Theories of intersectionality posit that systems of privilege and disadvantage—based on one's positions in social categories such as gender, race, and sexual orientation—operate simultaneously to produce unique experiences (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Dill 1983). At both individual and structural levels, our social statuses interconnect to constrain and enable our preferences and life opportunities, including those related to family formation (Moore 2011). Individuals positioned at the margins of multiple social categories—for example, sexual minorities from racial minority backgrounds—may face compounded disadvantage and stigmatization (Meyer, Dietrich, and Schwartz 2008). This, in turn, influences how sexual minorities develop meanings of parenthood and how they navigate pathways to parenthood.

Although the majority of previous research on sexual minorities has focused on those who are White and relatively affluent, sexual minorities develop different meanings of parenthood and face differential barriers to having children depending on their racial/ethnic backgrounds. Racial minority men and women with same-sex desire face conflicting perspectives on homosexuality (Ocampo 2012). Whereas mainstream (i.e., White, affluent) gay culture promotes adopting a public gay identity, racial minority groups often view sexuality as a private matter (Guzman 2006; Manalansan 2003), with Black communities promoting "respectability" in order to preserve the community's reputation (Moore 2010).

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Furthermore, socioeconomic context also influences meanings of parenthood and poses barriers to having children among sexual minorities. Stigma and discrimination may limit same-sex parents' access to socioeconomic resources (Gates 2015; Reczek, Spiker, Liu and Crosnoe 2016). The high costs of adoption and surrogacy present particularly steep hurdles for poor and working-class gay men and lesbian women who want to have children (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004; Moore 2011). Indeed, previous research found that childless gay men and lesbians expressed greater confidence about achieving parenthood when they enjoyed higher socioeconomic status (Riskind, Patterson and Nosek 2013).

Research Questions

My dissertation project uses multiple methodological approaches to expand sociological research about sexual minorities and family formation. Several overarching research questions inform this research:

- How does sexual orientation shape family formation preferences and processes among sexual minorities?

- How does parental sexual orientation shape the experiences of children raised by same-sex parents, as compared to children's race/ethnicity and their family's socioeconomic status?

- How do gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status intersect with sexual identity to create unique experiences for sexual minorities as compared to heterosexual women and men in family formation processes?

- How do sexual minorities with multiple marginalized identities navigate normative life transitions such as becoming a parent?

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- How do sexual minorities with conflicting social identities negotiate the barriers to family formation processes?

Chapter 1, "Educational Progress of Children in Same-Sex Families" uses a quantitative approach to examine educational well-being among children living with same-sex parents and different-sex parents. Using data from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, one of the largest available samples of same-sex couples with children, I explore whether variation in children's access to household-based resources and experience of family transitions across child type (e.g., biological, step or adopted children) and family structure explain observable differences between children living with same-sex parents and those living with different-sex parents. I examine how child type and family structure are associated with children's access to household-based resources, comparing children living with same-sex parents to children living with different-sex married parents and different-sex cohabiting parents across a range of household-based resources and family transitions. Finally, I explore how child type, family structure, and access to household-based resources are associated with children making regular progress through school.

Chapter 2, "Parenting Desires and Intentions Among Sexual Minorities: An Intersectional Approach" also uses a quantitative approach. In this chapter, I draw on data from two rounds of the National Surveys of Family Growth (2002 and 2006-2010) to examine parenting preferences and intentions among sexual minorities. Drawing on a larger and more recent sample than prior work, I take an intersectional approach and ask whether there is variation by race or education in the association between sexual identity and parenting desires. I further explore whether there is variation by race or education in the association between sexual identity and perceived barriers to

parenthood. In particular, I highlight the parenting preferences of men, bisexual respondents and Hispanic respondents, who have been largely overlooked in previous work.

In Chapter 3, "Expectations for Future Family Formation Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men of Color in Los Angeles" I utilize qualitative methods, including ethnographic observations and interviews, to explore how multiple stigmatized identities together impact normative life transitions, such as the formation of families, among young gay and bisexual men of color. Because young men of color with same-sex desire face considerable barriers to forming families and having children within same-sex relationships, I examine how background and family of origin shape their expectations for future family formation. Further, I ask, how do young men negotiate their multiple marginalized statuses as they form romantic relationships and transition into adulthood? What barriers do they expect to face in achieving their future family goals? How do they expect to navigate these barriers?

Overview of Findings

My dissertation expands upon previous studies on sexual minorities and families and contributes to several research areas, including fertility preferences and intentions, the impact of family structure and family type on children's educational well-being, and men's perspectives on families. Throughout this dissertation, I find that a large proportion of sexual minorities wants to have children. Although there are substantial barriers to becoming parents, many sexual minorities are resilient in overcoming these obstacles. When they do become parents, same-sex parents are raising children that are educationally prepared similarly to children with different-sex parents. On the whole, gender, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic position are key in shaping

meanings of parenthood among sexual minorities and the experiences they have in forming families.

Chapter 1 examines the "Educational Progress of Children in Same-Sex Families." Comparing children living with same-sex parents to children living with different-sex married and different-sex cohabiting parents, I explore how family and child type are associated with children's access to "household-based resources," such as parents' education, household income, parents' nativity and citizenship status, and residential stability. I conceptualize household-based resources broadly as providing access to various forms of capital (i.e., social, cultural, economic and human capital) and the benefits they confer (Bourdieu 1977). Notably, sexual minorities face social stigma and "institutional disenfranchisement" (Gates 2015; Reczek et al. 2016) that can limit their access to socioeconomic resources.

Drawing on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, I found that children living with same-sex couples experienced greater advantages over children living with different-sex cohabiting couples, yet had fewer household-based advantages over children living with different-sex married couples. Based on a multivariate analysis using binomial logistic regression, I found that children with same-sex parents made regular progress through school at statistically similar rates as most children with different-sex married or different-sex cohabiting parents. My findings emphasize the significance of parental education and socioeconomic status, as well as child type and family stability, are all important for understanding children's educational well-being. Taken together, my results suggest that children living with same-sex parents raise children that are educationally prepared in much the same ways as for children living with different-sex parents. In other words, the sexual orientation of parents has less of an

impact on children's educational progress than other factors such as parents' education and employment status and past family transitions.

In Chapter 2, "Parenting Desires and Intentions Among Sexual Minorities: An Intersectional Approach," I used a large sample from the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Surveys of Family Growth to examine the child preferences and intentions of individuals who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Consistent with prior work (Gates 2012; Kazyak, Park, McQuillan and Greil 2014; Riskind and Patterson 2010), gay men and lesbians were less likely to report parenting desires than their heterosexual peers; however, I found greater variation in parenting desires within sexual identity groups by gender, race/ethnicity and education. In addition, bisexual women and men tended to report parenting desires that more closely aligned with the desires of their heterosexual, rather than lesbian and gay, counterparts.

Furthermore, I found variability in sexual minorities' perceived barriers to parenthood, measured by a gap between their reported parenting desires and intentions. Gay men who want children generally perceived greater barriers to fulfilling their parenting desires, compared to heterosexual and bisexual men. Women who identified as lesbian or bisexual perceived greater barriers to having children than heterosexual women, but the association varied further by age. Across sexual identity groups, higher levels of educational attainment were associated with fewer perceived barriers for White and Black women. Among Hispanic women, however, perceived barriers did not vary by educational attainment.

In Chapter 3, "Expectations for Future Family Formation Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men of Color in Los Angeles," I show how the Black and Latino men I studied negotiated multiple marginalized identities—in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and socioeconomic status—while navigating family responses to their sexual orientation, forming

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romantic relationships, and developing expectations for future family formation. Respondents experienced minority stress (Meyer 2003), not only based on their sexual identity but also due to their racial minority and poverty statuses, which made them feel unwelcome in mainstream gay spaces like West Hollywood. Similarly, the responses they received from their families of origin and their racial/ethnic communities shaped the way they viewed themselves as men with same-sex desire and in turn how they viewed relationships and future family goals. For example, respondents who faced negative responses or negative religious views toward homosexuality tended to have a more difficult time reconciling their sexual orientation with their racial identities, leading to internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer 2012). In turn, these respondents expressed greater concern about the possibility of establishing long-term same-sex relationships or reaching their future family formation goals, compared to respondents who had more positive family experiences.

Furthermore, I found that young men of color with same-sex desire developed expectations about future family based on their past family experiences and the structural barriers they face. Their expectations were shaped by the various family schemas to which they were exposed. Many respondents wanted long-term romantic relationships or marriage and children in the future, reflecting a conventional nuclear family structure. Yet many also recognized barriers to achieving these ideal family forms, due to their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status. In response, they had developed adjusted expectations for future family that accommodated these perceived barriers (see Young 2004). Most notably, a sizeable group of respondents, both Black and Latino, reported a willingness—and for some, an expectation—that they would be single fathers in the future.

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CHAPTER 1

Educational Progress of Children in Same-Sex Families:

Can access to household-based resources explain differences between

children living with same-sex parents and different-sex parents?

As families headed by same-sex couples have become more visible, scholars and religious groups have expressed concern over the welfare of children being raised by same-sex parents. Previous research has shown that growing up with two biological, heterosexual, married parents is generally associated with better overall outcomes for children than all other family structures (Brown 2004; Cherlin 2004; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Seltzer 2000; Sweeney 2010). Historically, however, these studies typically compared children in heterosexual, biological married-parent households to those in single-parent households (e.g., McLanahan and Sandefur 1994), and did not include children with same-sex parents. In recent years, a growing literature has emerged, comparing the outcomes of children raised by same-sex parents to those raised by different-sex parents. The vast majority of these studies have found few to no statistically significant differences between children raised by same-sex parents and those raised by different-sex parents (see reviews by Biblarz and Savci 2010; Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Gates 2015; Manning, Fettro and Lamidi 2014; Stacey and Biblarz 2001; Tasker 2005; for an exception see Regnerus 2012), while some have found that children raised by lesbian mothers actually fare better than those raised by different-sex parents (see review by Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013).

Previous studies on children raised by same-sex parents, however, have typically been limited in several ways. First, because stigma is still attached to sexual minority identities, it is

challenging to locate and recruit participants who identify as gay or lesbian, and many nationally representative surveys do not ask respondents about their sexual orientation. Second, due to the relative rarity of sexual minority populations, most studies rely on small samples of same-sex couples and do not account for the considerable racial and socioeconomic variation among same-sex couples raising children. Third, some studies make inappropriate comparisons between family types and child types. For example, comparing children with same-sex unmarried parents to those with different-sex biological married parents does not account for the stability of marriage for children or the influence of biological relatedness on child/parent relationships. Finally, some studies overlook the considerable influence of past family transitions on the well-being of children.

In this paper, I use data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to address these limitations. Comparing children living with same-sex parents to children living with different-sex married and different-sex cohabiting parents, I explore how family and child type are associated with children's access to "household-based resources," such as parents' education, household income, parents' nativity and citizenship status, and residential stability. I conceptualize household-based resources broadly as providing access to various forms of capital (i.e., social, cultural, economic and human capital) and the benefits they confer (Bourdieu 1977). Notably, sexual minorities face social stigma and "institutional disenfranchisement" (Gates 2015; Reczek, Spiker, Liu and Crosnoe 2016) that can limit their access to socioeconomic resources. Disparities in children's access to household-based resources might account for children's well-being more so than parents' sexual orientation.

Background

Same-Sex Families and Child Well-Being

Early research on child health and well-being among children living with same-sex parents have found few to no differences compared to children living with different-sex parents (see reviews by Stacey and Biblarz 2001; Tasker 2005). Most of these early studies, however, were limited by sample size and sampling method. As a result, these studies disproportionately examined the well-being of children living with lesbian parents who were predominantly White and relatively affluent. Therefore, results are not generalizable to children living with same-sex male couples or children from racial minority or economically disadvantaged families. Where there were differences, children with lesbian mothers tended to fare better on social and behavioral outcomes, including interest and success in school compared with children with different-sex parents (see reviews by Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013; Tasker 2005). Stacey and Biblarz (2001) showed that children with lesbian mothers demonstrated flexibility around gender norms, such that sons and daughters exhibited fewer traditionally gendered behaviors. Children of lesbian mothers were more likely to report being open to same-sex relationships and behaviors, as compared to children with heterosexual mothers (Johnson and O'Connor 2002; Stacey and Biblarz 2001); yet, they were no more likely to identify as gay or lesbian than children of heterosexual parents (Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Johnson and O'Connor 2002).

More recently, studies have begun to examine the well-being of children living with same-sex parents using population-based surveys, which allow for larger sample sizes and greater generalizability. On the whole, these studies have found that children living with same-sex couples were disadvantaged in some ways compared to children living with different-sex

parents (see reviews by Gates 2015; Manning et al. 2014). Yet these disadvantages were largely explained by differences in socioeconomic status and family stability (Gates 2015). Different-sex married couples with children tend to have the highest income and educational attainment compared to other family structures, but same-sex parents with children tend to fall between different-sex married and different-sex cohabiting couples in terms of income and educational attainment (Reczek et al. 2016). Stigma and discrimination may limit same-sex parents' access to socioeconomic resources (Gates 2015; Reczek et al. 2016). Furthermore, family transitions are important for understanding child well-being, and the majority of children living with same-sex parents have experienced the dissolution of a parent's previous heterosexual relationship and subsequent transition into a same-sex relationship (Gates 2015; Gates and Romero 2009).

In terms of health and psychosocial well-being, Wainright and colleagues (Wainright and Patterson 2006, 2008; Wainright, Russell and Patterson 2004) found that relationship quality between parents and children was more important than family type in predicting differences in depressive symptoms, anxiety, adolescent risk behavior, victimization and substance abuse between children living with lesbian same-sex parents compared to children living with different-sex parents. Noting similarities between children living with same-sex parents and non-traditional family structures, Potter and Potter (2016) found that living in non-traditional family structures (e.g., divorced, stepparent, cohabiting and same-sex parent families) was associated with poorer psychological well-being, compared to living with different-sex married parents. Yet most of the observed differences between family structures were explained by variation in family change and instability. Furthermore, Reczek and colleagues (2016) showed that parental marriage has benefits for children's health over parental cohabitation, regardless of the sex composition of parents. Moreover, they argued that family structure has an effect on health

outcomes, independent of socioeconomic status, because differences in parental income and educational attainment did not fully explain differences in child health among children living with same-sex married and different-sex married parents. In other words, they found that children with same-sex married parents were more disadvantaged compared to children with different-sex married parents.

Children's academic achievement is also a key measure of child well-being because it is associated with success later in life (Rosenfeld 2010). In terms of school adjustment and progression through school, Wainright and colleagues (2004, 2006, 2008) found no differences between children living with same-sex parents and those living with different-sex parents (e.g., GPA, delinquency, peer relations). Instead, the quality of the parent-child relationship was more important than family type in explaining variation in school adjustment. Fedewa and Clark (2009) found that, among couples with children, lesbian same-sex parents and different-sex parents did not differ in parenting practices such as helping their children through school and home-school partnerships. Using 2000 Census data, Rosenfeld (2010) found no statistically significant differences in normal progress through school between children with same-sex parents compared to those with different-sex (married or unmarried) parents. Potter (2012) used the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study and found that observed differences in math scores between children in same-sex parent families and those in different-sex, married, biological parent families were explained by the greater number of family transitions experienced by children living with same-sex parents. Despite their use of population-based survey data, however, most of these studies relied on sample sizes of less than 200 children living with same-sex parents (e.g., Fedewa and Clark 2009; Potter and Potter 2016; Wainright and Patterson 2006, 2008; Wainright et al. 2004).

In contrast to the majority of studies that find no significant differences between children with same-sex and different-sex parents, a handful of population-based studies have concluded that children raised by same-sex parents display worse well-being, compared to those raised by different-sex parents (Allen 2013; Allen, Pakaluk and Price 2013; Regnerus 2012). Using the New Family Structure Survey (NFSS), Regnerus (2012) claimed that that young adults with "gay fathers" or "lesbian mothers" experienced high levels of depression and lower levels of educational attainment, compared to young adults who were raised in "intact biological families." Allen and colleagues (2013) conducted a reanalysis of Rosenfeld's (2010) study using a different set of data coding decisions and argued that children living with same-sex parents were considerably less likely to be making school progress, as compared with children living with different-sex parents. Using the Canadian Census, Allen (2013) similarly concluded that children living with same-sex parents were considerably less likely than children living with different-sex parents to have graduated high school. Yet, many social scientists have critiqued Regnerus's data-coding decisions as failing to account for previous family transitions in the lives of children with same-sex parents (Cheng and Powell 2015; Gates 2015; Manning et al. 2014; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2015; Perrin, Cohen and Caren 2013; Rosenfeld 2015). Similarly, the overall analysis conducted by Allen and colleagues (Allen et al. 2013; Allen 2013) did not account for the greater family instability experienced by children living with same-sex parents (Gates 2015; Manning et al. 2014).

Relatedly, although previous studies have found that same-sex couples experience higher rates of relationship dissolution compared to different-sex couples, more recent studies have shown that same-sex relationships are similar to different-sex relationships once controlling for marital status. Rosenfeld (2014) found that the difference in couple longevity between same-sex

couples and different-sex couples was explained by same-sex couples' lower rates of marriage. Once Rosenfeld (2014) controlled for marriage and "marriage-like" unions among same-sex couples, break-up rates were statistically similar for same-sex and different-sex couples. Notably, marriage created couple stability for same-sex couples similarly as it did for different-sex couples. Yet, a study of couples in Norway and Sweden by Andersson and colleagues (Andersson, Noack, Seierstad and Weedon-Fekjær 2006) suggested that, although patterns of divorce risk are similar in same-sex and different-sex marriages, divorce risk was higher among same-sex marriages than different-sex marriages, and female same-sex couples had higher divorce risk than male same-sex couples.

Challenges of Studying Same-Sex Families with Children

Although recent population-based studies have shown marked improvement in the quality of data that are available to examine same-sex families and child well-being, a majority of this work continues to be limited in one or more of the following ways: difficulty identifying same-sex parents with children; small sample sizes of children living with same-sex couples; inappropriate comparison groups; and failure to account for previous family transitions that may negatively influence children's outcomes. I discuss each of these points in greater detail below.

1. Identifying same-sex families

Because sexual minorities make up a relatively small population that still faces stigma and discrimination, researchers often struggle to identify sexual minority participants in studies of child well-being and family life (Rosenfeld 2015). Many previous studies have focused on the experiences of middle-class or affluent, White same-sex parents (Meezan and Rauch 2005), who tend to be more socially visible and more likely to self-select into these studies. Moreover, most children living with same-sex parents were born in prior, often heterosexual relationships (Gates

and Romero 2009), yet some studies do not sufficiently account for children's family transition

histories (e.g., Regnerus 2012). It may be especially difficult to identify a range of sexual

minorities across all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups because certain groups view their

same-sex desire as part of their private identities and may not be willing to publicly identify as

gay or lesbian (Goldberg 2010; Moore 2011). Sexual minorities from racial/ethnic minority

backgrounds tend to form families in different ways than White sexual minorities, yet most

previous research on same-sex families does not account for the experiences of working-class or

racial/ethnic minority gay men and lesbians (Moore 2011).

Few nationally representative surveys of family life ask respondents about their sexual

orientation and same-sex parenting. Without direct measures of sexual orientation, it is difficult

to measure same-sex families consistently across surveys and to get a true picture of how sexual

orientation shapes family lives. Some studies have used proxy measurements to identify children

with same-sex parents. For example, using the New Family Structures Survey (NFSS), Regnerus

(2012) categorized respondents as having a "gay" or "lesbian" parent if they indicated that their

mother or father had *ever* had a same-sex relationship. Respondents were not asked to indicate

the sexual identity of their parents, nor were they asked how their parents would identify

themselves. In response, however, many scholars have argued that Regnerus "mis-measured"

children with same-sex parents (e.g., Cheng and Powell 2015; Gates 2015; Manning et al. 2014;

Rosenfeld 2015).

Some large-scale surveys, such as the American Community Survey (ACS), do not

directly measure sexual orientation but do provide indicators by which researchers can

approximate a sample of children living with same-sex parents. Researchers, however, must

account for measurement error when using variables that are not precise. Although the ACS does

not allow for analysis of single parents who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, these data do permit researchers to identify children who were living with a same-sex couple at one point in time.

2. Small sample sizes

Because gay men and lesbians raising children are a relatively small population that continues to face social stigma and discrimination, most studies of same-sex families rely on small sample sizes, limiting the generalizability of their findings (see reviews by Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Stacey and Biblarz 2001; Tasker 2005). Small samples make it difficult to differentiate among people within same-sex families (Hofferth 2005; Meezan and Rauch 2005) and do not account for the diversity that exists among same-sex families in terms of race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and gender (Umberson et al. 2015). Moreover, smaller samples, as those available for sexual minority groups, generate greater noise in statistical estimates (Rosenfeld 2015). Allen (2013) recommended a sample size of at least 300 children living in same-sex families in order to general enough power in estimations, while Nock (2001) argued that a sample size of at least 800 children living with same-sex families would be required to properly test hypotheses about same-sex parenting and children's outcomes. Even though population-based surveys generally allow for larger overall samples, many of these studies still end up with very small samples (less than 100) of children living with same-sex couples. For example, Bos (2013) studied 32 lesbian couples with children, while Fedewa and Clark (2009) studied 35 same-sex families with children. Three articles by Wainright and colleagues (2004, 2006, 2008) draw on the same sample of 44 lesbian couples with children. Three studies drew on slightly larger samples, including 248 adult children with "gay fathers" or

"lesbian mothers" (Regnerus 2012) and 208 children and 186 children living with same-sex

parents (respectively, Potter 2012; Potter and Potter 2016).

Although several studies used population-based surveys with relatively large samples of

same-sex couples with children, these studies still have limitations. Using the 2000 U.S. Census,

Rosenfeld (2010) analyzed 3,502 children with same-sex parents but excluded stepchildren and

adopted children with same-sex parents from his regression analysis. Allen and colleagues'

(2013) reanalysis of Rosenfeld's (2010) study evaluated the largest sample of children living

with same-sex parents ($n = 8,632$) but was subject to the same limitations as Rosenfeld in terms

of the U.S. Census's limited grade progress measures and inability to account for previous family

transitions. Based on the 2004 to 2013 National Health Information Surveys (NHIS), Reczek and

colleagues (2016) accounted for parents' marital status for children living with same-sex parents,

yet their final analysis included only 633 children living with same-sex parents. Furthermore,

whereas Rosenfeld (2010) and Reczek and colleagues (2016) analyzed only biological children

living with same-sex couples, I include in my analyses all children who were reported to be

biological children, stepchildren, or adopted children living in same-sex and different-sex

households. The American Community Survey provides one of the largest available samples of

same-sex couples with children, allowing researchers to examine variation by race/ethnicity and

educational attainment among same-sex parents with children.

3. Comparison groups

Much previous research has shown that marriage is associated with social and

institutional benefits that influence children's well-being (Brown 2010; Cherlin 1978), and that

children raised by two biologically related, married parents tend to have better health and

educational outcomes compared to children raised by two biologically related, cohabiting parents

(Brown 2004; Bumpass and Lu 2000; Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin 1991; Manning and Brown 2006; Morrison and Ritualo 2000). Children living with married parents may be more likely to make regular progress in school, compared to those with same-sex parents or unmarried different-sex parents, because marriage provides stability and benefits to children. Unmarried couples are more likely to break up, affecting children's home lives and their success in school. Yet between 2004 and 2015, same-sex couples could marry in only a handful of states. Marriage was largely unavailable to same-sex couples in the U.S. until June 2015, when the US Supreme Court ruled that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was unconstitutional, making same-sex marriage legal across the country.

When evaluating the effect of family structure on children's well-being, appropriate counterfactuals are needed to produce credible results (Sweeney 2010). Regnerus's (2012) grouping of children raised by still-intact, biologically related married parents was characterized by family structure (different-sex parents), biological relatedness (both parents related), and family stability (intact marriage throughout childhood and into respondents' young adulthood). Yet Regnerus did not account for these same characteristics among the young adults who grew up with a "gay" or "lesbian" parent (Cheng and Powell 2015; Perrin et al. 2013; Rosenfeld 2015). Therefore, Regnerus made inappropriate comparisons because he did not account for the family changes and transitions experienced by children with gay or lesbian parents. Furthermore, Regnerus ignored the fact that some respondents categorized as having a gay or lesbian parent had never lived with their gay or lesbian parent or had never lived with the same-sex couple. The apparently negative outcomes experienced by these respondents were not due to time spent raised in a same-sex-couple household. When possible, appropriate comparisons should consider the varied pathways to parenting for same-sex couples (Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013;

Gates 2015), along with biological relatedness, parental status, shifting legal contexts and access to marriage (Meezan and Rauch 2005; Reczek et al. 2016; Umberson et al. 2015).

4. Accounting for family transitions

Children living with same-sex couples have extremely varied family histories (Cheng and Powell 2015; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013; Rosenfeld 2015). Children's well-being is influenced by their history of family transitions, regardless of the gender of their parents (Smock and Greenland 2010). Approximately 70 percent of children being raised by same-sex parents have experienced the divorce of their parents and have spent time in a single-parent home (Gates and Romero 2009), making them subject to same general hardships of family disruption and economic disadvantage as children whose parents divorce and reform different-sex stepfamilies (Brown 2004; Eggebeen 2012; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). A minority of children living in same-sex couples were born or adopted into an already established same-sex relationship. My study specifically accounts for past family transitions, compared to Allen (2013), Regnerus (2012), and Rosenfeld (2010) who did not examine variation in past family transitions among children with same-sex parents.

5. Selectivity

Because people make choices about their family structures, such as whether to marry or cohabit, it is difficult to disentangle the effects of family structure from people's characteristics that may lead them to be more likely to opt into particular family structures (Brown 2010; Hofferth 2005). For example, couples who are less committed or perceive more problems within their relationships may opt to cohabit rather than marry (Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin 1991; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995). Likewise, these couples with lower levels of commitment and more problems are more likely to dissolve their relationships. Furthermore,

educational attainment and race/ethnicity both play a role in decisions to cohabit versus marry. For example, couples with less education are more likely to cohabit but not marry compared to couples with more education. Race/ethnicity functions as a source of selectivity (Fomby and Cherlin 2007; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi and Wilson 2000; Phillips and Sweeney 2005), in that Black couples are more likely than Whites to select cohabitation as their first union (Smock and Manning 2004). The personalities and cognitive abilities of parents influence their children's characteristics and also affect parents' ability to maintain stable partnerships (Fomby and Cherlin 2007), all of which shapes children's outcomes independent of their family structure. The factors that influence parents' choice of family structure also influence parents' access to social and economic resources and influence children's outcomes (Sweeney 2010; Thomson and McLanahan 2012).

Selectivity may help explain why previous studies have found that children living in same-sex families show positive outcomes that may not be a direct result of the sexual orientation of their parents. Same-sex couples who become parents after forming a same-sex relationship must make great efforts to have children. The greater investment needed to become same-sex parents may lead to more successful parenting and better child outcomes (Powell, Hamilton, Manago and Cheng 2016). Lesbian women who become parents within same-sex relationships tend to be older and have higher levels of education than their heterosexual counterparts, which is associated with more positive outcomes among children (Stacey and Biblarz 2001:177).

Research Questions

Using data from the American Community Survey, one of the largest available samples of same-sex couples with children, the current study examines how child type and family

structure are associated with children's access to household-based resources and children's progress in school. Specifically, I compare children living with same-sex parents to children living with different-sex married parents or different-sex cohabiting parents across a range of household-based resources and family transitions. Furthermore, I explore how child type and family structure are associated with children making regular progress through school. I anticipate that controlling for variation in children's access to household-based resources and experience of family transitions across child type and family structure will explain most but not all of the differences between children living with same-sex parents and different-sex parents.

Data and Methods

To examine child well-being in same-sex families, I use data from the 2008-2012 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), one of the few nationally representative surveys that provides data on same-sex couples and their children. The 2008-2012 five-year estimates pooled by the ACS provide large sample sizes of children living with same-sex couples, allowing for analysis of a population that is relatively uncommon. Although ACS data were available before 2008, several important variables related to family history and family change were introduced to the survey in 2008. I used Stata 14 for all analyses. To account for the complex sampling design of the ACS, I applied sampling weights and used survey estimation techniques in all analyses, except where otherwise noted.

Measures

Couple-Headed Households

Because the American Community Survey did not specifically measure sexual orientation, I utilized available ACS measures that identify the sex of each partner in a couple-

headed household. In this analysis, different-sex married couples reported "husband/wife" relationships and different-sex partners. Different-sex cohabiting couples reported "unmarried partner" relationships and different-sex partners. Same-sex couples reported same-sex partners and a "husband/wife" relationship or "unmarried partner" relationship. Notably, the Census Bureau recoded publicly available data so that same-sex couples who had reported a "husband/wife" relationship were reclassified as "unmarried partner" couples (Gates and Steinberger 2010), given that many of the couples were not legally married and the federal government did not recognize same-sex marriage at the time. As a result, publicly available data do not allow researchers to distinguish if same-sex couples are married or not married (O'Connell and Gooding 2007), nor do they indicate which partner's status was recoded (Gates and Steinberger 2010). Moreover, if different-sex married couples had miscoded one spouse's sex, although rare, these couples are now categorized as unmarried same-sex couples. Despite these limitations, this is a notable improvement over previous recoding decisions: Before 1990, the Census Bureau changed same-sex couples with a "husband/wife" designation to different-sex married couples, assuming that respondents must have miscoded their own sex or their spouses' sex because same-sex marriage was not legal anywhere in the U.S. at the time (Gates and Steinberger 2010).

Because same-sex couples make up such a small proportion of couples overall, measurement error within this subpopulation has the potential to skew the results significantly. Based on available information in the ACS, Gates and Steinberger (2010) developed a strategy to avoid potential measurement error. While most ACS respondents completed a mail-in survey form, more than one third of ACS respondents (those who did not return the survey after a certain length of time) completed the survey through telephone or personal interviews. Among

the latter group, if respondents identified as a same-sex couple and also indicate a

"husband/wife" relationship to householder, the computer-assisted survey asked for verification

of respondents' sex and the sex of their spouse. To reduce measurement error on this item, Gates

and Steinberger strongly advised researchers to exclude same-sex couples who identified as

spouses but did not verify their sex.

In addition to asking one's relationship to household head, a second item in the

questionnaire asked respondents to identify their marital status. Some same-sex couples

identified as "unmarried partners" in the first relationship question but later reported one or both

partners' marital status as "married." In this case, the Census Bureau recoded marital status to

"unmarried." Although the ACS includes an allocation flag to signal that a respondent's marital

status was recoded in some way, it does not provide a reason for the recode (e.g., the question

could have been left blank). Gates and Steinberger (2010) argued, therefore, that the measure of

marital status cannot reliably indicate which respondents were divorced, separated, widowed or

never married because their original responses are not available. To address these measurement

complications, Gates and Steinberger (2010) recommend omitting respondents who fall into the

group most at risk of measurement error. Replicated from Gates and Steinberger (2010: 11), the

shaded quadrant (2) in Figure 1 represents respondents who responded via mail-in questionnaire

(i.e., couples' sex was not verified) and were at greatest risk of measurement error: same-sex

couples who reported a "husband/wife" relationship and different-sex married couples who

miscoded one spouse's sex.

Figure 1. Interpretation of sub-groups of same-sex couples by response mode and marital status allocation (replicated from Gates and Steinberger 2010, p. 11).

		Marital status allocation	
		Not allocated	Allocated
Response mode	Mail-in	(1) Same-sex couples who used the "unmarried partner" designation	(2) A combination of same-sex spousal couples who use the "husband/wife" designation and different-sex married couples who miscoded the sex of one spouse
Response mode	CATI/CAPI (computer-assisted telephone/ personal interview)	(3) Same-sex couples who used the "unmarried partner" designation	(4) Same-sex couples who used the "husband/wife" designation

Although it is problematic to omit potentially "true" same-sex couples, including false positives (e.g., different-sex married couples who miscoded a spouse's sex and were recoded as same-sex unmarried couples) would skew the results in a more detrimental way. Because I am investigating differences between children living with same-sex couples and those living with different-sex couples, and exploring the effects of parents' sex composition, I must ensure to the extent possible that I am comparing actual same-sex couples and different-sex couples. To do so, I draw on the guidelines of Gates and Steinberger (2010) to adjust the data and to eliminate potential measurement error where possible. I find that 35% of the same-sex couples with children in the sample fall into the group with potential measurement error. Despite these limitations, Gates and Steinberger argued that "the ACS data released since 2005 can provide the most accurate sample of same-sex couples" (p. 22).

Child Types

In relation to the household head, ACS data classified children as biological children, adopted children, stepchildren, foster children, grandchildren, related children and unrelated

children. In the current analysis, I focused on biological, adopted and stepchildren ages 17 and younger in couple-headed households, and I omitted the small samples of grandchildren, foster children, related and unrelated children. I constructed a measure of child type/family structure that allows me to compare biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex couples to biological, step, and adopted children living with married or cohabiting different-sex couples. As shown in Table 1, my analytic sample contains nearly 2.4 million biological, step and adopted children living in couple-headed households.

Measuring biological relatedness is important because biological ties are associated with greater parental investment in their children, as compared to their stepchildren (Marsiglio 2004; Powell et al. 2016). Although the ACS sample is very large, the data are limited in terms of precisely identifying certain child types. In the ACS data, children were categorized as "stepchildren" only in relation to the household head; the measure of "stepchildren" does not include children who are biologically related to the household head but are stepchildren to the householder's partner. As a result, 4.3% of all children are reported as stepchildren in the ACS, while other researchers have estimated that 7.2% of children were living with a married or cohabiting stepparent in 2004 (Kreider 2008). Similarly, not all biological children of the household head are biological related to the householder's partner, and some of these children could be stepchildren or adopted children of the householder's partner. Particularly among same-sex couples, many have had biological children in previous heterosexual relationships before transitioning to same-sex relationships, so their biological children may be stepchildren or adopted children of the householder's partner (Gates 2012a). Combining stepchildren and biological children living in same-sex couple households (under the presumption that biological children of one same-sex partner were likely stepchildren to the other partner), results in

approximately 70% of children living in same-sex couple households categorized as potential stepchildren.

Among children reported as "adopted" in relation to the household head, I cannot differentiate between children in second-parent adoptions (i.e., they are biologically related to the householder's partner) and children adopted by both partners. Furthermore, the experience of adoption differs for same-sex couples as compared to different-sex couples. For same-sex couples, adoption is a primary way of having children within the relationship, whereas for different-sex couples, adoption is typically a last resort option after being unable to conceive biological children (Bartholet 1993; Parry 2005). This difference is emphasized by the share of couples that are raising adopted children. ACS data from 2009 suggest that 19% of same-sex couples with children were raising adopted children (Gates 2012a). In comparison, only 2.3% of all children living in couple-headed households are adopted.

Children's Characteristics

This analysis incorporates several measures of children's characteristics, including child's sex, age, race/ethnicity, and disability status. See Appendix Table A for a description of these variables. Table 1 shows the means distribution of children's characteristics by child type and family structure.

Household-Based Resources

The ACS provides a variety of measures of "household-based resources," listed below and described in greater detail in Appendix Table A. In addition, Table 1 shows the mean distribution of household-based resources by child type and family structure.

- Child is US citizen
- Child is US-born

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- Child's level of English proficiency

- Child has health insurance

- Household head education

- Household head employed full-time/full-year in past 12 months

- Household head is US citizen

- Household head is US-born

- Household head was a teenage parent to a co-resident child

- Household head was married in the past year

- Household head was divorced in the past year

- Household head reports any prior marriages

- Couple's residential instability in the past year

- Child's residential instability in the past year

- Homeownership

- Household income

- Income-to-poverty ratio

- Multi-generational or multi-family household

Children's School Progress

To analyze child well-being, I measured educational well-being based on children's progress through school, among children ages 5 to 17. As Rosenfeld (2010) explains, children's progress through school is associated with parents' resources and parenting styles: "Grade retention is an important childhood outcome because retention in the primary grades is a strong indicator of a lack of childhood readiness … Grade retention is closely associated with more serious problems later in the life course" (p. 758). I drew on Rosenfeld's (2010) study to create a

measure of age-grade appropriateness among children to indicate whether children were making normal progress through school or, instead, if they had been held back one grade or more. Notably, the current study includes more detailed measures of child's school progress that are available in the ACS, as compared to Rosenfeld's study using the Census.

My measure of school progress is approximate because the ACS only provides the year of the interview (and not the month of the interview). I measured *normal school progress* as a binary outcome, with "1" indicating child is making normal progress through school and "0" indicating the child was likely retained at some point. I used the following age-grade cut-offs to designate those children not making normal progress:

Grade in School	Age cut-off for school retention
Kindergarten	7 years and older
Grade 1	8 years and older
Grade 2	9 years and older
Grade 3	10 years and older
Grade 4	11 years and older
Grade 5	12 years and older
Grade 6	13 years and older
Grade 7	14 years and older
Grade 8	15 years and older
Grade 9	16 years and older
Grade 10	17 years

Because I limited the sample to children aged 17 and younger, I can measure grade-retention only up to the tenth grade. I also considered children to be held back or not making normal progress if they had not been enrolled in school in the past three months and had not completed the grade that would signify normal progress (as noted above).

Methods

To examine differences among the family structure types, I estimated weighted means of the distribution of household-based resources (e.g., children's characteristics, household head's

characteristics and household-level resources) by child and family structure type. The seven child type categories used in this analysis are as follows: (1) biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex couples; (2) biological children living with different-sex married couples; (3) stepchildren living with different-sex married couples; (4) adopted children living with different-sex married couples; (5) biological children living with different-sex cohabiting couples; (6) stepchildren living with different-sex cohabiting couples; and (7) adopted children living with different-sex cohabiting couples. After confirming it would not change my overall results, I recoded as "stepchildren" all biological children living in same-sex couple households (most would be a stepchild to the householder's partner) and children living with different-sex married couples who had married two or more years after the child's birth. I then conducted tests of the difference of means across household-based resources to determine whether observed differences are statistically significant when comparing biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex couples to biological, step and adopted children living with different-sex couples.

For the multivariate analysis, I estimated a series of binomial logistic regression models of children's regular progress through school. I controlled for child characteristics, household head characteristics, and household-level characteristics that may influence children's progress through school. Further, I introduced interactions to the models to examine whether the effect of child type on children's school progress varied significantly, for example, by child's sex or by household head's educational attainment. I used Wald tests to determine the statistical significance of the association between categorical variables of analysis and children's progress through school and to determine which models provided the best fit for these data. To illustrate the final logistic regression models of children's school progress, I used the post-estimation

margins command in Stata to compute the marginal effects at representative values (MERs) (Long and Freese 2014; Williams 2012). Standard errors and confidence intervals were estimated with the delta method and used to determine whether differences between groups were statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$ level). In order to explain important relationships, I display the predicted probabilities of children's regular progress through school in Figures 3 and 4 using representative values of the sample.

[Table 1 about here]

Results

Descriptive Results

The first research question I address is how children's characteristics and access to household-based resources vary based on child type and family structure. Table 1 shows the weighted mean values for various characteristics and household resources by child type for biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex and different-sex parents. On the whole, children with different-sex married parents tended to be the most advantaged, compared to children with same-sex parents and those with different-sex cohabiting parents. Children with same-sex parents were generally more advantaged in terms of access to household-based resources compared to children with different-sex cohabiting parents. For example, same-sex parents with children had higher levels of educational attainment, higher household income, higher rates of steady employment, and higher rates of home ownership compared to different-sex cohabiting parents with children. Notably, however, children living with same-sex couples had experienced many of the same family breakups and transitions as children living with different-sex cohabiting couples, indicating greater family instability for children with same-sex

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parents than for children with different-sex married parents. In addition, most same-sex couples in this sample did not have access to legal marriage, so their children could not benefit from the stability of marriage.

Considering children's educational progress, the vast majority of all children were making regular progress through school (94.4% of children with same-sex parents, 96% of children with different-sex married parents, 93.6% of children with different-sex cohabiting parents). Figure 2 displays the mean proportions of each child type that were *not* making regular progress in school, as measured by grade retention. Biological children living with different-sex married parents were most likely to make regular progress in school (3% retained) than all other child types. Average school progress was statistically similar among children of same-sex couples (5.6% retained) as for stepchildren with different-sex married parents (6.4% retained), biological children of different-sex cohabiting parents (6.1% retained) and adopted children of different-sex cohabiting parents (7.3% retained). Compared to children of same-sex couples, larger proportions of adopted children with different-sex married parents (7.2% retained) and stepchildren with different-sex cohabiting parents (8.1% retained) had been retained in school.

[Figure 2 about here]

The racial/ethnic makeup of biological children living with different-sex married parents was considerably different than for children living with same-sex couples. Biological children with different-sex married parents were more likely to be White or Asian, while children with same-sex parents were more likely to be Hispanic, Black or Other race. Compared to children with same-sex parents, children living with different-sex cohabiting parents were more likely to identify as Hispanic and less likely to identify as White.

Biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex couples experienced disability rates comparable to stepchildren living with different-sex couples who were married or cohabiting. Among children living with different-sex couples, disability rates were highest among adopted children, whether they lived with married couples or cohabiting couples. Biological children living with different-sex married couples and those living with different-sex cohabiting couples were less likely to have a disability, as compared to children living with same-sex couples.

Compared to children living with different-sex cohabiting couples, those living with same-sex couples may benefit from couples having greater educational attainment, higher household income, and higher rates of home ownership. Higher levels of education on the whole provide higher incomes and better job prospects for parents. Biological and adopted children living with different-sex married couples were most likely to reside with household heads with a college education or more, compared to children living with same-sex couples. Still, children living with same-sex couples are much more likely to reside with a household head who has a college education or more, as compared to children living with different-sex cohabiting couples and step-children living with different-sex married couples. Similarly, children living with different-sex cohabiting couples were most likely to reside with household heads who had a high school diploma or less education, followed by stepchildren living with different-sex married couples. In comparison, children living with same-sex couples were less likely to reside with household heads with low educational attainment, but proportions were lowest among biological and adopted children living with different-sex married parents.

On average, children living with same-sex couples tended to live in households with considerably higher income (nearly 70% higher) than children living with different-sex

cohabiting couples. In comparison, biological children living with different-sex married couples tended to have higher household income, on average, compared to other child groups—almost twice as much income compared to children with different-sex cohabiting parents. Differences in household income were statistically significant between children living with same-sex couples and each of the other child groups.

Householders of children living with different-sex married couples were most likely to have full-time, consistent employment. Householders of children living with same-sex couples were employed in similar proportions as householders of adopted children living with different-sex cohabiting couples, but were more likely to have steady full-time employment than householders of biological children living with different-sex cohabiting couples. Home ownership provides children with greater housing stability, as compared to those who live in homes that are rented. For instance, children living with same-sex couples were more likely than children living with different-sex cohabiting couples to reside in homes that were owned rather than rented. All child groups living with different-sex married couples were more likely to live in an owned home than children living with same-sex couples. Biological children and adopted children living with different-sex married parents benefited from the highest rates of home ownership, and stepchildren with different-sex married parents were slightly more likely to live in owned homes.

Another factor that may influence children's well-being is parents' age when a child is born. Children born to teenage parents tend to have poorer outcomes than children born to older parents. Generally, teenagers are more likely to become parents when they grow up in poor or working-class backgrounds, and teenage parents tend to have lower educational attainment and lower socioeconomic status than people who become parents at later ages. Shown in Table 1, a

much larger proportion of children living with same-sex couples fell into this category compared to biological children living with different-sex married couples. The only child groups more likely to have a householder who was a teenage parent were stepchildren living with different-sex married couples and biological children living with different-sex cohabiting couples.

Children living with same-sex couples tended to fare better in terms of household head education, household income, and home ownership than children living with different-sex cohabiting couples (biological, step or adopted). Despite this, one-third of children living in same-sex couple households have incomes below the poverty line. All groups of children living with different-sex married couples were considerably less likely to be living in poverty than children living with same-sex couples. Stepchildren and adopted children living with different-sex cohabiting couples were slightly more likely to be in poverty than those with same-sex couples, and nearly half of biological children living with different-sex cohabiting couples were in poverty.

Notably, children living with same-sex couples had experienced many of the same family breakups and transitions as children living with different-sex cohabiting couples. Children living with same-sex couples were much more likely to have experienced the divorce of their parents in the past year, compared to children with different-sex married parents. Indeed, in their experience with recent divorce, children living with same-sex couples looked more similar to biological and adopted children living with different-sex cohabiting couples. Based on a measure of householders' reported previous marriages (indicating they had divorced at some point), children living with same-sex couples were much more likely than those with different-sex married couples to reside with a householder with prior marriages. Biological and adopted

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children living with different-sex married couples were the least likely to have experienced these family changes.

Moving residences or having a parent move residences is another transition through which children may experience disruption that can influence their social and educational well-being. Children living with same-sex couples were twice as likely to have moved residences in the past year, compared to biological children living with different-sex married couples. All groups of children living with different-sex cohabiting couples were more likely than children living with same-sex couples to have moved in the past year, and stepchildren living with different-sex cohabiting couples were most likely to have moved in the past year. Similarly, children living with same-sex couples were much more likely than biological children with different-sex married couples to have experienced a residential move of one or both parents in the past year. Again, all groups of children living with different-sex cohabiting couples were more likely than children living with same-sex couples to experience a recent residential move of one or both parents.

Furthermore, step and adopted children of same-sex and different-sex couples do not live with intact parents. Stepchildren of different-sex married couples benefit from the stability of marriage, but stepfamily relationships may be complicated. Not all stepchildren benefit from the financial resources of their stepparent (Marsiglio 2004). Adopted children living with different-sex married couples look most similar to biological children with different-sex married couples, in terms of household resources and their experience of family transitions. Because many same-sex couples could not marry before 2015, many children could not benefit from the stability of marriage. Children living with same-sex couples in many ways look similar to children living with different-sex cohabiting parents because many have experienced the same family transitions

during their lifetimes. Most children living with same-sex parents were born in previous heterosexual relationships, then experienced the breakup of their parents and one of their parent's transition into a new same-sex relationship.

In summary, biological children with different-sex married parents were typically the most advantaged group in terms of their access to a range of household-based resources. Notably, though, children with same-sex parents tended to have greater advantages than children with different-sex cohabiting parents in several important aspects, including higher levels of parental education, higher rates of steady parental employment, higher household incomes, and higher rates of home ownership compared to different-sex cohabiting parents with children. Even so, children with same-sex parents largely did not have access to marriage and had experienced many of the same family breakups and transitions as children with different-sex cohabiting parents, contributing to their general disadvantage relative to children with different-sex married parents.

Regression Results: Multivariate Analysis of Children's School Progress

The second research question I address is how child type and family structure are associated with children making regular school progress, once controlling for variation in children's access to household-based resources and histories of family transitions. I estimated a series of logistic regression models of children's regular school progress, using a seven-category variable of child type with biological, step, and adopted children living with same-sex couples as the reference category. Because Table 1 indicates considerable variation by child type in children's characteristics and the distribution of household-based resources, I expect that controlling for children's characteristics and access to household-based resources will account for most or all of the variation observed in regular school progress by child type. Table 2

displays odds ratios for the preferred logistic regression model of children's school progress that provided the best fit for the data based on Wald tests to determine the statistical significance of categorical variables. In these final models, I controlled for an array of children's characteristics and household-based resources.

[Table 2 about here]

Indeed, the final models show that children's characteristics and household-based resources are important for understanding why there is variation by child type. Once controlling for differences in children's characteristics and access to household-based resources, the effect of child type on children's odds of making regular school progress varied by parental education. Children's sex, age, race/ethnicity, level of English proficiency, disability status, and whether they were born in the U.S. were all significantly associated with children making regular progress through school. Household-based resources such as household income, geographic region in the U.S., and whether children live in a multi-family household were significant in predicting school progress. Several parent characteristics were also significantly associated with school progress in the model, including parents' educational attainment and full-time employment status, and whether parents had children as teenagers, were born in the U.S., or were U.S. citizens. In addition, children who moved in the past year and those whose parents married in the past year both had lower odds of making regular school progress, compared to children who had not experienced these transitions. Finally, I tested interactions between children's characteristics and other significant variables in the model. I found that the estimated effect of parents' educational attainment on children's regular school progress varied significantly depending on child type and child's sex.

Because logistic regression models are difficult to interpret on their own, especially in the presence of interactions, I computed predicted probabilities that children are making regular progress through school. I used Stata's margins command to compute marginal effects at representative values (MERs) (Long and Freese 2014; Williams 2012) and to determine whether the differences between groups were statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$ level). Figure 3 shows that the relationship varies between child type and regular school progress, depending on parents' educational attainment. Representative children in Figure 3 had the following attributes: White females, aged 9, proficient in English and not disabled, with residential stability in the past year in a single-family household, whose parent was born in the U.S., was a U.S. citizen, was employed full time, did not have a teen birth, did not marry in the past year, and household income was approximately $79,000.

[Figure 3 about here]

Shown in Figure 3, among children with same-sex parents, higher education was associated with a higher probability of making regular school progress (lower probability of retention), compared to children whose parents who did not graduate high school. Among all other child groups, parents having some college or college degree or more education was associated with a higher probability of children making regular school progress, compared to those whose parents did not complete high school. This indicates that parents' educational attainment has a considerable influence on the educational well-being of children. When the household head has a high level of education, children have a higher probability of making regular school progress, regardless of the type of couple with whom they reside.

Compared to children with same-sex parents, children living with different-sex married and different-sex cohabiting parents shared largely similar probabilities of making regular school

progress across education groups. In fact, only one group had a significantly higher probability of making regular school progress compared to children with same-sex parents: Biological children living with different-sex married parents with less than high school education had a 40% lower probability of school retention. In other words, once controlling for other characteristics, I found that school progress was similar for children living with same-sex parents and biological children living with different-sex married parents, except for the most disadvantaged children in terms of low parental education. A few child groups had significantly higher probabilities of retention than similar children with same-sex parents, including adopted children living with different-sex married parents with some college and college degree or more education, and stepchildren living with different-sex cohabiting parents with some college education. Notably, children with same-sex parents did not have higher retention rates than any of the more theoretically appropriate comparison groups, such as stepchildren with different-sex parents, that account for variations in family transition histories.

To demonstrate the influence of family changes and transitions on children's school progress, Figure 4 shows the predicted probability of being retained in school by child type and by parents' educational attainment for representative White female children, aged 16, who moved in the past year and whose parent married in the past year (all other attributes match those used in Figure 3). Among children with same-sex parents, those whose parent had some college or college degree or more education had higher probabilities of making regular school progress, compared to those whose parent did not complete high school. Figure 4 shows that, among White female children aged 16 with a history of family transitions, children living with same-sex parents had statistically similar probabilities of making regular school progress across education groups, compared to children living with different-sex married or different-sex cohabiting

parents—except for the same few child groups that showed statistical differences in Figure 3. Again, only among the most disadvantaged children in terms of parental education (less than high school education) did children with same-sex parents show statistically higher retention rates than biological children with different-sex married parents.

[Figure 4 about here]

Because children with same-sex parents may be living with only one biological parent, and most did not have access to marriage, comparisons to biological children with different-sex married parents are theoretically inappropriate. Notably, many children with same-sex parents experienced the same family transitions as stepchildren and adopted children living with different-sex parents—which are more theoretically appropriate comparison groups than biological children with different-sex married parents—yet children with same-sex parents appear to be doing better on the whole compared to stepchildren and adopted children with different-sex parents. In particular, children with same-sex parents were more likely to make regular school progress than adopted children with different-sex married parents or stepchildren with different-sex cohabiting parents. In addition to emphasizing the significance of parental education, these findings show that child type (in terms of child's relationship to parent) and the stability of marriage are important in shaping children's educational well-being.

Discussion

The general consensus among previous research studying child well-being for children with same-sex parents has found that children with same-sex parents are not statistically different from children living with different-sex parents. With few exceptions (e.g., Allen 2013; Allen et al. 2013; Regnerus 2012), previous studies found that socioeconomic status, parental marriage

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and family transitions were the source of many of the observed differences between children with same-sex parents and those with different-sex parents (Potter 2012; Reczek et al. 2016; Rosenfeld 2010). Yet because children with same-sex parents make up a small population that is typically difficult to identify in available datasets, previous research has been limited in terms of sample size, inappropriate comparison groups, and a lack of attention to previous family transitions.

The present study used data from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, one of the largest datasets available to examine well-being among children with same-sex parents as compared to children with different-sex parents. First, I explored variation in children's access to household-based resources. Based on descriptive results, children living with same-sex couples had advantages over children living with different sex cohabiting couples, yet had fewer household-based advantages over children living with different-sex married couples. In some ways, children living with same-sex parents looked more like children living with different-sex cohabiting parents. For example, both groups of children were more likely than children living with different-sex married parents to have experienced breakups and transitions within their families, including parental divorce, parents' prior marriages, and moving residences in the past year. Children living with same-sex parents seemed to fare better than children living with different-sex cohabiting parents on the whole in that parents had higher levels of education and higher rates of home ownership. Yet children living with same-sex parents also experienced high rates of poverty, much higher than among children living with different sex married parents. Moreover, I found considerable differences between biological children who live with different-sex married couples as compared to different-sex cohabiting couples, demonstrating that the stability of marriage has benefits for children that same-sex couples were largely unable to

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access until 2015. Taken together, when evaluating measures of child well-being, comparing children with same-sex parents to those with different-sex cohabiting parents is often more theoretically appropriate than comparing them to biological children with different-sex married parents in terms of children's access to household-based resources and experiences of family transitions.

Based on logistic regression results, I found that child type was significantly associated with children's school progress. Yet once I controlled for variation in children's characteristics and their access to household-based resources, child type had less of an effect on children's school progress and also had an interactive relationship with parental education. Notably, results indicated that the impact of parents' educational attainment on children's regular school progress varied depending on child and couple type. Overall, though, when parents had attained a higher level of education, their children had a higher probability of making regular school progress, regardless of child or couple type. Parents' educational attainment is influential in their children's educational well-being not only because higher levels of education allow for parents to earn a higher income, but also because well-educated parents are better able to facilitate their children's success in school (Lareau 2003). Furthermore, parents' employment status had a considerable influence on whether children were making regular progress through school. Consistent with previous studies (Potter 2012; Potter and Potter 2016; Rosenfeld 2015), I found that family transitions greatly influence children's educational well-being. Children who had moved residences in the past year and those whose parent had married within the past year were more likely to have been retained in school and not making regular school progress. Notably, I found that after accounting for family transitions, children with same-sex parents were more likely to be making regular school progress than stepchildren or adopted children living with

different-sex parents, even though many children with same-sex parents have experienced similar family transitions.

Overall, my findings demonstrated that children living with same-sex parents made similar or better progress through school compared to most children with different-sex parents, once controlling for children's characteristics, household-based resources, and family transitions. These results are consistent with the majority of previous research that found few differences in well-being among children raised by same-sex parents and those raised by different-sex parents (Fedewa and Clark 2009; Potter 2012; Rosenfeld 2010; Wainright and Patterson 2006, 2008; Wainright et al. 2004). Where I found differences, children with same-sex parents who had attained some college or more were more likely to be making regular progress through school than similar adopted children with different-sex married parents and stepchildren living with different-sex cohabiting parents. Higher levels of parental educational attainment have a more pronounced benefit for children with same-sex parents than for adopted children with different-sex married parents and stepchildren with different-sex cohabiting parents.

Although I have argued that it is less theoretically appropriate to compare children with same-sex parents to biological children with different-sex married parents, it is important to note that most children with same-sex parents are generally progressing through school in statistically similar ways to biological children with different-sex married parents. The one key exception is that low parental education seems to more negatively impact children with same-sex parents than biological children with different-sex married parents. Among children whose parents had not completed high school, biological children with different-sex married parents were considerably more likely to be making regular school progress compared to children with same-sex parents. On the one hand, higher parental education and higher household income among many same-sex

parents helps their children to overcome disadvantages they may face due to "institutional disenfranchisement" based on their parents' sexual orientation. On the other hand, children with same-sex parents who are more disadvantaged in terms of parental education appear to face greater challenges in making regular school progress, suggesting perhaps that it is more difficult for them to overcome the social and institutional disadvantages due to parents' sexual orientation.

In June 2015, the US Supreme Court ruled that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was unconstitutional, making same-sex marriage legal across the country. Record proportions of same-sex couples are now legally married, and many others may consider themselves to be married even if they have not legally wed. Given these recent changes in same-sex marriage, the Census Bureau should take steps to improve their measurement of marital status among same-sex couples.

Of course, my results should be considered within the context of this study's limitations. First, because the ACS identifies children's relationship only to the household head, children may not be properly classified in these data. For example, children classified as biologically related to the household head may also be a step or adopted child of the household head's partner. Notably, children living with same-sex parents cannot be biologically related to both parents. Therefore, I do not distinguish between biological, step and adopted children living with same-sex parents. Surveys should include questions on multiple household relationships so that researchers can be more precise in measuring children's relationship to the parents and other children in the household. Second, due to recoding strategies of the ACS, I cannot differentiate between married and unmarried same-sex couples, though marriage certainly provides benefits for same-sex relationships (e.g., Rosenfeld 2014) and their children's well-being (e.g., Reczek et

al. 2016). Third, because of small sample sizes of sexual minorities with children, I do not differentiate children's outcomes by the gender of same-sex parents, so I cannot evaluate differences in the outcomes of children who are living with same-sex female and same-sex male couples. Notably, previous research has found variation in children's well-being based on parents' gender (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Fedewa, Black and Ahn 2015), and future research could explore this further. Fourth, because the ACS does not ask respondents about their sexual orientation, I could not evaluate the outcomes of children living with single parents who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. With available data, I approximated a measure of same-sex and different-sex couples based on measures of each parent's sex; yet there is risk of misclassification bias because some respondents may have miscoded parents' sex. I minimized this risk, however, by adjusting the sample according to Gates and Steinberger's (2010) recommendations. Furthermore, I cannot confirm the sexual orientation of parents in the household. Surveys should more explicitly include questions on sexual orientation so that researchers can better identify the ways that parental sexual orientation might shape children's experiences and outcomes. Finally, because questions in the ACS ask about limited family transitions and changes only within the past year, my findings underestimate the cumulative number of transitions that children have experienced and the influence of these transitions on children's school progress.

My findings emphasize the significance of parental education and socioeconomic status, as well as child type and family stability, for understanding children's educational well-being. Taken together, my results suggest that children living with same-sex parents raise children that are educationally prepared in much the same ways as for children living with different-sex parents. In other words, the sexual orientation of parents has less of an impact on children's

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educational progress than other factors such as parents' education and employment status and past family transitions. When newer become available, future work should also compare findings before and after June 2015, when same-sex marriage became federally legal, to further examine how access to marriage benefits children with same-sex parents.

Table 1. *Weighted Means of Children's Characteristics and Household-Based Resources by Couple Type and Child Type, for Biological, Step and Adopted Children under 18 Years Living in Couple-Headed Households. ACS 2008-2012, 5-year estimates, N = 2,396,248.*

	Same-sex couples	Different-sex married couples				Different-sex cohabiting couples			
Household-Based Resources	All Children	All Children	Biological children	Step children	Adopted children	All Children	Biological children	Step children	Adopted children
Child Characteristics									
Child making regular school progress	0.944	0.960 *	0.967 *	0.936	0.928 *	0.936	0.939	0.919 *	0.927
Child's age, in years	8.43	8.64 *	8.09 *	11.57 *	9.52 *	6.89 *	6.63 *	9.46 *	8.29
Child's race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	0.523	0.627 *	0.645 *	0.541	0.531	0.424 *	0.422 *	0.456 *	0.396 *
Hispanic	0.235	0.206 *	0.198 *	0.256 *	0.184 *	0.351 *	0.355 *	0.316 *	0.322 *
Black, non-Hispanic	0.154	0.068 *	0.056 *	0.131 *	0.108 *	0.143	0.141	0.152	0.198 *
Asian, non-Hispanic	0.021	0.058 *	0.062 *	0.025	0.112 *	0.016 *	0.016	0.015 *	0.017
Other, non-Hispanic	0.066	0.041 *	0.040 *	0.047 *	0.065	0.065	0.066	0.060	0.067
Child is U.S. citizen	0.980	0.969 *	0.971 *	0.959 *	0.961 *	0.979	0.981	0.952 *	0.962 *
Child is native-born	0.962	0.959	0.966	0.951 *	0.815 *	0.977 *	0.980 *	0.947 *	0.939 *
Child's English proficiency									
Speaks English only	0.847	0.776 *	0.769 *	0.788 *	0.877 *	0.741 *	0.737 *	0.770 *	0.766 *
Speaks well or very well	0.142	0.209 *	0.215 *	0.199 *	0.112 *	0.238 *	0.242 *	0.212 *	0.215 *
Speaks not well or not at all	0.011	0.015	0.015	0.013	0.011	0.021 *	0.021 *	0.018 *	0.019
Child has disability	0.058	0.030 *	0.024 *	0.053	0.088 *	0.043 *	0.041 *	0.055	0.083 *
Child has health insurance	0.906	0.929 *	0.932 *	0.904	0.951 *	0.896	0.899	0.870 *	0.873 *
Household Head (HH) Characteristics									
HH education									
Less than high school	0.177	0.142 *	0.131 *	0.209 *	0.108 *	0.310 *	0.314 *	0.276 *	0.279 *
High school diploma	0.176	0.177	0.166	0.238 *	0.164	0.262 *	0.261 *	0.277 *	0.241 *
Some college	0.324	0.302 *	0.290 *	0.369 *	0.304	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.347
College or more	0.323	0.379 *	0.413 *	0.185 *	0.424 *	0.093 *	0.090 *	0.113 *	0.133 *
HH employed full-time/full-year	0.582	0.661 *	0.666 *	0.630 *	0.654 *	0.517 *	0.507 *	0.620 *	0.574
HH is U.S. citizen	0.910	0.878 *	0.875 *	0.885 *	0.947 *	0.812 *	0.808 *	0.860 *	0.811 *
HH is native-born	0.859	0.778 *	0.768 *	0.813 *	0.889 *	0.769 *	0.764 *	0.821 *	0.776 *
HH was teen parent to co-resident child	0.129	0.058 *	0.042 *	0.154 *	0.013 *	0.202 *	0.219 *	0.050 *	0.051 *
HH divorced in past year	0.0323	0.0013 *	0.0002 *	0.0076 *	0.0008 *	0.0333	0.0324	0.0421 *	0.0380
HH married in past year	0.0055	0.0263 *	0.0073	0.1339 *	0.0199 *	0.0006 *	0.0006 *	0.0006 *	0.0002 *
HH has any prior marriages	0.379	0.176 *	0.123 *	0.457 *	0.263 *	0.345 *	0.337 *	0.415 *	0.436 *

Table 1.   *(continued)*

Children Living in Couple-Headed Households

Household-Based Resources	Same-sex couples	Different-sex married couples				Different-sex cohabiting couples			
	All Children	**All Children**	**Biological children**	**Step children**	**Adopted children**	**All Children**	**Biological children**	**Step children**	**Adopted children**
Residential Stability and Household Characteristics									
Couple's residential stability, past year									
Neither partner moved	0.757	0.881 *	0.891 *	0.821 *	0.903 *	0.680 *	0.682 *	0.658 *	0.697 *
Only HH moved	0.019	0.005 *	0.005 *	0.009 *	0.005 *	0.016 *	0.016	0.019	0.025
Only partner moved	0.041	0.006 *	0.004 *	0.018 *	0.006 *	0.049 *	0.048	0.049	0.070 *
Both partners moved	0.183	0.107 *	0.100 *	0.152 *	0.086 *	0.255	0.254 *	0.274 *	0.208
Child moved, past year	0.200	0.107 *	0.096 *	0.165 *	0.101 *	0.258 *	0.251 *	0.329 *	0.229
Own/rent housing unit									
Own home	0.569	0.745 *	0.767 *	0.609 *	0.838 *	0.342 *	0.336 *	0.396 *	0.404 *
Rent home or no rent payment	0.431	0.254 *	0.233 *	0.391 *	0.162	0.658 *	0.664 *	0.604 *	0.596 *
Household income, in dollars	91,441	102,269 *	106,186 *	78,579 *	111,964 *	53,706 *	52,775 *	62,176 *	63,444 *
Income-to-poverty ratio									
Less than 100%	0.329	0.101 *	0.094 *	0.144 *	0.076 *	0.454 *	0.464 *	0.362 *	0.359
100-199%	0.235	0.188 *	0.177 *	0.253	0.166 *	0.292 *	0.289 *	0.319 *	0.319 *
200-399%	0.246	0.340 *	0.335 *	0.366 *	0.336 *	0.197 *	0.192 *	0.244	0.234
400% or more	0.189	0.371 *	0.394 *	0.236 *	0.423 *	0.057 *	0.054 *	0.075 *	0.088 *
Multi-generational or multi-family household	0.023	0.019	0.018	0.023	0.026	0.023	0.023	0.020	0.031
	0.003	0.910	0.753	0.134	0.023	0.087	0.079	0.007	0.001
Total *n* (unweighted)	5,271	2,215,851	1,853,652	302,981	59,218	175,126	157,971	14,897	2,258

Note: All means are weighted; N values are unweighted.

* Indicates statistically significant difference compared to mean of biological, step, and adopted children living with same-sex couples (at p < 0.05 level).

Table 2. *Logistic Regression Model Predicting Regular Progress Through School,Controlling for Individual and Household-Level Characteristics, for Biological, Step and Adopted Children under 18 Years in Couple-Headed Households, Odds Ratios. ACS 2008-2012, 5-year estimates. N = 1,680,032.*

Independent Variables	e^{coeff}		coeff/se
Child Type (Living in Couple-Headed Households) [a]			
(ref = Bio, step & adopted children with SS couples)			
Bio children with DS married couples	1.69	**	3.43
Step children with DS married couples	1.42	*	2.26
Adopted children with DS married couples	1.34		1.79
Bio children with DS cohabiting couples	1.33		1.84
Step children with DS cohabiting couples	1.11		0.60
Adopted children with DS cohabiting couples	0.95		-0.22
Child is female *(1 = yes)*	1.33	***	14.47
Child's age, in years	0.87	***	-98.86
Child has a disability *(1 = yes)*	0.39	***	-56.20
Child's race/ethnicity *(ref = White, non-Hispanic)*			
Hispanic	1.03		1.63
Black, non-Hispanic	0.87	***	-7.41
Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	1.18	***	5.26
Other, non-Hispanic	0.98		-0.66
Child is native-born *(1 = yes)*	1.49	***	18.23
Child's English proficiency *(ref = Speaks English only)*			
Speaks well or very well	0.91	***	-4.77
Speaks not well or not at all	0.60	***	-14.30
Household income, in dollars	1.00	***	18.13
Household head (HH) education			
(ref = No high school diploma)			
High school diploma	1.93	*	2.46
Some college	2.89	***	4.85
College or more	2.84	***	4.52
HH employed full-time/full-year *(1 = yes)*	1.10	***	8.50
HH had co-resident child as a teenager *(1 = yes)*	0.76	***	-14.89
HH is U.S. citizen *(1 = yes)*	1.14	***	5.56
HH is native-born *(1 = yes)*	0.78	***	-10.39
HH married in past year *(1 = yes)*	0.90	**	-3.11

Independent Variables	e^coeff		coeff/se
Child moved in past year *(1 = yes)*	0.83	***	-11.32
Multi-gen. or multi-family household *(1 = yes)*	0.61	***	-19.16
Geographic region of U.S. *(ref = Northeast)*			
Midwest	0.83	***	-10.93
South	0.66	***	-26.47
West	1.20	***	10.02
Child type x Household head education			
Bio children with DS married couples			
High school diploma	0.80		-0.85
Some college	0.68		-1.73
College or more	0.82		-0.86
Step children with DS married couples			
High school diploma	0.71		-1.28
Some college	0.58	*	-2.45
College or more	0.76		-1.17
Adopted children with DS married couples			
High school diploma	0.57	*	-2.03
Some college	0.43	***	-3.61
College or more	0.41	***	-3.70
Bio children with DS cohabiting couples			
High school diploma	0.72		-1.24
Some college	0.63	*	-2.10
College or more	0.80		-0.90
Step children with DS cohabiting couples			
High school diploma	0.64		-1.57
Some college	0.50	**	-2.87
College or more	0.55	*	-2.17
Adopted children with DS cohabiting couples			
High school diploma	0.91		-0.24
Some college	0.80		-0.61
College or more	1.02		0.03
Household head education x Child's sex			
High school diploma x Female	1.06	*	2.12
Some college x Female	1.13	***	4.41
College or more x Female	1.18	***	5.70
Intercept	32.74	***	22.15
Wald tests for interactions			
Child/Couple type x Household head education	$F(18, 4615663) = 7.72$		
	$p < .001$		
Household head education x Child's sex	$F(3, 4615678) = 12.53$		
	$p < .001$		

Note: Data are weighted.

[a] *SS = Same-sex, DS = Different-sex. "ref" indicates omitted reference category.*

* p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 2. Mean Proportions of Children Retained in School, by Child Type.
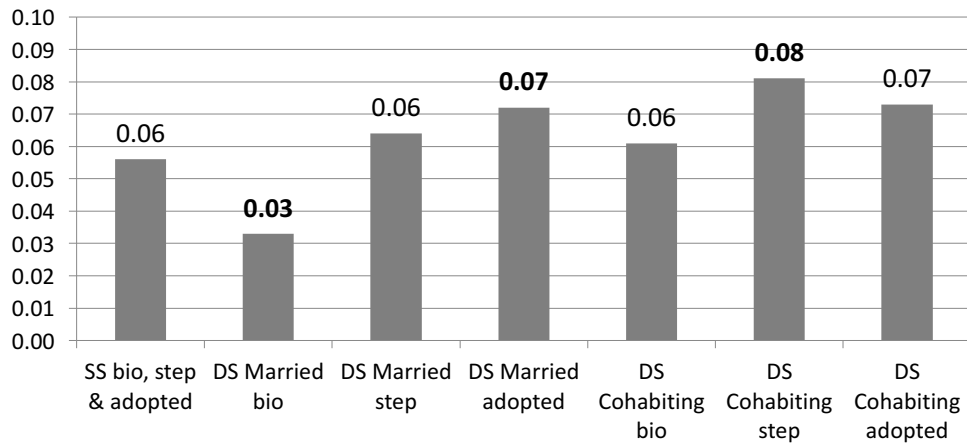
*Note: Values in **BOLD** are statistically significant compared to children with same-sex parents at p < 0.05 level.*

Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities of Children Retained in School, by Child Type and Parent Education, Illustrative Females Aged 9.
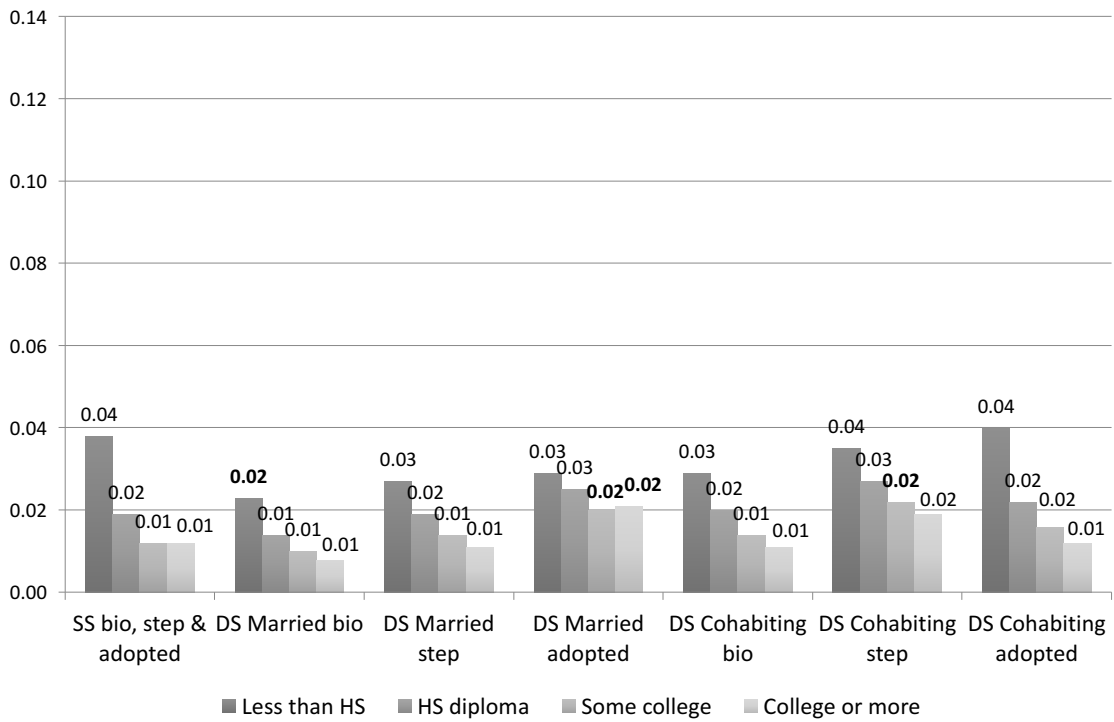
*Note: Values in **BOLD** are statistically significant compared to children with same-sex parents at p < 0.05 level.*

Figure 4. Predicted Probabilities of Children Retained in School, by Child Type and Household Head Education, Illustrative Females Aged 16 with Family Transitions.
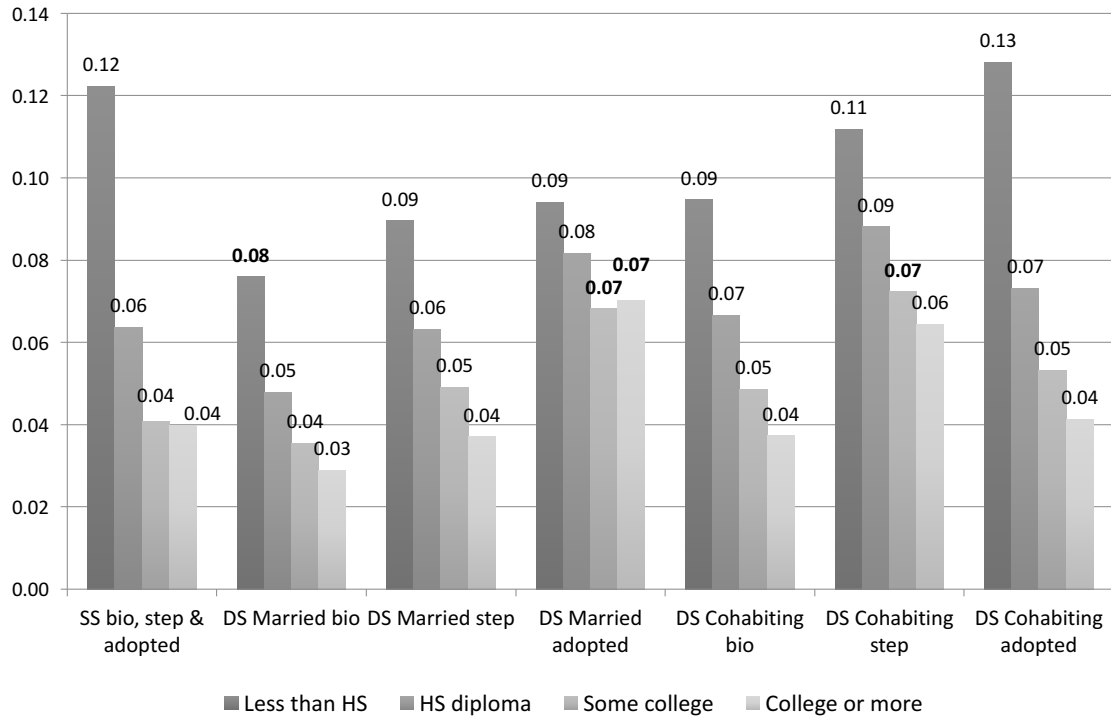
*Note: Values in **BOLD** are statistically significant compared to children with same-sex parents at p < 0.05 level.*

Table A. *Variables of Analysis with Descriptions.*

| Variable of Analysis	Description of Variable
Child's school progress	0 = retained in school, 1 = making regular school progress
Child's sex	0 = male, 1 = female
Child's age	In years
Child's race/ethnicity	(categorical) *Hispanic, White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Asian non-Hispanic, Other non-Hispanic*
Child is U.S. citizen	0 = no, 1 = yes
Child is U.S. born	0 = no, 1 = yes
Child's level of English proficiency	(categorical) Child *speaks English only*, *speaks English well or very well*, or *speaks English not well or not at all*
Child has a disability	0 = no, 1 = yes; child has difficulty with memory, hearing, vision, or physical ability, or has a personal care limitation.
Child has health insurance	0 = no, 1 = yes
Parent education	(categorical) Household-head education categorized as *less than high school diploma* (including those with GED, see Cameron and Heckman 1993), *high school diploma, some college*, and *college degree or more*.
Parent employed full time	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head was employed full-time/full-year in past 12 months.
Parent is U.S. citizen	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head is U.S. citizen
Parent is U.S. born	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head was born in U.S.
Parent was teenage parent	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head was a teenage parent to a co-resident child, including all children in the household, even if not born to teenaged parent. Research on heterosexual mothers has found that maternal age is associated with child well-being, such that children born to teenage mothers fare worse than those born to older mothers (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, Morgan 1987; Levine, Pollack and Comfort 2001). I approximate this measure based on the year of interview (the only interview data available).
Parent married in past year	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head married in past year
Parent divorced in past year	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head divorced in past year
Parent has prior marriages	0 = no, 1 = yes; household head reports any prior marriages
Parents' residential instability in past year	(categorical) *Neither partner moved, both partners moved, only household head moved*, or *only partner moved*
Child's residential instability in past year	0 = no, 1 = yes; child moved in the past year.
Homeownership	0 = no, 1 = yes; housing unit is owned.
Household income	In dollars.
Income-to-poverty ratio	Based on household income and number of individuals in the household.
Multi-family household	0 = no, 1 = yes; household contains multiple families or multiple generations.

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CHAPTER 2

Parenting Desires and Intentions Among Sexual Minorities:
An Intersectional Approach

As same-sex relationships have gained greater social acceptance, families headed by lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) parents have become increasingly visible. In fact, about one third of lesbians and one in six gay men have children (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, and Chambers 2007), as do over half of bisexual women and one third of bisexual men (Pew Research Center 2013). Yet demographic accounts of parenting desires and intentions largely neglect sexual minorities. Particularly little is known about parenting preferences among bisexual adults (Ross and Dobinson 2013) and among sexual minorities who have already become parents. Instead, previous studies almost exclusively focus on heterosexual women and men or do not consider respondents' sexual identities.

The limited existing research on parenting desires among sexual minority populations suggests that, although a large proportion does want a child someday, gay men and lesbians are less likely than heterosexual people to express a desire to have children (Gates et al. 2007; Riskind and Patterson 2010). Among those who report *wanting* children, gay men are less likely than heterosexual men to report that they *plan* to have children, but lesbians appear just as likely as heterosexual women to do so (Riskind and Patterson 2010). This suggests that a larger share of sexual minorities, particularly men, is not able to achieve their desire to have children. Previous research points to a higher risk for depression among heterosexual adults (Connidis and McMullin 1993; White and McQuillan 2006) and gay men (Shenkman 2012) who are not able to realize their parenting preferences, suggesting that sexual minorities who cannot achieve their parenting desires are at risk of decreased well-being (Riskind and Patterson 2010).

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Furthermore, prior efforts to investigate how background characteristics may jointly influence parenting preferences (e.g., educational differentials within race groups) have been particularly hampered by the lack of large sample sizes of sexual minority populations (Russell and Muraco 2013). Considerable variation exists among heterosexual people in parenting desires, including by gender, race/ethnicity, education, and age (e.g., Browning and Burrington 2006; Hayford 2009; Kessler, Craig, Saigal, and Quinn 2013), yet relatively little is known about the broader set of factors shaping parenting desires and intentions among LGB people. Previous work indicates that racial minority gay men are more likely than White gay men to want—and to plan to have—children (Riskind and Patterson 2010; Riskind, Patterson, and Nosek 2013). Nevertheless, previous research found that some sexual minority women do not want children and feel relieved that they are not pressured to become mothers due to their lesbian identities (Kazyak, Park, McQuillan and Greil 2014).

Using data from the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), this analysis investigates parenting desires and intentions among sexual minorities, with a focus on variability across groups defined by race/ethnicity and education. With more recent data and a larger sample size than prior studies (Gates et al. 2007; Kazyak et al. 2014; Riskind and Patterson 2010), I am able to evaluate the parenting preferences of sexual minorities with and without children, to differentiate between Hispanic and Black respondents, and to distinguish between bisexual people and their gay and lesbian peers. Using an intersectional lens (Crenshaw 1991), I explore whether variation in the reported parenting desires and intentions of sexual minorities reflects their positions of social privilege and disadvantage in other aspects of life (Moore 2011). An intersectional approach reveals that LGB people face complex barriers in the pathways to parenthood.

Background

Intersectionality

At both individual and structural levels, our social statuses interconnect to constrain and enable our preferences and life opportunities, including the desire to become a parent and the ability to do so (Moore 2011). Theories of intersectionality posit that systems of privilege and disadvantage—based on one's positions in social categories such as gender, race, and sexual orientation—operate simultaneously to produce unique experiences (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Dill 1983). On the one hand, individuals positioned at the margins of multiple social categories—for example, sexual minorities from racial minority backgrounds—may face compounded disadvantage due to stigmatization from multiple sources (Meyer, Dietrich, and Schwartz 2008). Yet, on the other hand, systems of privilege and disadvantage interconnect in such a way that some individuals may benefit from the complex interplay of their multiple marginalized identities (Meyer et al. 2008; Pedulla 2014). By analyzing variable interactions in regression models, a quantitative intersectional approach can reveal the "complexity of relationships among multiple social groups within and across analytical categories" (McCall 2005: 1786) and show how these complex relationships shape the parenting desires and intentions of sexual minorities.

Parenting Preferences Among Sexual Minorities

Prior studies, though limited, have provided important insights into parenting preferences among sexual minorities. Although results may not be generalizable to larger populations, existing research using non-representative or homogeneous samples or qualitative approaches generally has found that, despite expressing less interest in having children and less intention to do so, relative to heterosexual peers, gay men's and lesbians' parenting desires remain strong

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(Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; D'Augelli, Rendina, Sinclair, and Grossman 2007; Rabun and Oswald 2009). Remarkably few studies use population-based samples to evaluate parenting perspectives among sexual minorities (for exceptions, see Gates et al. 2007; Kazyak et al. 2014; Riskind and Patterson 2010). Using data from the 2002 NSFG, Gates and colleagues (2007) found that gay men (52%) aged 18 to 44 were less likely than heterosexual (67%) and bisexual men (66%) to report wanting a/another child someday. Similarly, lesbian women (41%) were less likely to report wanting a/another child, compared to heterosexual (54%) and bisexual women (59%). Aside from current parity, however, Gates and colleagues did not address the predictors of LGB people's parenting desires.

Building on this work, Riskind and Patterson (2010) also analyzed 2002 NSFG data, matching childless gay men and lesbians aged 15 to 44 with comparable heterosexual participants based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. Similar to Gates and colleagues (2007), Riskind and Patterson observed that childless gay men (54%) and lesbian women (37%) were considerably less likely than similar heterosexual men (75%) and women (68%) to want a child someday. Notably, gay men were also less likely than heterosexual men to report intending to have a child, but heterosexual and lesbian women expressed statistically similar levels of parenting intentions—suggesting that parenting preferences are shaped by gender as well as by sexual identity. Although Riskind and Patterson were unable to fully explore variation within sexual minority groups across background factors such as education and race, presumably due to the relatively small sample sizes of such groups in the 2002 NSFG, they found that Whites were less likely than people of color to express parenting desires in all sexual identity groups.

Drawing on a population-based sample of 43 sexual minority women, Kazyak and colleagues (2014) found that sexual minority women expressed variation in their commitment to motherhood. While some sexual minority women wanted children, others were happy to remain childfree and to escape the pressure to become mothers (also see Gillespie 2003). Notably, some sexual minority women distinguished between *having* a child and *raising* a child, suggesting that they hold broad conceptions of motherhood that do not always include biological relatedness (Kazyak et al. 2014).

Largely invisible in accounts of parenting perspectives, bisexual people are often lumped together with gay men and lesbians or excluded altogether. Indeed, small sample sizes limited Riskind and Patterson's (2010) ability to include bisexual respondents in their analysis. Yet the existing limited research on bisexual adults shows that they are more likely to be raising children and to report wanting children than their gay and lesbian counterparts (Ross and Dobinson 2013). This points to the importance of studying bisexual people separately from gay men and lesbians when examining family life.

Previous research on heterosexual men and women found that age and relationship status are two of the primary factors that influence desires (Gray, Evans and Reimondos 2013) and expectations (Hayford 2009) to have children. Fertility declines with age for both women and men, yet child desires and intentions may fluctuate (Gray et al. 2013). On the one hand, young people may be more likely to want children and to see parenthood as possible in their future, suggesting that child desires would be stronger among younger individuals. On the other hand, older people tend to be more financially stable and more likely to be in a stable relationship, which may strengthen their desires to have children in the near future. Notably, parenting desires and intentions are not static, and individuals may adjust their child desires and intentions over

their life course because of their age and their life experiences (Gray et al. 2013; Hayford 2009; Iacovou and Tavares 2011).

Pathways and Barriers to Parenthood Among Sexual Minorities

Although same-sex marriage is legal across the U.S. (as of June, 2015), LGB women and men continue to face discrimination, legal and religious restrictions on same-sex relationships, and internalized homophobia. As a marginalized group, sexual minorities are susceptible to minority stress, which promotes a lower sense of self-worth and decreased well-being (Meyer 2003) and contributes to greater instability in same-sex relationships than in different-sex relationships (Green 2006). A lack of family acceptance (Mezey 2008; Reczek 2016; Riskind et al. 2013) and institutional support (Baiocco, Argalia, and Laghi 2014; Gates 2015) may further discourage LGB people from forming serious same-sex relationships and having children. Moreover, sexual minorities often encounter discrimination in adoption agencies (Goldberg 2012; Wald 2006), making this pathway to parenthood more difficult.

In fact, sexual minorities are keenly aware of the constraints they face to becoming parents (Baiocco and Laghi 2013; Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Shenkman 2012). A gap between child desires and intentions (i.e., *wanting* a child but not *planning* to have one) may signal the perception of barriers to parenthood that are beyond one's control (Kazyak et al. 2014) or the existence of competing opportunities such as education and career goals (Barber 2001; Johnson-Hanks, Bachrach, Morgan and Kohler 2011). Drawing on a large, internet-based sample, Riskind and colleagues (2013) found that childless gay men and lesbians expressed greater confidence about achieving parenthood when they enjoyed higher socioeconomic status. Among gay men, age and race were also important: Younger, White gay men expressed greater certainty about their ability to become parents someday than those who were older and not White

(Riskind et al. 2013). This supports an intersectional approach and suggests that LGB people with multiple marginalized identities (e.g., sexual minority and racial minority statuses) face differential obstacles to becoming parents based on the interplay of their social identities.

Previous work has also shown that the intersection of gender and sexual identity may shape meanings of parenthood and constrain and enable parenting opportunities among LGB people. Gay men face particular challenges in forming planned families. Most have not been socialized to be nurturers and caregivers, and instead have been stereotyped as self-centered and pleasure-seeking (Berkowitz 2011; Goldberg 2012; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004). Lesbian women have been viewed by others as unfeminine or unfit to be mothers, and this may be especially salient for racial minority lesbians (Moore 2011). Notably, bisexual women and men face unique discrimination, as they are marginalized in both gay and heterosexual spaces. Many people dismiss bisexuality as a stage of transition or confusion (Ross and Dobinson 2013), and in fact, some research has found that bisexual people may have poorer mental health outcomes than gay men and lesbians (e.g., Bostwick 2012; Meyer et al. 2008). Compared to their gay and lesbian peers, however, bisexual people are more often women, much more likely to be married, and much more likely to be in committed relationships with different-sex partners (Pew 2013). This highlights the importance of gender and sexual identity for understanding sexual minorities' barriers to having children.

In addition, sexual minorities develop different meanings of parenthood and face differential barriers to having children depending on their racial/ethnic backgrounds. Racial minority men and women with same-sex desire face conflicting perspectives on homosexuality (Ocampo 2012). Whereas mainstream (i.e., White, affluent) gay culture promotes adopting a public gay identity, racial minority groups often view sexuality as a private matter (Guzman

2006; Manalansan 2003), with Black communities promoting "respectability" in order to preserve the community's reputation (Moore 2010). Although Black and Hispanic populations share similar average socioeconomic status, differences in their family patterns suggest that race and culture shape family life (Raley, Durden, and Wildsmith 2004) and sexuality (Guzman 2006) in particular ways. Demonstrating the benefit of an intersectional approach, Moore (2011) showed that Black lesbian women rely on their racial communities for economic support and feel less affinity with the White gay community. Similarly, Mezey (2008) found that White, middle-class lesbians reported greater family support for their lesbian identity and their decisions to become mothers, compared to working-class and racial minority peers. Yet from a different angle, because racial minority communities often value the collective family and its reputation above the wants of individuals (Allen and Bagozzi 2001; Sabogal et al. 1987), LGB people from racial minority backgrounds may receive greater family support and thus perceive fewer barriers to having children.

As Moore (2011) and Mezey (2008) have suggested, socioeconomic context also influences meanings of parenthood and poses barriers to having children among sexual minorities. The high costs of adoption and surrogacy present particularly steep hurdles for poor and working-class LGB people who want to have children (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Mezey 2008; Moore 2011). Among heterosexual women, less-educated women tend to prioritize parenthood as necessary for a meaningful life, while more-educated women may view their highly paid professions as obstacles to becoming a mother (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Johnson-Hanks et al. 2011; Waller 1999; but see Musick, England, Edgington, and Kangas 2009). Prior work on heterosexual men, however, has found a positive relationship between education and parenting desires, suggesting that gender intersects with education to create different opportunity

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costs to becoming parents (Kessler et al. 2013; Morgan and Rackin 2010). Although previous research does not fully address how education or income might shape the barriers to parenthood for LGB people, an intersectional framework can account for the considerable socioeconomic diversity among LGB people (Gates 2012).

Finally, other factors constrain sexual minorities' ability to become parents. Fertility declines with age, yet same-sex couples adopt children more often than different-sex couples (Gates 2012), perhaps weakening the power of age as a barrier to parenthood for some sexual minorities. Moreover, older LGB people may have encountered greater discrimination in their lifetimes. In contrast, as indicated by sexual minorities "coming out" at younger ages (Pew 2013), younger LGB people are better positioned to benefit from recent social and legal changes, and thus to see parenthood as a possibility (Riskind et al. 2013). Moreover, having a child influences one's perception of barriers to having another child (Morgan and Rackin 2010). Notably, a sizable proportion of sexual minorities has already become parents, many through a heterosexual relationship prior to adopting a gay identity (Gates 2012; Moore 2011), yet prior studies have typically limited their analysis to childless individuals (Kazyak et al. 2014; Riskind and Patterson 2010; Riskind et al. 2013). Although specific results vary across studies, previous work on heterosexual people has indicated that characteristics such as union status, religiosity (Hayford and Morgan 2008), nativity (Raley et al. 2004), urbanicity (Kulu 2013), and childhood family structure (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994) also shape barriers to parenthood.

Research Questions

Using data from two rounds of the NSFG (2002 and 2006-2010), this research expands our knowledge of parenting preferences and intentions among sexual minorities. Drawing on a larger and more recent sample than prior work, I take an intersectional approach and ask whether

there is variation by race or education, first, in the association between sexual identity and parenting desires and, second, in the association between sexual identity and perceived barriers to parenthood. My large sample permits greater statistical power to investigate complex interactions than prior work (e.g., Riskind and Patterson 2010). In particular, I highlight the parenting preferences of bisexual respondents and Hispanic respondents, who have been largely overlooked in previous work. Because communities of color and those with lower socioeconomic status more often prioritize the collective family over the individual, I expect sexual minorities who are not White or are less educated will report greater parenting desires than their peers who are White or more educated. Moreover, because some LGB people may experience conflict between their communities and mainstream gay culture, I expect that sexual minorities' perceived barriers to having children, as signaled by larger gaps between their reported parenting desires and intentions, will vary by educational attainment and by race/ethnicity.

Data and Methods

To examine parenting desires and intentions, I use data from the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Surveys of Family Growth (NSFG). These are nationally representative, cross-sectional surveys of women and men aged 15 to 44, which jointly include nearly 20,000 women and over 15,000 men (Lepkowski et al. 2013). I combine the 2002 and 2006-2010 rounds of the NSFG to allow for larger samples of sexual minority respondents and greater statistical power in subgroup analyses. As one of the only population-based surveys to ask about sexual orientation in addition to parenting desires and intentions, the NSFG is well suited for studying parenting preferences among LGB people. Interviewers administered most of the survey, but respondents answered

sensitive questions, such as those related to sexual orientation, via Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI) to protect their privacy. The NSFG oversampled Black and Hispanic adults and teenagers of all races. I used Stata 13 for all analyses. Utilizing Stata survey estimation techniques, I adjust for the stratified and clustered sampling design of the NSFG and apply sampling weights for all analyses (except where noted).

Measures

To measure parenting desires, I rely on a question that asked, "Do you, yourself, want to have a/another child at some time in the future?" Response options were *yes*, *no*, and *don't know*. Those who said *don't know* (2.4% of women, 1.9% of men) were then asked whether they would "probably want or probably not want" to have a/another child at some time in the future, with response options *probably want*, *probably do not want*, and *don't know*. After verifying that it would not change my substantive results, I combine *yes*/*probably yes* and *no*/*probably no* to create a binary variable, and omit *don't know* responses due to negligible cases (women: 0.53%, $n = 105$; men: 0.68%, $n = 104$).

For the next stage of the analysis, I measure parenting intentions using a question that asked, "Looking to the future, do you intend to have a/another child at some time?" with the clarification that "intend refers to what you [and your wife/husband/partner] are actually going to try to do." Married respondents and those cohabiting with an "opposite-sex" partner were asked to provide joint intentions of the couple, while all others provided individual intentions. Responses for women were *yes, no,* or *don't know*, but for men were *definitely yes*, *probably yes*, *probably no*, *definitely no,* or *don't know*. Although I cannot directly compare women's and men's models, I classify all responses as *yes/no* and combine individual and joint intentions.

My three key independent variables are sexual identity, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. The NSFG measured sexual identity as *heterosexual or straight, homosexual or gay/lesbian, bisexual,* or *something else.* Notably, however, there were inconsistencies in the answer choices over time. In the 2002 NSFG, the first two choices for sexual identity were *heterosexual* and *homosexual*; the respective options of *straight* and *gay/lesbian* were added in 2006, so responses may differ across the rounds of data. In addition, the NSFG dropped the option of *something else* in 2008 (Lepkowski et al. 2013). After confirming that it would not change my substantive results, I omitted respondents who identified as *something else*.[1] In terms of race/ethnicity, I classified respondents as *Hispanic*, *non-Hispanic White*, and *non-Hispanic Black*. I omitted respondents who identified as *Other* because the small share of respondents (women: 6.2%, *n* = 1,105; men: 6.3%, *n* = 966) made subgroup analysis difficult. Finally, I categorized respondents' education as *high school diploma or less, some college,* or *college degree or more*. Table 1 describes my final analytical samples (see Appendix, Table 4 for three-way frequencies among key variables).

[Table 1 about here]

Furthermore, I incorporate an array of characteristics that, as noted above, may contribute to variation in parenting desires and in perceived barriers to parenthood, including respondents' age (in 5-year categories), marital status, number of children (biological and adopted), religious service attendance, whether respondents lived with both parents from ages 0 to 18, urbanicity, nativity (whether U.S. born), and survey wave (2002 vs. 2006-10). Notably, 22% of lesbians, 42% of bisexual women, and 58% of heterosexual women in my sample already had at least one child, as did 12% of gay men, 27% of bisexual men, and 47% of heterosexual men. Moreover, current parity varied by race: Hispanic women (66%) and Black women (62%) were more likely

than White women (54%) to already have children. Similarly, 54% of Hispanic men and 49% of Black men already had children, compared to 44% of White men. More specifically, Hispanic and Black gay men were more likely than White gay men to have children, and Hispanic and Black lesbians were about four times as likely as White lesbians to have children. Despite this apparent variation in parity by sexual identity and race, I do not include interactions with parity in my models in order to maintain parsimony.

Although the NSFG data are useful for studying the parenting preferences of sexual minorities on a national scale, survey questions focused on heterosexual relationships. For example, cohabitation was described as "not married but living with a partner of the opposite sex," excluding same-sex cohabiting relationships (Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum 2013). In addition, respondents who did not report an opposite-sex spouse or partner were asked to provide income levels for themselves and anyone in the household who is "family" or "who is related to you." Whether they accounted for the income of a same-sex cohabiting partner would depend on their interpretation of these terms, leaving room for measurement error. Therefore, I rely on education as a measure of socioeconomic status in the current analysis.

Furthermore, parenting desires may be understated in these data. Focusing on biogenetic relatedness, the NSFG asked female respondents if they want to "have a baby" and male respondents if they want to "have a child." If respondents distinguished between *having* and *raising* a child (Kazyak et al. 2014), the NSFG may capture *childbearing* preferences rather than *parenting* preferences. Finally, married and cohabiting respondents reported joint parenting intentions, while all others reported individual intentions. As a result, heterosexual and bisexual respondents provided joint intentions more often than gay men and lesbians, potentially obscuring true parenting intentions.

Analytic Strategy

To address missing data, I tested both multiple imputation and listwise deletion. The NSFG imputed some incomplete variables, which I use when available, yet missing ACASI data were not imputed. Data remained missing for *sexual identity* (women: 1.8%, *n* = 314; men: 1.9%, *n* = 256), *nativity* (women: 0.11%, *n* = 23; men: 0.14%, *n* = 23), and *religious service attendance* (women: 0.16%, *n* = 26; men: 0.15%, *n* = 20). I employed Stata's 'mi' command to impute missing values for these variables and estimated weighted descriptive statistics and regression models. Comparing imputed data estimates to listwise deletion estimates revealed no substantive difference in overall results, as most imputed cases were heterosexual respondents. Therefore, I opt to use listwise deletion in the current analysis (Johnson and Young 2011). Shown in Table 1, my final samples include 13,712 men and 17,906 women aged 15 to 44. Of these, 3.5% (*n* = 585) of men and 5.1% (*n* = 1,063) of women identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

To evaluate variability in the relationship between sexual identity and desire to have a/another child, I employ binomial logistic regression. Applying an intersectional lens, I introduce to the models all possible interactions of sexual identity, race/ethnicity, and education, and control for other relevant variables. I used Wald tests to determine the statistical significance of the association between categorical variables of analysis and desire to have a/another child, and to determine which models provided the best fit for these data. Next, to measure perceived barriers to parenthood, I investigate the magnitude of a gap between parenting desires and intentions among those who reported wanting a/another child (i.e., they want to have a/another child but do not intend or are not sure if they intend to do so). Using binomial logistic regression, I assess whether the tendency of sexual minorities to perceive greater barriers to having children,

compared to heterosexual peers, varies further by race or education, among those who reported

parenting desires. Again, I test interactions among the three key independent variables using

Wald tests to determine statistical significance, controlling for other relevant factors.

To illustrate the final logistic regression models of parenting desires and parenting

intentions, I used the post-estimation margins command in Stata to compute the marginal effects

at representative values (MERs) (Long and Freese 2014; Williams 2012). Standard errors and

confidence intervals were estimated with the delta method and used to determine whether

differences between groups were statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$ level). In order to explain

important relationships, I display the predicted probabilities of parenting desires in Figure 1 and

predicted probabilities of reporting a gap between desires and intentions in Figure 2, using

representative values of the sample.

Results

Parenting Desires: Descriptive Results

Using a larger and more recent data sample than previous studies, I begin by briefly

exploring the descriptive associations between key variables and wanting a/another child.

Consistent with previous research (Gates et al. 2007; Riskind and Patterson 2010), gay men

(47%) and lesbian women (44%) were considerably less likely to report wanting a/another child

someday, as compared to heterosexual men (68%) and women (59%). My expanded analysis of

the 2002 and 2006-2010 NSFG data also finds that, compared to similar heterosexual men and

women, bisexual men (67%) were just as likely to report parenting desires, yet bisexual women

(69%) were more likely to do so. Also consistent with Riskind and Patterson (2010), non-

Hispanic White men were less likely (66%) than non-Hispanic Black men (70%) and Hispanic

men (72%) to report wanting a/another child someday. Among women, however, I find little variation across racial groups (58% of Whites; 59% of Blacks; 61% of Hispanics). Considering educational attainment, men with a college degree or more (63%) were less likely to want a/another child than those with high school or less (67%) or some college education (71%). As with race, women reported little variation in parenting desires by education (ranging from 58% of some college to 60% of high school or less).

Descriptive statistics also suggest substantial variation in reported parenting desires by age and by current number of children. Overall, younger respondents expressed parenting desires much more often than older respondents: Most respondents aged 15 to 19 reported wanting a/another child (95% of young men, 91% of young women), but those aged 40 to 44 were much less likely to do so (31% of men, 20% of women). Further, already having children was associated with lower parenting desires, compared to those who were childless.

Parenting Desires: Multivariate Regression Analysis

To further examine variation in the relationship between sexual identity and parenting desires, I estimated separate but identical series of logistic regression models for parenting desires among men and women. For ease of comparison, the final models shown in Table 2 include all variables that were statistically significant for either sex (at $p < .05$ level), controlling for age, number of children, survey wave, and other demographic characteristics. Even when controlling for these characteristics, I found that sexual identity, race, and education were statistically significant predictors of parenting desires for both men and women. Employing an intersectional approach, I also investigated whether differences in parenting desires by sexual identity vary further by race or education, evaluating three two-way interactions among key

variables. Because age may influence desires for children differently for sexual minorities than for heterosexual people, as noted above, I tested an interaction between sexual identity and age.

[Table 2 about here]

My analysis reveals that, among women, reported parenting desires varied considerably within sexual identity groups by race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 2, a three-way interaction among sexual identity, race, and age significantly improved model fit for women (see Appendix, Table 5 for three-way frequencies).[2] Figure 1 illustrates this three-way relationship for women aged 20 to 24 (Panel A) and 30 to 34 (Panel B). Because logistic regression models are difficult to interpret on their own, especially in the presence of interactions, I computed predicted probabilities using representative values of the sample, for hypothetical childless women who were not married or cohabiting with an opposite-sex partner, earned a high school diploma or less, attended religious services less than once per month, were U.S. born, and interviewed in the 2006-2010 wave. In all figures, error bars mark the 95% confidence interval for each computed probability. Panel A shows that heterosexual and bisexual women aged 20 to 24 reported strong parenting desires, regardless of race/ethnicity. Yet among lesbian women, White and Black women were considerably less likely to report desires for a/another child, compared to Hispanic lesbian women aged 20 to 24, nearly all of whom reported a desire for children. Moreover, Black and White women who identified as lesbian were considerably less likely that their heterosexual peers to report desires for a/another child, yet Hispanic lesbian women were slightly more likely than their heterosexual peers to do so. These results suggest that the intersection of race/ethnicity and sexual identity influences child desires in varying ways.

[Figure 1 about here]

Although being older generally dampened parenting desires, this relationship operated differently for women within sexual identity and racial groups (Figure 1, Panel B). Shown in Panel B of Figure 1, on the whole, women aged 30 to 34 who identified as heterosexual or bisexual reported less desire for a/another child than similar women aged 20 to 24. Among lesbian women aged 30 to 34, however, there was greater variation: White and Hispanic lesbians were much less likely to report wanting a/another child than younger lesbian women, yet older Black lesbians were more likely to report child desires compared to young Black lesbians. Although some of the observed race and age variations among bisexuals are not statistically significant (indicated in tables and figures), I discuss them here for descriptive purposes, particularly because so little is known about parenting desires among bisexual people.

Among men, also shown in Table 2, differences in parenting desires by sexual identity varied by age but did not significantly vary by race/ethnicity. Using the same representative characteristics as for women above, my analysis of predicted probabilities (not shown) reveals that, among men aged 20 to 24, hypothetical White heterosexual men (94%) were more likely than White gay (69%) and bisexual men (72%) to report wanting a/another child. At ages 30 to 34, however, child desire was considerably lower among heterosexual (81%) and gay men (40%) but was only slightly lower among bisexual men (76%). Taken together, the complexity of the results reflects the importance of an intersectional approach for understanding variation in parenting desires between and within sexual identity groups.

Parenting Intentions: Descriptive Results

To evaluate perceived barriers to having children, I examined variation in parenting intentions among those who reported wanting a/another child someday. On the whole, descriptive results indicate that 14% of men and 20% of women who expressed parenting desires

also reported that they do not intend to act on their desires, suggesting they recognize obstacles to achieving their parenting preferences (see Appendix, Table 6). Considering sexual identity, gay men (23%) were more likely to report parenting desires and intentions that were incongruent, as compared to heterosexual (14%) and bisexual men (17%). Among women, lesbian and bisexual women were equally likely to report child desires and intentions that did not match (23% of each) and were more likely than heterosexual women (19%) to report incongruent child desires and intentions.

Descriptive results also suggest that education operates differently for men and women. Among those who reported wanting a/another child, men with at least a college degree (17%) were more likely to report intentions for children that did not align with their reported child desires, relative to men with high school or less education (15%). Among women, however, those with the least educational attainment (22%) were most likely to report discordant child desires and intentions, compared to women with a college degree or more (15%). An examination of racial/ethnic variation shows few differences across groups for women (19%-21%) and men (14%-16% of men), suggesting race/ethnicity may not be a strong predictor of the likelihood of reporting dissimilar child desires and intentions. In addition, the likelihood of a discrepancy between reported parenting desires and intentions was greater among older respondents and among those who already had children.

Parenting Intentions: Multivariate Regression Analysis

To further assess differences in the gap between reported child desires and intentions, I estimated logistic regression models of intentions for children in the same manner as I described above for child desires, only among those who reported wanting a/another child. Table 3 displays the final preferred models predicting a gap—suggesting perceived barriers to parenthood—by

sexual identity, race, and education, while controlling for age, parity, and other demographic characteristics. Congruent with Riskind and Patterson (2010), sexual identity was a significant predictor of a gap between men's reported child desires and intentions. My analysis also finds that sexual identity was significant in predicting a gap between women's desires and intentions to have a/another child.

[Table 3 about here]

Though less variability was apparent in parenting intentions than in parenting desires, likely due in part to the smaller sample sizes, several findings are of particular note. Among women, I found that differences between sexual identity groups in perceived barriers to parenthood varied further by age. Figure 2 shows the predicted probability of a gap between child desires and intentions by sexual identity for hypothetical White women aged 20 to 24 and 30 to 34 (using representative values similar to those in Figure 1, as well as metropolitan residence and lived with both parents throughout childhood). Among those aged 20 to 24, bisexual women were more likely than heterosexual and lesbian women to report a discrepancy between parenting desires and intentions. Yet among those aged 30 to 34, lesbian women were most likely to report dissimilar child desires and intentions. This suggests that age may influence women's child intentions differently based on sexual identity.

[Figure 2 about here]

Moreover, race and education were significant in predicting perceived barriers to parenthood among women, but not among men, and allowing the effects of women's race/ethnicity to vary across educational groups significantly improved model fit. For example, I computed predicted probabilities for hypothetical women (not shown; using the representative values above) and found that, among White and Black women aged 30 to 34, a gap between

child desires and intentions was more likely for those with less educational attainment (22% of Whites; 16% of Blacks) than for those in the highest education group (7% of each). Notably, the education gradient was much steeper for White women than for Black women. In contrast, comparable Hispanic women reported discrepancies between their child desires and intentions that were similar across education levels (ranging 12%-15%). The results suggest that educational attainment may operate differently for Hispanic women than for White or Black women to shape attitudes toward children and to alleviate perceived barriers to having a/another child. Overall, my analysis found considerable variation between and within sexual identity groups, supporting an intersectional approach to understanding sexual minorities' perceived obstacles to parenthood.

Discussion

Applying an intersectional lens, this article drew on a larger and more recent sample than previous research to examine variation in parenting desires and intentions among sexual minority women and men, with a focus on differences by sexual identity, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. Broadly speaking, results are consistent with previous research (Gates et al. 2007; Riskind and Patterson 2010), which found that gay men and lesbians were less likely to express a desire for children than their heterosexual peers. My expanded analysis also found that, on the whole, bisexual women and men tended to report child desires that more closely aligned with the desires of comparable heterosexual—rather than lesbian and gay—women and men. We might expect this pattern, given that bisexual people most often pair with different-sex partners and are more likely to be raising children than similar gay men and lesbians (Pew 2013). This suggests that sexual minority status does not diminish bisexual people's desires for children in the same

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way it does for gay men and lesbians, supporting prior arguments to consider bisexual people distinctly from gay men and lesbians (Ross and Dobinson 2013).

Moreover, compared to previous work (Riskind and Patterson 2010), my findings point to greater variation in child desires within sexual identity groups. Among younger women, the probability of reporting parenting desires was high among bisexual Whites and Hispanics, and heterosexual women of all races. Heterosexual and bisexual women's desire for children was lower among older women, as compared to younger women, yet the pattern was not consistent among lesbian women. Due to a relatively small sample of lesbian women ($n = 274$, 1.3% of women), there may be greater statistical noise in analyzing subgroups of lesbian women. Nevertheless, results further validate an intersectional approach and demonstrate that social context is key to understanding how sexual minority identities shape child preferences (Moore 2011), as one characteristic alone (e.g., sexual identity or race) cannot fully account for variation in child desires.

This study also identified variability in sexual minorities' perceived barriers to parenthood, measured by a gap between their reported parenting desires and intentions. On the whole, gay men perceived greater barriers to fulfilling their parenting desires, compared to heterosexual and bisexual men. Among women, however, age differentiated perceived barriers among sexual minorities: Younger bisexual women perceived greater barriers to parenthood than their lesbian and heterosexual peers, whereas lesbian women were most likely to report incongruous child desires and intentions in the older age group. Furthermore, my findings revealed that, across sexual identity groups, higher levels of educational attainment tended to diminish perceived barriers to parenthood among White and Black women but not for Hispanic women. Thus, having a college education may alleviate barriers to having children for White and

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Black women, but less so for Hispanic women. Although results did not support my expectation that variation in perceived barriers by sexual identity would differ further by race or education, the distinct patterns between racial minority groups again emphasize the value of an approach that differentiates between Hispanic and Black respondents. Future research should further assess these relationships using larger sample sizes.

Because many LGB people have already become parents (Gates et al. 2007), this study included sexual minority respondents with and without children. Notably, the dampening effect of having children on women and men's parenting desires was the same regardless of sexual identity. In addition, compared to those without children, women and men who were already parents perceived greater barriers to having a/another child, and this did not vary by sexual identity. The development of child desires and intentions among childless individuals, however, is arguably different than among those who already have one or more children. Moreover, my measure of perceived barriers to having children may exclude people who had already achieved their parenting preferences as well as those who were so discouraged in fulfilling their desires that they no longer report wanting children (Gray et al. 2013; White and McQuillan 2006). Future studies should investigate how parity might interact with other social characteristics to differentially influence parenting desires among sexual minorities.

In this analysis, I used a discrepancy between reported child desires and intentions to measure sexual minorities' perceived barriers to having children. Yet there are many reasons that people may choose to be childless (Gillespie 2003) or may end up childless that I cannot accurately measure with these data. For some LGB people, a sexual minority identity continues to be viewed as incompatible with parenthood (Kazyak et al. 2014; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004; Mezey 2008). In fact, some sexual minorities may feel relieved that they are not expected to

become parents. Others may be uncertain or ambivalent about their ability to realize their child

desires (McQuillan et al. 2012; Miller, Barber and Gatny 2013). Even people who report wanting

children may be more or less distressed about the barriers to having children (Jacob, McQuillan

and Greil 2007). Future research should explore sexual minorities' varying levels of distress,

perhaps by measuring sexual minorities' degree of "happiness" with being childfree.

As this analysis has shown, the NSFG is valuable for studying parenting perspectives

among LGB people at the population level, yet the data are limited in the depth of information

they provide. Indeed, these cross-sectional data provide only a snapshot in time. Because

parenting preferences fluctuate throughout the life course and over time (Gray et al. 2013),

longitudinal data—if it were available—would be better suited to assess change over time in

sexual minorities' parenting perspectives. Qualitative approaches may be more effective in

identifying the barriers to having children that are most salient for sexual minorities (e.g.,

Riskind et al. 2013) and the ways in which they negotiate these barriers.

Furthermore, because the NSFG emphasizes biogenetic pathways to parenthood, these

data likely excluded LGB people who wanted to *raise* children but were not interested in *having*

them (Kazyak et al. 2014). As noted earlier, the NSFG asked those married or cohabiting with an

"opposite-sex" partner to report joint parenting intentions, while all others were asked about

individual intentions. As such, a greater share of LGB people provided individual intentions,

which may bias the results. The focus on "opposite sex" relationships also makes it difficult to

accurately identify same-sex relationships. Finally, because these data were collected between

2002 and 2010, sexual minority responses may not reflect recent social and legal gains for same-

sex couples. Given that same-sex marriage is now legal in the U.S., the NSFG and other

nationally representative surveys should explicitly acknowledge same-sex relationships so researchers can more accurately study the relationships and family lives of LGB people.

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to my knowledge to use an intersectional framework to investigate LGB people's parenting desires and intentions at the national level. This analysis revealed considerable heterogeneity between and within sexual identity groups, suggesting that social privileges and disadvantages contribute to shaping parenting desires and perceived barriers to achieving those desires. Future research should more explicitly incorporate an intersectional approach in order to better understand how multiple social characteristics work together to shape sexual minorities' relationships and family lives. Finally, future work should continue to monitor how sexual minorities' parenting desires and intentions evolve as legal support and social acceptability of same-sex relationships continue to grow.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

[1] Notably, respondents who identified as *something else* (women: 2.4%, $n = 407$; men: 2.1%, $n = 233$) tended to report primary attraction to the opposite sex (90% of women; 86% of men) and were younger and less educated than the overall sample—together suggesting that they were similar to heterosexual respondents but may have misunderstood the question (see Williams Institute 2009). I used measures of sexual behavior and sexual attraction to recode cases of *something else*. Because most of these were recoded as *heterosexual*, I found no substantive difference in my overall conclusions.

[2] Although this three-way interaction was not significant in predicting men's parenting desires, I include the interaction in both models to maintain consistency.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Analytical Samples by Relevant Variables, Women and Men Aged 15-44, NSFG 2002 and 2006-2010.*

Variable	Women (N = 17,906)		Men (N = 13,712)	
	Mean	*n*	Mean	*n*
Sexual identity				
Heterosexual or straight	.950	16,843	.964	13,127
Gay/lesbian or homosexual	.013	274	.021	341
Bisexual	.038	789	.015	244
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	.687	10,042	.688	7,754
Hispanic	.164	4,024	.184	3,316
Black, non-Hispanic	.149	3,840	.127	2,642
Education				
High school or less	.481	9,203	.531	7,944
Some college	.288	5,038	.270	3,460
College degree or more	.231	3,665	.199	2,308
Age of respondent				
15-19 years	.162	3,080	.170	3,147
20-24 years	.165	3,129	.168	2,419
25-29 years	.159	3,275	.159	2,220
30-34 years	.157	3,052	.157	2,021
35-39 years	.174	2,749	.170	2,005
40-44 years	.181	2,621	.175	1,900
Number of children (bio and adopted)				
0	.430	7,908	.538	8,455
1	.171	3,365	.157	1,899
2+	.399	6,633	.306	3,358
Had a first child/birth as a teenager				
Yes (under 20 years)	.173	3,513	.066	884
Union status				
Married	.441	6,329	.400	3,615
Cohabiting with opposite-sex partner	.100	1,966	.105	1,324
Not married or cohab with opp-sex partner	.459	9,611	.495	8,773
Religious service attendance				
Never	.214	4,107	.283	3,998
Less than once a month	.276	4,708	.292	4,007
1-3 times per month	.182	3,406	.169	2,386
Once a week or more	.329	5,685	.256	3,321
Nativity				
Foreign born	.119	2,610	.136	2,105
Urbanicity				
Metropolitan area	.816	15,274	.813	11,739
Childhood family structure				
Lived with both parents from 0-18 years	.623	10,283	.653	8,248

Note: Means are weighted.

Table 2. *Logistic Regression Models Predicting Desire to Have a/Another Child Among Women and Men Aged 15-44, Controlling for Other Variables[a], NSFG 2002 and 2006-2010.*

Independent Variable	Women (N = 17,906)			Men (N = 13,712)		
	B	SE *B*	Exp(*B*)[b]	*B*	SE *B*	Exp(*B*)[b]
Sexual identity (Heterosexual)						
Gay/lesbian	-1.71***	0.41	0.18	-2.02***	0.33	0.13
Bisexual	-0.40*	0.16	0.67	-1.84***	0.48	0.16
	$F(2,179) = 10.40, p < .001$			$F(2,179) = 10.40, p < .001$		
Race/ethnicity (White non-Hispanic)						
Hispanic	-0.06	0.10	0.94	-0.02	0.15	0.98
Black non-Hispanic	-0.28**	0.10	0.76	-0.40*	0.16	0.67
	$F(2,179) = 4.31, p < .05$			$F(2,179) = 3.30, p < .05$		
Education (High school or less)						
Some college	0.02	0.07	1.02	0.33***	0.08	1.40
College degree or more	0.19**	0.07	1.21	0.39***	0.10	1.48
	$F(2,179) = 3.96, p < .05$			$F(2,179)=11.07, p < .001$		
Age (15-19 years)						
20-24 years	-0.16	0.12	0.85	-0.36*	0.16	0.70
25-29 years	-0.55***	0.11	0.57	-0.68***	0.15	0.51
30-34 years	-1.32***	0.12	0.27	-1.73***	0.16	0.18
35-39 years	-2.12***	0.12	0.12	-2.20***	0.16	0.11
40-44 years	-2.94***	0.14	0.05	-2.92***	0.17	0.05
	$F(5,176) = 134.79, p < .001$			$F(5,176) = 88.06, p < .001$		
Race/ethnicity x Sexual identity						
Hispanic x Gay/lesbian	3.33**	0.96	28.03	0.86	0.67	2.36
Hispanic x Bisexual	0.28	0.39	1.33	1.26	0.83	3.51
Black x Gay/lesbian	-0.14	0.62	0.87	0.38	0.59	1.46
Black x Bisexual	-0.30	0.32	0.74	0.89	0.64	2.44
	$F(4,177) = 3.35, p < .05$			$F(4,177) = 1.21, p = .31$		
Sexual identity x Age (15-29 years)						
Gay/lesbian x 30-44 years	0.23	0.58	1.26	0.18	0.43	1.20
Bisexual x 30-44 years	0.81*	0.32	2.25	1.57*	0.61	4.83
	$F(2,179) = 3.50, p < .05$			$F(2,179) = 3.42, p < .05$		
Race/ethnicity x Age (15-29 years)						
Hispanic x 30-44 years	0.49**	0.15	1.64	0.57**	0.18	1.77
Black x 30-44 years	0.64***	0.12	1.90	0.83***	0.20	2.30
	$F(2,179) = 10.63, p < .001$			$F(2,179) = 10.63, p < .001$		
Sexual identity x Race x Age						
Gay/lesbian x Hispanic x 30-44 yrs.	-2.86*	1.13	0.06	-0.29	0.87	0.75
Gay/lesbian x Black x 30-44 yrs.	1.46	0.98	4.29	0.18	0.79	1.20
Bisexual x Hispanic x 30-44 yrs.	-0.51	0.79	0.60	0.54	1.08	1.72
Bisexual x Black x 30-44 yrs.	-0.75	0.61	0.47	0.06	0.94	1.06
	$F(4,177) = 3.18, p < .05$			$F(4,177) = 0.11, p = .98$		
Constant	2.11***	0.11	8.21	2.61***	0.14	13.66

Note: Reference categories shown in parentheses. Results of Wald tests shown below estimates for each variable. Estimates adjusted to account for complex sampling design of the NSFG.
[a]Models include controls for age, parity, union status, nativity, religious service attendance, interview wave.
[b]Odds ratio.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 3. *Logistic Regression Models Predicting Gap Between Parenting Desires and Intentions Among Those Who Reported Wanting a/Another Child, Women and Men Aged 15-44, Controlling for Other Variables [a], NSFG 2002 and 2006-2010.*

Independent Variable	Women (N = 10,902)		Exp(B) [b]	Men (N = 9,919)		Exp(B) [b]
	B	SE B		B	SE B	
Sexual identity (Heterosexual)						
Gay/lesbian	-0.14	0.42	0.87	1.05*	0.53	2.87
Bisexual	0.77**	0.26	2.17	-0.73	0.49	0.48
	$F(2,179) = 4.89, p < .01$			$F(2,179) = 3.16, p < .05$		
Race/ethnicity (White non-Hispanic)						
Hispanic	-0.54***	0.14	0.58	0.08	0.19	1.09
Black non-Hispanic	-0.40*	0.16	0.67	0.33	0.20	1.39
	$F(2,179) = 10.06, p < .001$			$F(2,179) = 1.40, p = .25$		
Education (High school or less)						
Some college	-0.73***	0.13	0.48	-0.28	0.19	0.76
College degree or more	-1.40***	0.15	0.25	-0.48*	0.21	0.62
	$F(2,179) = 44.90, p < .001$			$F(2,179) = 2.95, p = .06$		
Age (15-19 years)						
20-24 years	0.94***	0.21	2.56	-0.03	0.20	0.97
25-29 years	1.69***	0.21	5.42	0.54*	0.21	1.71
30-34 years	2.50***	0.21	12.22	0.99***	0.24	2.70
35-39 years	3.49***	0.21	32.84	1.71***	0.22	5.55
40-44 years	4.71***	0.27	111.18	2.45***	0.23	11.64
	$F(5,176) = 155.50, p < .001$			$F(5,176) = 37.81, p < .001$		
Sexual identity x Age (15-29 years)						
Gay/lesbian x 30-44 years	1.54**	0.58	4.67	0.46	0.61	1.59
Bisexual x 30-44 years	-0.11	0.38	0.89	1.16	0.69	3.18
	$F(2,179) = 3.72, p < .05$			$F(2,179) = 1.65, p = .20$		
Race/ethnicity x Education						
Hispanic x Some college	0.82***	0.21	2.26	0.02	0.30	1.02
Hispanic x College or more	1.24***	0.29	3.47	0.17	0.45	1.19
Black x Some college	0.03	0.28	1.03	-0.48	0.35	0.62
Black x College or more	0.41	0.27	1.50	0.03	0.34	1.03
	$F(4,177) = 5.97, p < .001$			$F(4,177) = 0.66, p = .62$		
Constant	-3.37***	0.19	0.03	-3.16***	0.22	0.04

Note: Reference categories shown in parentheses. Results of Wald tests shown below estimates for each variable. Estimates adjusted to account for complex sampling design of the NSFG. [a]Models include controls for age, parity, first birth as teenager, union status, nativity, lived with both parents from 0-18, urbanicity, religious service attendance, interview wave. [b]Odds ratio.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities of Wanting a/Another Child Among Women, by Sexual Identity, Race, and Age, NSFG 2002 & 2006-2010.

Panel A: Ages 20-24

Panel B: Ages 30-34
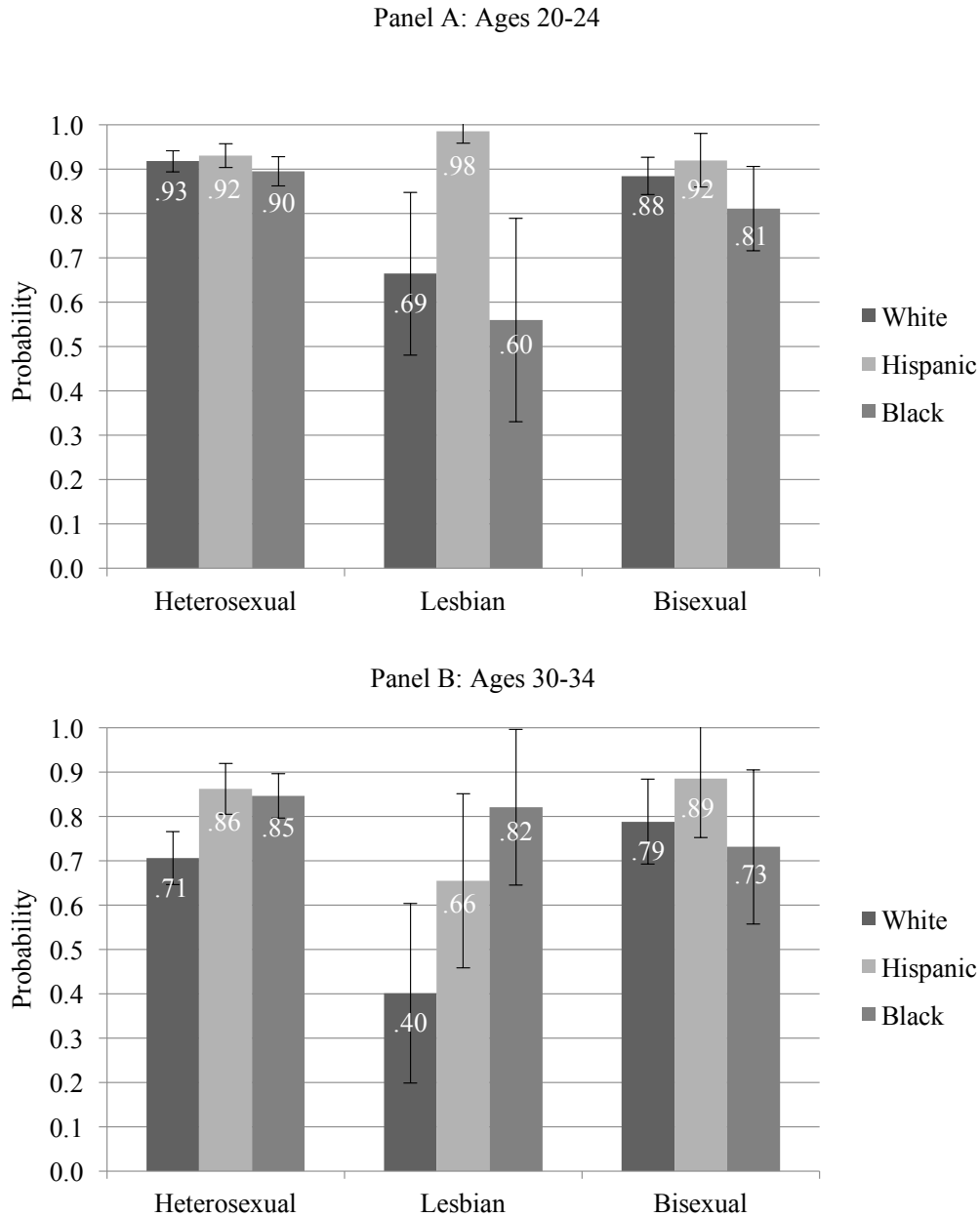
Note: Based on coefficients shown in Table 2, with probabilities computed for illustrative childless women, who earned high school diploma or less, were U.S. born, were not married or cohabiting with opposite-sex partner, attended religious services less than once per month, and interviewed in 2006-2010.

Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities of a Gap Between Women's Parenting Desires and Intentions, by Sexual Identity and Age, NSFG 2002 & 2006-2010.
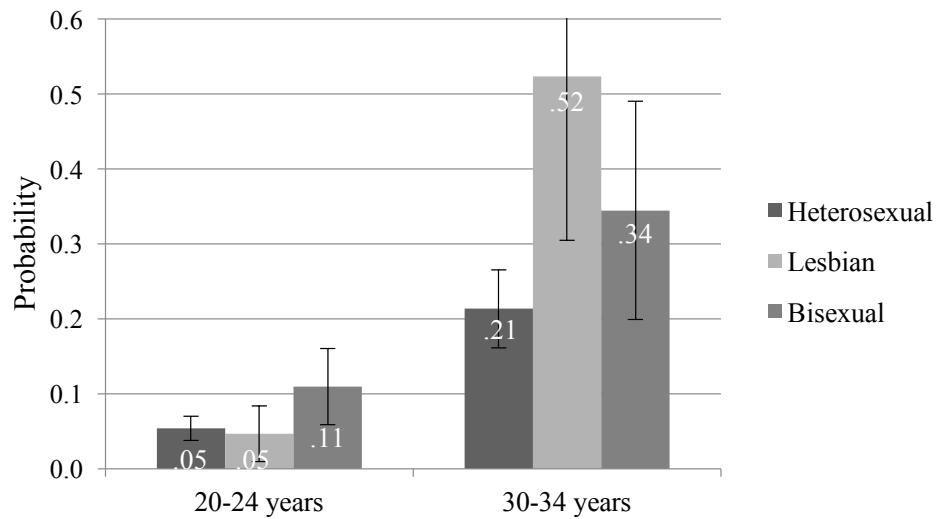
Note: Based on coefficients shown in Table 3, with probabilities computed for illustrative childless White women, who earned high school diploma or less, were U.S. born, were not married or cohabiting with opposite-sex partner, attended religious services less than once per month, metropolitan residence, interviewed in 2006-2010, and lived with both parents from ages 0-18.

CHAPTER 2 APPENDIX

Supplementary Information

Table 4. *Three-Way Frequencies of Sexual Identity, Race/Ethnicity, and Education, Women and Men Aged 15-44, NSFG 2002 & 2006-2010.*

| Race/ethnicity Education | Sexual identity | | | | | |
| | Women (*N* = 17,906) | | | Men (*N* = 13,712) | | |
	Hetero-sexual	Lesbian	Bisexual	Hetero-sexual	Gay	Bisexual
White, non-Hispanic						
HS or less	3,916	63	282	3,677	74	60
Some college	2,859	43	142	2,043	59	48
BA or more	2,622	49	66	1,689	76	28
Hispanic						
HS or less	2,570	32	96	2,348	40	45
Some college	883	11	30	615	26	10
BA or more	389	7	6	214	13	5
Black, non-Hispanic						
HS or less	2,096	38	110	1,647	26	27
Some college	1,003	21	46	628	16	15
BA or more	505	10	11	266	11	6

Table 5. *Three-Way Frequencies for Women Aged 15-44, by Sexual Identity, Race, and Age, NSFG 2002 & 2006-2010.*

Race/ethnicity Age group	Heterosexual	Lesbian	Bisexual
White, non-Hispanic			
15-29 years	4,784	70	337
30-44 years	4,613	85	153
Hispanic			
15-29 years	2,058	29	99
30-44 years	1,784	21	33
Black, non-Hispanic			
15-29 years	1,953	40	114
30-44 years	1,651	29	53
Total *n*	16,843	274	789

The header "Sexual identity" spans the three columns: Heterosexual, Lesbian, Bisexual.

Table 6. *Mean Values of a Gap Between Parenting Desires and Intentions by Select Variables, Among Those Who Reported Wanting a/Another Child, Women and Men Aged 15-44, NSFG 2002 & 2006-2010.*

Variable	Women (N = 10,902)		Men (N = 9,919)	
	Mean	Base *n*	Mean	Base *n*
Sexual identity				
Heterosexual or straight	.19	10,255	.14	9,585
Gay/lesbian or homosexual	.23	126	.23	169
Bisexual	.23	521	.17	165
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	.19	6,133	.14	5,521
Hispanic	.21	2,498	.16	2,499
Black, non-Hispanic	.20	2,271	.15	1,899
Education				
High school or less	.22	5,687	.15	5,809
Some college	.18	3,025	.13	2,548
College degree or more	.15	2,190	.17	1,562
Age of respondent				
15-19 years	.02	2,772	.03	2,969
20-24 years	.06	2,572	.04	2,168
25-29 years	.16	2,268	.11	1,776
30-34 years	.30	1,669	.19	1,332
35-39 years	.52	1,025	.35	1,000
40-44 years	.76	596	.48	674
Number of children (bio and adopted)				
0	.07	6,578	.07	7,375
1	.20	2,092	.18	1,308
2+	.59	2,232	.45	1,236
Union status				
Married or cohabiting with opposite-sex partner	.30	4,220	.27	2,695
Not married or cohabiting with opposite-sex partner	.11	6,682	.06	7,224
Total	.20		.14	

Note: Means are weighted.

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CHAPTER 3

Expectations for Future Family Formation
Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men of Color in Los Angeles

Although young gay and bisexual men of color are often invisible, they live throughout the country, particularly in large cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta and New York. Due to the persistent social stigma of homosexuality among some communities of color (Harris 2010; Ocampo 2012), especially those who are deeply religious (Ward 2005), young men of color with same-sex desire tend to blend into their predominantly heterosexual, Black and Latino, working-class neighborhoods. Outside of attending gay pride festivals or frequenting gay-friendly venues, young gay and bisexual men of color remain largely hidden.

Yet, young gay and bisexual men of color are some of the most socially vulnerable within the gay community, as they negotiate multiple marginalized identities including racial minority identities, sexual minority identities, and poverty. Black and Latino men continue to be marginalized because of their race/ethnicity, stereotyped as hyper-masculine and prone to violence and criminality (Collins 2004; Mirande 1997). Many grew up and still live in poor and working-class neighborhoods with limited access to quality education and health care (Wilson and Moore 2009). Differential treatment based on race begins in the school system (Ferguson 2000; Royster 2003) and continues into the labor and housing markets (Pager 2003; Pager and Shepherd 2008). Compared to White men, Black and Latino men are more likely to drop out of high school, to earn lower wages in employment, and to be imprisoned (Asencio and Acosta 2010; Harris and Allen 2003; Torres and Fergus 2012). Due to racism and classism in the U.S. at

large, gay minorities often depend on their families and racial/ethnic communities for social and economic support (Moore 2010b, 2011; Ocampo 2012).

However, the cultural and religious values of racial/ethnic communities often conflict with mainstream American ideas about public gay identities. In racial minority communities, being gay is associated with effeminate White men and a public gay identity may threaten the support that gay minorities receive from their racial communities (Boykin 1996; Collins 2004; Han 2007; Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter 2004). In contrast, mainstream White gay neighborhoods encourage the adoption of public gay identities, which conflicts with the belief among some communities of color that sexuality should remain private (Diaz 1998; Harris 2010; Moore 2010b; Munoz-Laboy 2004; Yon-Leau and Munoz-Laboy 2010). Gay and bisexual men of color are less likely to participate in mainstream gay spaces because they experience racism and classism in those predominantly White, affluent neighborhoods (Green 2007; Ocampo 2012). In turn, they are less likely to access social services and health care that are available in gay enclaves (Mills et al. 2001). Essentially, gay and bisexual minorities are "victims of double discrimination," marginalized within their racial/ethnic communities due to homophobia and marginalized by White gay communities due to racism (Myrick 1999:160). As such, sexual minorities from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds may feel the need to choose between a gay/bisexual identity and the benefits that come with strong ties to one's racial community.

Due to the social stigma around homosexuality in communities of color, stemming from religious and traditional beliefs, sexual minorities are susceptible to minority stress, which promotes a lower sense of self-worth and decreased well-being (Meyer 2003). Gay minorities may be more likely than White peers to develop internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer 2012), making them less likely to adopt public gay identities and more likely to engage in risky

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sexual behaviors (Ford et al. 2007; Myrick 1999; Peterson and Jones 2009; Rosario et al. 2004).

Consequently, men of color who have sex with men have disproportionately higher rates of minority stress (Meyer, Dietrich and Schwartz 2008) and of contracting HIV/AIDS (Diaz 1998; Myrick 1999), as compared with White men who have sex with men (MSM).

Though previous research has touched upon aspects of these men's experiences, we know little about how the multiple stigmas they face—stemming from poverty, racism, homophobia and heterosexism—will together impact the normative life transitions that most people take for granted, such as the formation of families. Broadly, I examine how background and family of origin shape expectations for future family formation among young gay and bisexual men of color. How do these young men negotiate their multiple marginalized statuses as they form romantic relationships and transition into adulthood? What barriers do they expect to face in achieving their future family goals? How do they expect to navigate these barriers?

In this chapter, I find that young gay and bisexual men of color face barriers in several ways—homophobia from their families of origin and within their racial/ethnic communities, racism and homophobia in larger society, and internalized homophobia within themselves— which together hinder their ability to successfully form romantic relationships and to achieve their future family goals. I propose that gay men face great barriers to achieving parenthood, even greater than those faced by lesbians, not only because men cannot bear children but also because they are viewed as less competent parents than women. Drawing from participant observation and in-depth interviews with 36 gay and bisexual men of color (primarily Black and Latino), ages 18 to 32, I explore respondents' family backgrounds and how they have negotiated their sexual orientation within their families of origin and their racial/ethnic communities. Their background experiences shaped how they view gay identities and how they approached

relationships. In turn, experiences with their families of origin and with romantic same-sex relationships influenced the young men's expectations for future family formation. In response to the obstacles these men face, they develop strategies or adjusted expectations (Young 2004), at times constructing definitions of family that do not align with traditional notions of family. Yet rather than rejecting these traditional ideas entirely, the men I studied drew from and adapted upon traditional ideas of family in constructing their expectations for future family formation.

Background

Intersectionality

At both individual and structural levels, our social statuses interconnect to constrain and enable our life opportunities. Theories of intersectionality posit that systems of privilege and disadvantage—based on one's positions in social categories such as gender, race, and sexual orientation—operate simultaneously to produce unique experiences (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Dill 1983). Individuals positioned at the margins of multiple social categories, for example, sexual minorities from racial minority backgrounds, may face compounded disadvantage and stigmatization (Meyer, Dietrich and Schwartz 2008), resulting in greater obstacles to achieving their long-term relationship and parenting desires. Notably, studying gay and bisexual minority men provides an opportunity to examine intersectional identities because these men are simultaneously advantaged in terms of their gender and disadvantaged in other ways (in terms of race, sexual identity, social class) (Bowleg 2012; Collins 1990). Gay and bisexual men from minority racial/ethnic groups must negotiate their identities at the intersection of "multiple fields of power": their racial/ethnic families and communities, American society at

large, and the mainstream White affluent gay community (Ocampo 2012: 6; see also Bowleg 2012; Boykin 1996; Cantu 2009; Green 2007; Hawkeswood 1996; Johnson 2008; Moore 2010a).

Intersections of Sexuality with Race, Class, and Religion

Over the years, a number of ethnographic studies have described the experiences of poor men of color (e.g., Anderson 1978, 1999; Bourgois 1995; Liebow 1967; MacLeod 1995; Rios 2011; Roy and Jones 2014; Venkatesh 2008; Wilson 1987, 2009). Young (2004) found that young, poor Black men, due to their marginalized statuses and limited opportunities, expressed differential visions of the future in terms of what they see as *desirable*, as opposed to what they believe is *possible* or *probable*. While they dreamed of reaching their desirable goals, they saw these goals as unrealistic. Instead, they adjusted their expectations of the future to reflect what they saw as probable outcomes or their "sense of base-level achievements for the future" (Young 2004:171), taking into account the constraints with which they are faced. Notably, Young argued that researchers should pay attention to people's thoughts and not just their behaviors, to explore how people understand the social processes in their lives. Building on this, the current study considers how low-income young men of color with same-sex desire imagine creating their future families while navigating the additional obstacles of sexual minority status.

Religion often plays an important role in the lives of young men of color, shaping the way families view and respond to homosexuality. Many Christian and Catholic denominations view homosexuality as wrong or as a sin. There is variability, however, in how families respond to homosexuality depending on the strength of religious ties and whether they view homosexuality as biological or as a choice (Moon 2014). Yet, gay and bisexual men of color are more likely than White sexual minority men to participate in religious settings that are non-

affirming of their sexual orientations, which may contribute to greater internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer 2012).

Religious denominations that interpret the Bible in a literalist tradition tend to hold the most extreme negative views toward homosexuality (Maher, Sever and Pichler 2008; Moon 2014). In many Black churches, members believe that homosexuality is not just a sin but that it is an "abomination" (see Walsh 2016; Ward 2005), and some Black churches still espouse extremely homophobic views toward their LGB members (Bennett and Battle 2001; Ward 2005). People with same-sex desire may be viewed as having a "wicked spirit" (Griffin 2010). Others view same-sex desire as not inherently sinful, but they consider acting on same-sex desire to be a sin (Moon 2014). Within churches and families that hold these negative views, gay and bisexual minorities often hide their sexual orientation to avoid homophobic responses. Some churches hold less negative views and may allow for gay minorities to participate in religious settings as long as they do not draw attention to their sexual orientation (Harris 2010; Moon 2014). This allows gay minorities to cultivate their racial identities and benefit from community support. In fact, some gay minorities interpret this silence as a form of acceptance of their sexual orientation (Del Pino et al. 2014; Rosario et al. 2004). Nevertheless, this expectation of silence around homosexuality still serves to marginalize gay minorities within religious spaces and can foster internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer 2012).

In some communities of color, religious beliefs around homosexuality permeate traditional cultural values, even among families that have weak religious ties (Harris 2010; Rosario et al. 2004). Indeed, the Black church serves as the linchpin of values and moral in the Black community, regardless of religious involvement (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). As such, the Black church's conservatism around sexuality in general, not just around homosexuality—

"[resisting] hints of Black sexual deviance, straight and gay alike" (Collins 2004:107)—has shaped Black community perspectives as a whole (Harris 2010).

Communities of color may view it as respectful for gay minorities to limit their expressions of sexuality to the private realm, rather than presenting gay identities in public or in front of family members (Chung and Katayama 1998; Guzman 2006; Manalansan 2003; Moore 2010a, 2010b, 2011; Ocampo 2012; Rosario et al. 2004). On the one hand, some scholars (e.g., Almaguer 1991; Diaz 1998) argue that the avoidance of discussion of homosexuality among families of color represents an implicit imposition of silence around homosexuality, indicating that homosexuality is not something that should be discussed in public or around family. On the other hand, Guzman (2006: 88) argued that, within families, an "absence of speech" around issues like marriage "represents a suspension of the assumption of heterosexuality. There is enormous amount of room for the expression of homosexuality under this absence of speech." Similarly, Manalansan (2003: 30) found that some Filipino gay men interpreted this silence from families as "indicative of a kind of dignified acquiescence, and more important, of abiding love." In this way, gay minorities may feel unconditional love from their families and simultaneously be aware that their families do not accept their sexual orientation (Del Pino et al. 2014). Ocampo (2014) showed that, in order to negotiate conflicting racial/ethnic and immigrant identities, Latino and Filipino gay men engaged in "moral management" of their sexual identities around their families based on the degree of family acceptance they received. Gay children of immigrants monitored their behaviors and gender presentations around their immigrant families in order to maintain the support of their families and racial/ethnic communities (Ocampo 2014). Indeed, these different cultural perceptions of homosexuality have the potential to place racial/ethnic minority gay men in a tenuous position, walking the line between embracing same-

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sex desire and being culturally appropriate in one's enactment of that desire. The current study will provide further insight into the ways in which racial/ethnic minority gay men make sense of their sexuality in relation to their families of origin, and will also speak to the ways these men negotiate sexuality and family as they think about forming their own families.

Understandably, gay and bisexual men of color may have a difficult time negotiating the expectation of respectability in their racial communities while enacting same-sex desire (Boykin 1996; Hawkeswood 1996; Moore 2010b). Indeed, they may be reluctant to display their same-sex desire publicly for fear of losing the support of their racial community (Ocampo 2014). "Down low" behavior, or publicly engaging in heterosexual relationships while also privately participating in same-sex behavior (Boykin 2005), can be seen as one response to the requirement of publicly respectable behavior among some communities of color. Although the media has tended to attribute "down low" behavior to Black men (Bond et al. 2009; Boykin 2005; Ford et al. 2007; Saleh and Operario 2009), Gonzalez (2007) found that some Latino men engage in similar behaviors.

Although some gay minorities have trouble reconciling their racial identities and religious beliefs with their sexual orientation, this is not true for all gay minorities (Dahl and Galliher 2012). Previous research has shown that some gay minorities find ways to successfully integrate their racial identities and sexual identities through resilience and reinterpretation of religious beliefs (Kubicek et al. 2009; Winder 2015). Meyer and Oullette (2009: 83) found that, while Black gay men perceived external constraints related to competing identities, some were able to internally construct "coherence by incorporating complex identities into an integrated and meaningful unity." Moreover, some people of color with same-sex desire express multiple social identities at once (Bowleg 2012; Hawkeswood 1996; Hunter 2010; Moore 2010a). Hunter (2010)

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identified three distinct pathways that Black gay men used to reconcile their marginalized racial and sexual identities. Some integrated their sexual and racial identities in an interlocking fashion, not giving priority to any one identity. Others prioritized one identity over the other, identifying as Black then gay or gay then Black, depending on their particular circumstances. Finally, some separated the two identities by envisioning Blackness as a public and visible identity, while reserving sexuality as a private and hidden identity (Hunter 2010). All in all, young men of color with same-sex desire rely on various strategies to reconcile conflicting identities, depending on family acceptance and their social circumstances.

Schemas

To understand how people develop future family goals, I draw on the concept of schemas, or cognitive maps that we use to organize the world around us. Theories of schemas have emerged in multiple fields, including sociology (Sewell 1992), social psychology (Fiske and Taylor 1991), and family therapy (Dattilio 2005). Through our experiences, we identify patterns and norms in the world around us by observing social interactions or being taught certain rules and norms. We develop schemas, or shortcuts in our minds for making sense of our surroundings, and then use these shortcuts to facilitate efficiency in processing and interacting in social life (Sewell 1992:8). Schemas allow us to more quickly receive and interpret the massive amounts of information we encounter each day (Dattilio 2005). They also provide us with "default values … where knowledge is incomplete or ambiguous" (Fiske and Linville 1980:552).

Blair-Loy (2003:176) theorizes that schemas not only organize cognitive processes, but they also evoke emotion and normative assessment. Blair-Loy defines a cultural schema as "an ordered, socially constructed and taken-for-granted framework for understanding and evaluating self and society, for thinking and for acting. Schemas are objective in the sense of being shared,

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publicly available understandings. They are also subjective and partially internalized, thereby shaping personal aspirations and identities." (Blair-Loy 2001:689). Thus, schemas externally influence our thoughts and behaviors through family norms and public policies, and also internally influence the ways we develop tastes and preferences for normative cultural schemas.

Though schemas serve as tools of efficiency, we do not always behave in ways that are consistent with our cultural schemas. Schemas are not static but are continually revised in relation to our life experiences (Fiske and Linville 1980). Moreover, individuals' behavior often contradicts normative family schemas when those schemas do not align with their experiences (Stone 2007). Sewell (1992) noted that schemas are virtual and how we enact these schemas in our lives—whether our behavior aligns with our cognitive maps—depends on the resources available to us. Social institutions, or structures, can shape people's behavior by showing them what is possible or is the norm. In turn, people's behavior can shape structures, though this influence is often reserved for those with high social status. An intersectional approach can be helpful here to demonstrate how our social identities together influence our "knowledge of different schemas and access to different kinds and amounts of resources" (Sewell 1992:20). People in positions of power or privilege are better able to funnel resources toward reproducing structures that will help continue their power and privilege.

Family Schemas

I develop the concept of *family schemas*, which convey culturally acceptable family formations, normative family processes, and relationships and roles among family members. In the United States, the "standard North American family" (Smith 1993:52) is the "ideal" family schema, complete with roles and expectations for its members. This ideal typically consists of a married, different-sex couple with biological children and a gendered division of household

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labor: The husband is the primary income-earner, while the wife cares for her husband, household and children, even if she works full time. Family schemas are virtual cognitive structures that inform individuals' preferences and decisions about their own family structure and processes. As children are socialized within families, they learn family schemas, or normative ways of forming families.

The existence of an ideal family schema constrains and enables the ways in which individuals form families, including expectations within marriage. On the one hand, this schema provides individuals with a blueprint for forming families such that they can rely on normative understandings of roles and responsibilities among family members. Long considered a social institution, marriage provides rules and guidelines for childbearing and childrearing as well as defining socially acceptable behaviors among members (Cherlin 1978).

On the other hand, this schema can be highly constraining in that it limits the options available to individuals in forming families. For young men growing up in racial minority, often poor communities, the family schemas they have experienced in their own lives do not match with the normative two-parent, biological, married-parent, nuclear family that the media and conservative scholars portray as ideal. Moreover, in the U.S. there are few institutional supports for families that fall outside of this structure. Cherlin (1978) showed that in first marriages with children, social norms provide guidelines on how family members should behave, for example, what to call each other and how to discipline children. In remarriages with children, however, stepparents do not have automatic legal rights regarding their stepchildren. Further, stepfamily members can experience boundary ambiguity (Brown and Manning 2009), or uncertainty about how children should refer to their stepparents and the role of stepparents in their stepchildren's lives (Cherlin 1978).

Ideas of Future Family Formation Among Young Gay Men

Many gay men initially see a gay identity as incompatible with becoming a parent (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Goldberg, Downing and Moyer 2012; Mallon 2004). Though limited, previous research suggests that many young gay men are interested in having long-term relationships and children (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; D'Augelli, Rendina, Sinclair and Grossman 2008; Rabun and Oswald 2009). Yet existing research on the family formation desires of gay men has tended to focus on White, relatively privileged gay men (e.g., Rabun and Oswald 2009) or has addressed the experiences of older gay men or gay men who already have become fathers (e.g., Carrington 1999; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004).

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, "Parenting Desires and Intentions Among Sexual Minorities: An Intersectional Approach," I used the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Surveys of Family Growth to quantitatively examine the child preferences and intentions of individuals who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. I found that, although gay men were less likely to report wanting children than heterosexual men, nearly half (47%) of gay men aged 15 to 44 wanted to have a child or another child in the future. Across all sexual identity groups, men of color were more likely than White men to report wanting children. Gay men were more likely to report parenting desires and intentions that did not match, suggesting that they perceived barriers to achieving their parenting desires. Notably, I found that bisexual men's parenting desires and intentions more closely matched those of heterosexual men than gay men. Bisexual men may perceive fewer barriers to realizing their parenting desires because some may imagine having children in a future different-sex relationship with a woman.

D'Augelli and colleagues (2008) conducted a survey of LGB youth that included 83 "totally" or "mostly" gay young men living in and around New York City, asking about their

experiences with sexuality and their expectations for future family. Two-thirds of the young men reported that they considered long-term relationship to be very or extremely important to them, and more than 80% expected to be in a monogamous relationship after the age of 30 (p. 89). Nearly all the young men reported wanting children in the future, with one-fifth (20%) saying it was extremely likely that they would raise children in the future and two-thirds (67%) expressing some lesser degree of likelihood (p. 90). Among young men who expected to raise children, over half expected to be raising their own biological children. D'Augelli and colleagues' sample did include some racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, but they did not consider how these characteristics are associated with young gay men's parenting desires.

Rabun and Oswald (2009) explored conceptions of fatherhood among young gay men through in-depth interviews with 14 gay men ages 18 to 25. All respondents expressed an intention to become fathers in the future, and most described their family formation desires "in ways that uphold the normative family: a committed couple who delay their parenthood until after establishing themselves in a middle-class career and then acquire 2 children and organize daily life around meeting the child's needs" (p. 274). At the same time, however, they expanded the notion of the ideal family by the fact that they are gay, cannot procreate within the context of a same-sex relationship, and cannot rely on sex differences to divide household labor (see also Folgero 2008). Many expressed a desire to live in liberal communities once they have established a family, in order to protect their children from homophobia and discrimination. Yet, Rabun and Oswald's findings are limited because the sample lacked racial/ethnic and class diversity—only one respondent was *not* White (one Black respondent). Furthermore, all respondents were attending or had recently graduated from college, and all but one were raised in middle-class or upper-class families.

Although not specifically a study of youth, Berkowitz and Marsiglio (2007) conducted in-depth interviews with 19 childless gay men and 20 gay men who are fathers, ages 19 to 55, to explore how gay men develop a sense of themselves as fathers and as part of a family. Predominantly White and upper middle class men, many disclosed that when they realized they were gay, they initially expected to never become fathers. As time went on, however, most experienced a turning point at which they developed a desire to have children or came to believe they could make it happen. Many conveyed a sense that "their desires to father were mediated and even constrained by structural and institutional barriers" (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007: 372; see also Green 2006, 2007). Moreover, the stigmatization of gay men influences their perceptions of fatherhood. Some expressed the desire to become fathers but worried about their children's well-being growing up with two fathers. Notably, biogenetic relatedness remained a primary feature in their understandings of children and constructing families, though surrogacy is accessible only to those who can afford it. The current research draws on these themes, expanding them to specifically include the experiences of young gay men of color.

Negotiating Multiple Family Schemas

Young men of color, especially those from poor or working-class families, often encounter a number of family structures when developing their ideas about family. First, they encounter the "standard North American family" (heterosexual, married nuclear family) that is considered the "ideal" family form in the U.S. Young gay men of color may draw on the *heterosexual nuclear family schema* when conceptualizing their own future families (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Folgero 2008), even if this schema is not common in their own communities. Furthermore, their familiarity with the nuclear family schema may vary based on their racial/ethnic backgrounds. For example, two-parent, single-earner families are more

common among Mexican-American families than among families of other Hispanic groups (Lichter and Qian 2004). Asian-American families, more than any other group, are headed by married couples. Thus, Mexican-American and Asian-American gay men may have a stronger connection to the heterosexual nuclear family schema. In Black communities, however, young men are more often raised in single-parent families and more likely to encounter single-parent families in their neighborhoods (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi and Wilson 2000), as 75% of Black children are born to unmarried mothers (Hummer and Hamilton 2010; Kreider 2008). Therefore, the *single-parent family schema* may appear to be a viable option to some, even though they still see marriage as ideal (Edin and Kefalas 2005).

Additionally, gay men may draw on *chosen family schemas*. "Chosen families" consist of individuals who consider themselves to be family, or like a family, but are not related by blood or marriage (Weston 1991). The Black community, in particular, has a long history of forming fictive kin relationships that are not based on biological ties (Chatters, Taylor and Jayakody 1994; Hawkeswood 1996). These relationships may develop out of a shared sense of marginality (Anderson 1978; Liebow 1967), or may fulfill a role of informal social support, providing reciprocal assistance out of economic necessity (Stack 1975). In recent years, scholars have explored the ways in which gay men construct "chosen families" from their friendship and support networks (Carrington 1999; Hawkeswood 1996; Nardi 1992, 1999; Nardi and Sherrod 1994; Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001; Weinstock 1998; Weston 1991). Sexual minorities are more likely than heterosexual people to create chosen families because they more often face alienation from their families of origin (Hawkeswood 1996; Nardi 1992, 1999; Nardi and Sherrod 1994; Weston 1991). For some, "families of choice" function as replacements for family of origin that may be estranged or may simply live too far away to provide needed support

(Nardi 1999; Weinstock 1998). Most often, though, chosen families supplement family-of-origin

relationships, providing different kinds of support than their families of origin can provide (Nardi

1999; Weston 1991). Black sexual minorities may be particularly likely to form "chosen

families" due to the established fictive kin model within the Black community (Hawkeswood

1996).

Parenting Patterns and Parenting Desires

Data from the National Survey of Family Growth show that over one-third of lesbians

and about one in six gay men have become parents to a biological or adopted child (Gates,

Badgett, Macomber, and Chambers 2007: 5). Similar to different-sex couples, same-sex couples

from racial minority backgrounds are more likely to have become parents than their White

counterparts and more likely to live in socially conservative areas of the country (Gates and

Romero 2009). This contrasts with much of what has been conveyed in previous research on

same-sex parents, which has highlighted the experiences of White, middle-class gays and

lesbians (see Biblarz and Stacey 2010).

Notably, Moore (2011) points out that the context in which her Black lesbian respondents

adopted gay identities had influenced the ways they mothered. For example, women who had

become mothers before identifying as lesbian tended to have children younger, and as a result,

had less opportunity to complete high levels of education. In contrast, women who had first

identified as lesbian and then took steps to become mothers had attained higher levels of

education and greater economic stability before having children. This suggests that age and

education may influence the expectations of future family formation among young gay and

bisexual men of color.

Sexual minorities are keenly aware of the constraints they face to becoming parents (Baiocco and Laghi 2013; Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Shenkman 2012). Drawing on a large, internet-based sample, Riskind, Patterson and Nosek (2013) found that childless gay men and lesbians with higher socioeconomic status expressed greater confidence about being able to achieve parenthood than those with lower socioeconomic status. Among gay men, they also found notable differences by age and race: Younger, White gay men expressed greater certainty about becoming parents someday than older, racial minority gay men.

Pathways and Barriers to Parenthood Among Sexual Minorities

Although same-sex marriage is legal across the U.S. (as of June, 2015), LGB women and men continue to face discrimination, social and religious restrictions barriers to same-sex relationships, and internalized homophobia. As discussed earlier, sexual minorities are susceptible to minority stress, which contributes to greater instability in same-sex relationships than in different-sex relationships (Green 2006; Frost and Meyer 2009). A lack of family acceptance (Mezey 2008; Reczek 2016; Riskind et al. 2013) or institutional support (Baiocco, Argalia and Laghi 2014; Gates 2015) may further discourage LGB people from forming serious same-sex relationships and having children. Furthermore, the historical lack of access to marriage and legal recognition of same-sex relationships has negatively impacted the stability and well-being of same-sex relationships (Herdt and Kertzner 2006; Herek 2006).

Certainly, gendered expectations of men are significant in shaping men's same-sex parenting experiences. Considering the obstacles to forming same-sex relationships, among men of color with same-sex desire, a masculine presentation continues to be highly valued (Ocampo 2012). Gay and bisexual men who appear masculine and "act straight" have been constructed as the most desirable partners. For instance, Manalansan (2003:187) explains that Filipino gay men

are "racialized by both mainstream and gay communities," occupying a subordinate position in the hierarchy of gay masculinity that portrays Asian gay men as less desirable partners (Asencio 2011; Guzman 2006).

A number of scholars point out the particular challenges that gay men face in forming planned families (Berkowitz 2011; Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Goldberg 2012; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004; Stacey 2006). First of all, most men have not been socialized as nurturers or caregivers, and they cannot rely on children's mothers to fulfill these duties in the way that many heterosexual fathers do (Stacey 2006). In addition, they must negotiate "the conflicting demands and cultural requirements of fatherhood and being gay men" (Lewin 2009:170), who are stereotypically viewed as individualistic, pleasure-oriented, and often as pedophiles. Through fatherhood, however, gay men may perceive greater status associated with parenthood such that they come to see themselves as more similar to heterosexual parents than to gay men without children (Lewin 2009). Yet, this reinforces the notion of immorality among childless gay men and suggests that gay men can achieve morality only by becoming fathers. Similarly, Greenfeld (2007: 11) found that, compared to heterosexual men, gay men who plan to become fathers were more likely to cite "the higher status accorded to parents than non-parents" as a motivation for having children.

The most common route to parenthood among gay men is through a prior heterosexual relationship before coming to identify as gay or bisexual (Gates 2012; also see Allen and Demo 1995; Bigner and Bozett 1989; Bozett 1987; Lewin 1993; see also Mallon 2004; Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013). In turn, gay men may become stepparents to their partners' children from their partners' prior heterosexual relationships (Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013). Although early research on same-sex parents focused primarily on those who had become

parents in a heterosexual relationship, the field saw a dramatic growth in research on planned gay and lesbian families starting in the 2000s (e.g., Gianino 2008; Goldberg 2010, 2012; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004; Mezey 2008). These studies found that sexual minorities frequently encounter discrimination in adoption agencies due to their sexual orientation (Goldberg 2012; Wald 2006). As a result, many same-sex couples have access only to the less desirable, hard-to-place children (Lewin 2009; Stacey 2006). Furthermore, the high costs of adoption and surrogacy present particularly steep hurdles for poor and working-class gay men who want to have children (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Moore 2011).

Adoption by same-sex couples has increased in recent years, from 10% of couples in 2000 to 19% of couples by 2009 (Gates 2012: F2). Moreover, many same-sex couples and single-parent sexual minorities raise foster children, some of whom they later adopt (Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013). Among same-sex couples, White couples with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt children than same-sex couples of color with less education (Gates 2012). Notably, though, available adoption data do not reflect more informal adoption arrangements, such as parenting relatives' children, which are more common among communities of color (Lewin 2009).

Finally, gay men may become parents through surrogacy or donor insemination. For those who are economically advantaged and able to afford the costly process, these options allow same-sex couples to have children that are biologically related to one of the partners (Bergman, Rubio, Green and Padron 2010), yet the process may be lengthy and emotionally taxing. Like many different-sex couples, when same-sex couples become parents through surrogacy or donor insemination, they face difficulties in co-parenting because only one of the parents is biologically related to the child (Hequembourg 2004; Padavic and Butterfield 2011; Sullivan 2004).

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Taken together, young men of color with same-sex desire face a number of challenges in becoming parents, including reconciling multiple marginalized identities. Some young gay men of color who are impoverished may not be able to overcome the financial barriers to having children in same-sex relationship. On the one hand, gay and bisexual men of color may experience greater barriers to parenthood than White gay and bisexual men because their families and racial/ethnic communities are less accepting of homosexuality. On the other hand, because racial minority communities often value the collective family and its reputation above the wants of individuals (Allen and Bagozzi 2001; Sabogal et al. 1987), LGB people from racial minority backgrounds may receive greater family support and thus perceive fewer barriers to having children.

Data and Methods

Analyses in this chapter are based on ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews with 36 young gay and bisexual men of color ages 18 to 32, from the Los Angeles area between 2009 and 2015. Because these men are typically difficult for academic researchers to locate, I conducted this study within a local nonprofit organization called XLA[1] that focuses on the sexual health and wellness of men who have sex with men (MSM) who are racial/ethnic minorities and many of whom are poor or working class. I conducted interviews in two rounds: 19 interviews in 2009 to 2010 with primarily Black gay and bisexual men, and 17 interviews in 2015 with primarily Latino gay and bisexual men.

In early 2009, I began volunteering at XLA and then started attending and participating in weekly meetings on health and wellness with primarily Black young men with same-sex

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[1] The name of the organization has been changed to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

attractions. The staff member who led these meetings invited me to participate and observe on the condition that I participated in all the same discussions and activities as the men. For about one year, I participated in their weekly meetings, often arriving early and staying late to spend additional time with them. I also accompanied the young men to various community events outside the organizational setting. Through my initial observations and interviews with several of the staff, I learned that young gay and bisexual men of color felt particular uncertainty and frustration in forming relationships and being able to achieve the future families they desire. Based on the initial fieldnotes I collected, I developed a supplemental interview component of this study—that would serve as the primary data for this chapter's analysis—to explore the young men's perspectives on relationships and expectations for future relationships and children.

Locating interview participants was made possible by development of two key informants during the project who connected me to most of my respondents. This was especially important because I am not a member of the populations I studied. Through my participation in the weekly meetings, I developed a good relationship with the staff person who led the meetings, and he became my key informant in the first round of interviews. In the first round, I also interviewed three young men on staff who were members of my interview populations, and I include them in my analysis.

Based on the first round of interviews with primarily Black young men, I wanted to expand my sample and include men from other racial/ethnic backgrounds to explore how race/ethnicity influences the experience of navigating normative life transitions as young gay and bisexual men of color. Between 2010 and 2015, I developed a relationship with another key informant who had long been affiliated with XLA and was at times a contract employee of the organization. He connected me to nearly all my respondents in the second round of interviews.

About half respondents involved in HIV testing services, and some of them had been involved in other sexual health organizations in the Los Angeles area. Most were tangentially involved with XLA, as compared to respondents in the first round.

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews, asking the men about their family backgrounds, current relationship with their families, and their aspirations for future long-term relationships and children (see Appendix B for Interview Guide). The majority of interviews took place within the organization offices in confidential spaces, though a few of the earlier interviews were conducted at other locations chosen by the respondents. I recorded all interviews on a digital recorder and transcribed the recordings in full. The length of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two hours, with most lasting about one hour. After reviewing the interview recordings, I also conducted brief follow-up interviews with a few of the men to gather more in-depth information about particular aspects of their interviews.

Because this study is based on a convenience sample of young gay and bisexual men of color, my findings are based on a non-random group and may not be generalizable to the larger community of young men of color with same-sex desire in the Los Angeles area. Most of my respondents grew up in low-income, predominantly racial/ethnic neighborhoods in the Los Angeles area, such as Compton, East LA, Inglewood, Lynwood, Paramount, South LA and Watts, and most would be considered poor or working class at the time of the interviews. A considerable portion of them had been homeless or had lived in transitional living centers at some point in their lives. These men, however, may be different from others in the broader communities of young gay and bisexual men of color in Los Angeles, due in part to their willingness to participate in services and programs that cater to young men with same-sex desires. Therefore, while these results provide great insight into the perceptions of family among

these young gay men of color, the findings may not be generalizable to the larger community of which they are a part.

In addition, I asked the men to describe their sexual identities. Most of the men self-identified as gay, indicating they had already come to terms with their sexuality to some extent and were open about their sexuality in a confidential interview setting. Notably, however, although all of them provided an immediate response, a few explained they did not like to label their sexual identities because they felt the label did not apply to them. Several self-identified as bisexual or something more fluid (e.g., pansexual). Most of the men who identified as bisexual suggested they were primarily attracted to men but open to relationships with women, thus I tend to group their responses with the men who identified as gay.

Notably, however, there were differences in the social and political settings for each round of my respondents. For those that I interviewed in the first round (2009), same-sex marriage had recently been legalized and then banned in 2008. For those in the second round of interviews, same-sex marriage became legal in June 2015, in the middle of the interview period. When discussing the possibility of marriage and future family, this shift in legal climate may differently impact responses from participants in the first and second rounds of interviews.

Findings

As young, working-class gay and bisexual men of color, my respondents face marginalization due to their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class, which together impact their ability to form relationships and families. Negotiating multiple marginalized identities, these men face barriers to reaching their relationship and family goals, due to homophobia in their families of origin and their racial communities, racism and homophobia in

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larger society, and internalized homophobia within themselves. Some respond by developing alternative meanings of family that reflect their stigmatized social locations but are nevertheless modeled after existing family structures. In this chapter, I provide a temporal analysis of the young men's lives, following them through their experiences of marginalization. I begin with their families of origin, then move to their experiences as young men trying to form relationships, and conclude with how they envision their future families. This temporal progression shows how the experience of marginalized identities varies over the life course for young gay men of color.

As they navigate social and structural constraints, young men of color with same-sex desire develop strategies for achieving their relationship and family goals. Notably, the multiple stigmas these men face—due to class, family background, race and sexual identity—are difficult to analyze separately. Their statuses are intrinsically intertwined and are best understood through an intersectional lens (Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005). At times, I describe how a particular status affects the men's lives, but this should not be taken to mean that any one status is independent of the others (see also Bowleg 2012; Hunter 2010; Moore 2010a).

Families of Origin

In order to understand how young gay and bisexual men of color come to make sense of the idea of family, it is critical to explore their family backgrounds and experiences within their racial/ethnic communities. For most of the men I studied, family structure itself did not significantly shape their experiences. Instead, family transitions and socioeconomic status seemed to have more of an impact on their lives. Moreover, the quality and strength of respondents' relationships with their parents impacted their view of what is attainable for the future. The consistent presence of both parents in respondents' lives provided a sense of stability,

compared to those who grew up with single mothers and uninvolved fathers, but it did not

guarantee that respondents received emotional or financial support from their parents. Family

experiences helped these men develop a particular sense of self, as well as an understanding of

the meaning of family. I demonstrate that young people construct meanings of family based on

the families in which they are raised and the examples to which they are exposed.

Consistent with previous research showing that two-parent families are not the norm

among poor and working-class families of color in the Los Angeles area, my respondents

reported a wide variety of family backgrounds and histories of family transitions. In fact, almost

three quarters of my respondents did not grow up with both parents throughout their childhoods.

Many had experienced the separation or divorce of their parents or had experienced separation

from their parents while in foster care or kin care. Most respondents experienced multiple family

transitions during their childhood, and several lived with different family members throughout

their lives. The majority of respondents reported having good relationships with their mothers,

and many considered their mothers to be their role models. Only a few reported having good

relationships with their fathers. Although several respondents maintained contact with their

nonresidential fathers after their parents separated, about two thirds of the men reported that their

fathers were uninvolved for most or all of their childhoods.

More than a quarter of the men I studied (10 out of 36) lived with both biological parents

or were raised by long-term foster parents for most or all of their childhoods. Among these

respondents, however, only three reported having good relationships with both parents. Anton

West, a 26-year-old Black man, was raised by married parents who are still together, along with

two older siblings. He recalls his upbringing as "very fairy-tale-ish," with a loving, supportive

and communicative family. He disclosed his bisexual identity to his parents at age 18 and feels

his parents are generally accepting of his same-sex desire as long as he does not make it front and center when he is around them. Anton was still living with his parents and said that witnessing their 28-year marriage taught him the importance of strong, healthy relationships. He expressed a desire to marry in the future, and he was one of only a few respondents in a serious, committed relationship at the time of the interviews.

The seven other respondents who lived with both parents during their childhoods had strained relationships with their fathers. For most of these men, their fathers' inability to accept their gay/bisexual identity or feminine presentation appeared to be the primary reason for the difficult relationships. They reported frequent arguments with their fathers and making conscious attempts to avoid each other at home. Of these six men, three respondents still lived with both parents, though they did not talk to their fathers often, and two respondents' parents had separated or divorced in the years since.

Most of my respondents (26 out of 36) experienced the separation of their parents for some or all of their childhoods. Thirteen of my respondents were raised primarily by single parents. Seven of these respondents were raised by single mothers (one of which was a single foster mother) and did not have contact with their biological fathers. The remaining six respondents in this group experienced the separation or divorce of their parents at a young age (12 years old or younger) but had regular contact with their biological fathers during childhood.

Brandon Davis was raised by a single mother along with three brothers and three sisters. His father "had umpteen other children" and left when Brandon was 3 years old in order to evade the mother of one of his other children to whom he owed child support. Brandon's mother may have struggled financially at times—supporting seven children on welfare, disability payments, and help from extended family—but always found a way to ensure all her children received

sufficient care. Brandon said his mother was "the best mom [he] could possibly ever have," and they enjoyed a very close relationship until she passed away. Despite growing up in a poor, single-mother household, Brandon developed strong relationships with his mother and siblings. This positive experience emphasized to him the importance of family. He expressed the desire to establish a future long-term relationship with a man and have children, but he doubted that he would be able to maintain a long-lasting relationship.

At least 10 of the men I studied had been involved in the foster care system or kin care program, including one respondent who has had no contact with his parents since he was sent to a juvenile detention center years ago. Another three men lived with grandmothers or aunts during childhood in the absence of their parents, but they were not formally involved with kin care. Five respondents had lived with their single mothers along with other family members, typically grandmothers and/or aunts. Several respondents had especially tumultuous childhoods, and a few moved in and out of foster care or moved around among relatives. For example, 21-year-old Victor Garcia had perhaps one of the most unstable childhoods among my respondents. His alcoholic parents fought constantly and frequently abused him. His father left when Victor was 7 years old. When he was 13, his father passed away, which escalated the physical and verbal abuse by his mother. He voluntarily entered the foster care system, moving around among several foster families and four LGBT-specific group homes because he was treated badly by other children. At times, he would "AWOL from the group homes" and lived on the streets for weeks at a time in Hollywood. He eventually moved in with his aunt but admits he does not feel close to her. Because of his tumultuous childhood and inability to connect with anyone, he does not consider anyone to be his family. He dreamed of creating his own family in the future with a male partner and children, but he doubted that he would ever find someone who accepts him for

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who he is. Victor's story demonstrates that a negative experience with one's family of origin can have a negative impact on one's conception of family.

On the whole, respondents who had positive experiences with their families of origin often developed a strong sense of the importance of family. For example, Anton held a positive outlook on marriage, and Brandon expressed the desire for a long-term relationship with the caveat that relationships are difficult to maintain, which he learned through the absence of his father. On the other hand, Victor had a negative experience and never really felt accepted by his family of origin or by any of his foster families. As a result, he struggled to describe his ideal family because he did not consider anyone his family. In a similar vein, Marquis Burris explained, "My family past only shows me that that's what my family should never be." Some respondents who had experienced a number of family transitions and disruptions reported that they do not want to get married or do not want children in the future because they did not have a positive perspective of family.

Notably, the young men's experiences with their families of origin were shaped considerably by their socioeconomic status. Some experienced multiple family transitions during their childhoods, consistent with family formation patterns in low-income communities. Growing up with both parents provided stability for some respondents, but the presence of both parents did not always ensure that respondents were emotionally or financially supported by their parents, in part because many families were struggling financially.

Negotiating Same-Sex Desire within Racial/Ethnic and Religious Families

Religion often played a significant role in the lives of the Black and Latino men I studied. Religious beliefs about homosexuality influenced their families' level of acceptance of their same-sex desire and shaped the men's self-acceptance. For some of the men, religion

considerably impacted their view of themselves as young men of color with same-sex desire, and in turn, impacted what they saw as possible for their future families. Respondents raised in religions that hold extremely negative views toward homosexuality had a more difficult time accepting their same-sex desire and tended to be less certain about the possibility of long-term same-sex relationships in the future. Young men who identified or were raised in Christian denominations were more likely to encounter extreme negative religious views from their families, compared to respondents and families who identified as Catholic. Notably, in some cases, families put less emphasis on religious beliefs when they were also dealing with extreme challenges of poverty.

Feeling accepted or not by one's family of origin shaped the ways respondents viewed themselves as young men of color with same-sex desire. Religious and cultural values shaped the ways families responded to their sons' gay or bisexual identities. Many of my respondents grew up in religious households, attending church during their childhoods and learning that homosexuality is a sin. Most were raised in Christian or Catholic churches. Negative responses to respondents' sexual identities from their families were based on families' religious beliefs, traditional or cultural beliefs, or stereotypes about gay/bisexual or feminine-acting men (Schulte and Battle 2004). Families with strong ties to religion and those who interpret the Bible in a literalist tradition had a more difficult time coming to terms with the fact that their sons were gay or bisexual (Maher et al. 2008).

The men in this study faced varied levels of acceptance from their families. About half of the men felt they had received some degree of acceptance from one or more people in their families, though not always initially. Respondents who grew up in households with negative religious views toward homosexuality had a much more difficult time coming to accept their

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same-sex desire and feeling accepted by their families. This, in turn, shaped the way they approached romantic relationships and developed expectations about future family formation.

Responses from families differed depending on the strength of parents' religious ties and whether parents believe that same-sex desire is chosen or biological. Though many of my respondents described generally positive experiences with their families, several respondents had particularly traumatic experiences due to their parents discovering their same-sex desire. Drawing on Moon's (2014) spectrum of religious beliefs ranging from most negative to most positive views of homosexuality, families that have the most negative reactions to homosexuality are those who believe that "God hates fags." They believe homosexuality is a choice and is a sin more evil than other sins—an "abomination." In their view, same-sex desire is a pathology that can result from childhood dysfunction or child abuse and requires "treatment." Respondents who had to negotiate these extreme negative views about homosexuality often had the most difficult time coming to terms with their sexual orientations and feeling accepted by their families. For example, when 22-year-old Aaron Norris was in high school, his adoptive father who was a pastor overheard one of Aaron's phone conversations. His father confronted him and asked if he was gay. Fearing he would be kicked out of the house, he denied being gay, but his father still beat him with a belt. Aaron had not yet disclosed to his family that he is gay, and he continued to suffer from self-esteem issues that caused him great turmoil in relationships.

Similarly, Elijah Lawrence described religion as a source of anti-gay attitudes and discrimination, particularly among the Pentecostal denomination in which he was raised. When Elijah was in high school, his pastor forced him to participate in a debate against homosexuality in front of the church congregation. He described the debate as "me going against myself," an experience that continues to trouble him. His mother was deeply religious and never accepted his

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sexual identity. Although he had since changed his mind about homosexuality being a sin, Elijah reported that those early negative experiences impacted his self-esteem in a lasting way. He hoped to form a family in the future but planned to keep that family separate from his family of origin.

Alternately, some young men of color with same-sex desire continue to attend church with the goal of becoming straight or heterosexual through church involvement. For instance, Jarrod Griffin, a 24-year-old Black/multiracial man who identified as religious, had so internalized the idea that being gay is a sin that, although he identified as gay, he believed he "wasn't born gay" and planned to "become straight" in the future:

> I know in the Bible it says it's abomination. Mentally, in my heart, it's wrong. So um, as I'm younger, I'm like honestly, I'm trying to enjoy it. But in time, in time, I'm actually asking God to help me change because I know in the Bible, it's you know you're, it's abomination so I'm going to hell… I told God like oh you know my heart, but in the Bible, I know what's right. I should be with a woman. It says be fruitful and multiply. I can't be fruitful and multiply with a man. So I'm slowly trying to get it right. So but everybody else is telling me, "You're not going to hell." But in my heart, I know it's wrong, and if it's in here, then you know I have to change. So it's like ugh! But slowly but surely... So I'm still attracted to men. So but slowly but surely, it'll happen.

Jarrod revealed an obvious struggle between expressing his same-sex desires and adhering to his religious principles. His internalization of the Black community's homophobia had influenced his vision of future family in that he believed he could only be happy in the future by marrying a woman, despite his same-sex desires.

The next group on Moon's spectrum that was relevant for many respondents—those who believe they should "love the sinner, but hate the sin"—tends to have a less negative view toward homosexuality compared to those who believe it is an abomination. People with this perspective believe same-sex desire is biological rather than chosen and not inherently sinful. Acting on that desire, however, by engaging in same-sex behavior or adopting a gay or bisexual identity is

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sinful. Despite the stance of the Black church, several Black men described homosexuality as no greater than other sins. Thus, they implied that, although they believed the church should not condemn them for being gay, they continued to regard homosexuality as a sin on some level. Because this belief is so ingrained in the value system of their families and communities, it may be difficult for these men to fully accept themselves as being gay.

The young men whose families believed they should "love the sinner, but hate the sin" came to learn that their families' love did not always guarantee acceptance. A number of the men conveyed stories of their mothers telling them, "I do not agree with your being gay and I will never fully accept it, but I love you no matter what because you are my son." Their mothers reinforced the endurance of a mother's love for her son, while still implying there is something wrong with him. For example, 26-year-old Brandon Davis had a very close relationship with his mother, and religion and church attendance played a big role in his life throughout his childhood and until the time of the interview. Demonstrating the concept of "love the sinner, hate the sin," Brandon's mother said to him when she discovered that he was gay: "Of course, I don't agree with it, I'll never accept it… But you are my child so you know I'm going to love you unconditionally no matter what. But I really don't agree with it." Brandon continued to feel conflicted about whether homosexuality was a sin and hoped to become a single father in the future, believing a long-term same-sex relationship would not be possible for him.

Even when families did express acceptance, however, some men believed it was not possible to be fully be accepted by their families. For example, Thomas Wheeler explained that even when people say "it's cool, I'm going to love you anyway," they do not genuinely mean it: "But inside you really don't accept it, like you really not cool with it." James Hargrove also believed that many parents have a difficult time fully accepting their gay sons. He argued,

"They'll be accepting supposedly and then once they get mad at the kid, they start degrading him, 'You faggot, you gay.'" Similarly, Elijah Lawrence explained that when things would go wrong or his mother would get upset with him, she would tell him that bad things were happening to him "because you're gay." The feeling of never truly being accepted fosters a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about one's self and sexual identity.

Another relevant religious perspective among respondents was Moon's (2014) category of those who "Don't talk about it," similar to the concept of respectability with respect to sexuality (Harris 2010; Moore 2010b). People with this perspective believe that same-sex desire is not inherently sinful, as long as the person does not draw attention to their same-sex desire in public (Harris 2010; Moon 2014). People with same-sex desire have the choice to separate their gay identity from other aspects of their lives, including church. In this way, respectability allows for people with same-sex desire to participate in church services as long as they do not draw attention to their same-sex desire or gay/bisexual identity. For example, Javier Ortega, a 19-year-old Hispanic man, said that his Catholic family never told him that homosexuality is sinful because that is a "sensitive topic," something that should remain private.

Although some respondents reported avoiding church because of religious views toward homosexuality, others continued going to church services but generally downplayed or hid signs of their same-sex desire. For example, Marquis Burris was still regularly attending church and seemed to consider himself to be respectable ("doesn't act gay") so it does not matter that he is gay while at church. He acts like himself, which is not "acting a fool" like other gay men, and appears to pass as straight or at least not drawing attention to himself in the church setting. Similarly, Brandon Davis still attended church with his family every Sunday. Members of his current church did not know he is gay, and he said he has to "tone it down," meaning he has to

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avoid acting in a way that would suggest he is gay. Brandon believed that the church is hypocritical, and questioned why homosexuality would be seen as a graver sin. He also conveyed to me that gay people should not "force" their gay identity or same-sex desire on other people. Instead, he believed in being respectable (Harris 2010; Moore 2010b) and not drawing attention to one's gay identity.

Among the men I studied, those whose families identified as Catholic tended to be more accepting of their sons' same-sex desire. Some Catholic respondents heard the message that homosexuality is a sin, but they did not learn that homosexuality is an "abomination" or greater than other sins. Six respondents reported that they had never heard from their parents that homosexuality is a sin, and all but one of them identified with Catholicism. In fact, Sal Gonzalez reported that he had only heard that homosexuality was a sin from "Christians." Among respondents whose families were not religious, most still learned that homosexuality was immoral, unnatural or wrong. Some said that their families were not religious but rather saw homosexuality as wrong due to "traditional" or cultural values.

Some respondents whose families were Catholic but not religious pointed to their poverty status as a factor in mediating negative religious views toward homosexuality. Sal Gonzalez, a 19-year-old Latino man, grew up with a single mother and four siblings. His mother worked long hours to support them all, though his older brothers were involved in gangs and each had multiple children with multiple women. Sal believed these were protective factors because his mother was more concerned with feeding her children and she already had grandchildren (so she was not worried about becoming a grandmother through Sal). Similarly, Raul Moreno's siblings experienced substance abuse problems and teenage pregnancies. Because his mother had bigger issues to deal with, Raul believed she was not concerned about his being bisexual or gay.

Respondents who had transitioned from religious to spiritual or otherwise changed their minds about homosexuality being a sin tended to have more positive views of themselves as young men of color with same-sex desire and to view same-sex relationships as possible. For example, 18-year-old Dewayne Seaborne said he "[hadn't] been to a Black church since age 12" because many of their members are "not really accepting yet of homosexuality" and "behind the scenes will judge you." He also believes that religion is hypocritical, giving an example of a politician who publicly opposed same-sex marriage but was later caught having sex with men in an airport bathroom. Dewayne said that now, "I'm not religious, but I still pray to God, believe in God, spiritually." Likewise, Jordan Price said that initially, religion greatly influenced his feelings about his sexual orientation because he believed it was a sin. As he grew older, however, he became more comfortable with being gay and changed his mind about homosexuality being a sin. He believed that God would prefer that he be gay and happy than pretend to be heterosexual and be unhappy. Thomas Wheeler also believed that homosexuality cannot be sinful because "God created everything… I didn't choose to be this way… I was made this way, it's nothing I can change."

Anton West said he tends to avoid organized religion and instead read the Bible and interpreted it for himself. He felt that he had to go to the Bible as the source, a "pure stream of knowledge" that you should interpret for yourself:

> I know there's been scholars and priests … and I'm pretty sure that each and every one of them had a different interpretation. So I took that idea and then I took what I've read into context, and … I adapted that into my own spirituality. So now it's like I have my own relationship with God, but at the same time, I don't go to church every Sunday because in the Bible and my interpretation, it doesn't say that you have to go to church every Sunday. [In church sermons] they preach so much propaganda, they preach so much that's just kinda like it's polluted. So I figure the easiest and best way to get that pure stream of knowledge is to seek it out for yourself and get your own connection. … it's worked wonders for me. I mean, my spirituality and my connection with God has brought out of some of my darkest times.

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For the men who changed their minds about the sinfulness of homosexuality or who had become more spiritual, they became more accepting of themselves as young men of color with same-sex desire because they no longer view it as morally or religiously wrong. This is consistent with previous research that has found that, in light of anti-gay teachings in religious settings, young gay and bisexual men have developed a more personal spirituality (Kubicek et al. 2009) or have reinterpreted and repurposed religious teachings to reconcile the conflict between their religious beliefs and their same-sex desire (Winder 2015). Some respondents had changed their mind about homosexuality being a sin but seemed to still be conflicted or ambivalent, which in turn created greater uncertainty in their minds about the possibility of long-term same-sex relationships in their futures.

Surely, negative responses from families and communities have a significant impact on one's perception of self and sexual identity. For example, even though Elijah does not believe homosexuality is a sin, he still has trouble loving himself and being assertive due to the negative experiences associated with his sexual identity. In order to minimize negative reactions from one's family and community, gay men of color may feel forced to choose between embracing public gay identities and suppressing their sexuality around their families and racial/ethnic communities (Hunter 2010; Moore 2010b; Ocampo 2014; Peterson 1992). Ultimately, being unable to accept oneself may have potentially dire consequences for establishing and maintaining romantic relationships.

Barriers to Gay Identities and Relationships

Due to homophobia and lack of acceptance in their families and racial/ethnic communities, the Black and Latino men I studied faced barriers to adopting gay identities and to forming same-sex relationships. In addition, they faced racism, classism and homophobia from

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larger society, including the mainstream White gay community. In what follows, I show that the stigmatization and marginalization these men experienced from their families, from their racial/ethnic communities, and from larger society have affected their ability to navigate romantic relationships and have impacted their expectations for future family.

Barriers in families of origin and racial/ethnic communities

The young men's experiences within their families of origin and racial/ethnic communities shaped the way they approached relationships. Although young men of color typically receive support from their families and communities, particularly as a refuge from racism in mainstream U.S., the men I studied were often alienated by their families and communities because of their gay or bisexual identities. Negotiating a lack of family acceptance and feelings of sinfulness fostered internalized homophobia for many of the young men of color I studied, making it difficult for them to form and sustain same-sex relationships because they could not accept themselves as men with same-sex desire (Barnes and Meyer 2012). Moreover, many of my respondents expressed the need to hide same-sex relationships from their families and from people in their racial/ethnic neighborhoods, which many classified as impoverished neighborhoods with high crime and persistent gang activity, furthering the challenges of starting and sustaining same-sex relationships. One visitor to XLA argued that "Black men are relegated to the 'social minefields of homophobia.' They live in places like South Central where it's not ok to be gay" (fieldnote excerpt, paraphrasing young man visiting a weekly meeting). These barriers to adopting gay identities and forming same-sex relationships pushed my respondents out of their families and neighborhoods and limited the support that they received from their families and racial/ethnic communities (Green 2007).

Additionally, my respondents have not been exposed to lasting relationships in their families and communities. Indeed, the heterosexual relationships they have seen have largely been unhealthy or unsuccessful. For instance, some of the men reported that their parents or grandparents were unfaithful to each other, and that these were not models the young men wanted to emulate:

> As far as like the whole concept of marriage—and again, it has nothing to do with just being gay as my idea of what marriage is and… Like I said, my dad cheated on my mom, my grandmother and grandfather were together for years but he had a girlfriend on the side that we knew about. My grandmother probably had somebody. They had divorced. It wasn't until my grandfather had died… I remember that my grandmother had moved out of the house. But she stayed with my grandfather just for the money. And I'm like wow, are you that co-dependent? (Derrick Smith)

Even when they see heterosexual relationships that do last, they may not understand how to use those relationships as models for themselves. Elijah asserts that heterosexual relationships are easier to form and maintain based on the fact that they are heterosexual, making them unclear models for gay relationships.

Barriers in larger society and mainstream gay communities

When young gay and bisexual men of color venture out into the world beyond their families and racial communities, they face obstacles due to their multiple stigmatized statuses within larger American society, which tends to privilege White, middle-class heterosexuals (McIntosh 1992). The young men I studied were marginalized in mainstream society and within mainstream gay spaces because they were men of color (primarily Black and Latino). Many respondents reported facing racial bias or discrimination due to stereotypes about Black and Latino men that persist in U.S. discourse. Many Black respondents reported that other people had perceived them as criminals and had approached or avoided them with skepticism when they appeared Black and masculine in public. They told stories of White people locking car doors as

the Black respondents walked past them on the sidewalk. Aaron recalls a number of times, while working at his retail job, when women have given him strange looks and have appeared to veer away to avoid interaction with him.

My respondents were keenly aware that West Hollywood was a space for predominantly middle-class/affluent White gay men. If White gay men experience alienation from their families, they can theoretically seek refuge in spaces such as West Hollywood that celebrate their sexual identities. This is not true, however, for gay or bisexual men of color or White gay or bisexual men who are economically disadvantaged. Many of my respondents reported feeling excluded within gay enclaves such as West Hollywood, though many had visited on occasion. These neighborhoods largely cater to White gay men and are generally not welcoming to racial/ethnic minorities (Cantu 2009; Green 2007; Moore 2010b; Ocampo 2012). Derrick did not feel comfortable in places like West Hollywood because, as a "hood queen," he did not fit in to the predominantly White neighborhood. In fact, several of my Black respondents reported having encountered explicit racism in West Hollywood. This sentiment was particularly pronounced after the passage of Proposition 8 in California when mainstream media blamed Black communities for helping to pass the ban on same-sex marriage and criticized them for their close-minded religious beliefs. As James recalled, the young men felt the effects of this anger:

> They had people calling them "nigger" and all that kinda stuff because they blamed it on all the Black, African American people. At that point, they felt bad about being Black… And they're like, "We all are gay, why are they coming at us this way? I voted like they voted so why would they come against me that way?"

Although White gay men can seek refuge from homophobia within gay enclaves such as West Hollywood, young gay and bisexual men of color cannot rely on the same benefits due to their race and class.

Furthermore, homophobia in larger society prevents gay and bisexual men from expressing affection for their partners in public. Anton argued that gay relationships are still considered taboo:

> You're still kind of sneaking around and you're still kind of hiding some of the things that you do. You know, you're not doing some of the things as you are, it feels like sometimes you're looking over your shoulder 'cause you're like "oh, who's watching?" what you're doing with a guy.

Similarly, Elijah said he believes that it is challenging to form healthy relationships because gay men are deterred from expressing affection in public.

Because of perceived social restrictions to being gay in public, the young men were uncertain about where to find partners who want serious relationships. James pointed out that there are no Black gay places to go in Los Angeles. Gay-friendly social venues typically cater to White gay men, and tend to serve as places to meet "hook ups" rather than to start serious relationships. As Brandon said, "You find 'em at a club, you lose 'em at a club" (to another man). These obstacles to meeting potential partners and finding gay men who are serious about relationships may encourage young men to avoid committed gay relationships altogether.

Many of the men I studied expressed the belief that, in general, gay men do not make good partners for serious relationships. They described gay men as averse to monogamous relationships, prone to infidelity within relationships, and jealous and controlling. For example, Kenny self-identified as gay but was frustrated with "the lifestyle." He believed gay men focus too much on sex and are not interested in monogamy or in forming meaningful relationships. Like many respondents, he expressed the desire for a serious relationship with a man, but thus far had not been able to develop a relationship.

Furthermore, respondents expressed cynicism about the stability of gay relationships, believing they are "set up to fail" due to the inherent challenges of being both gay or bisexual and racial minorities. Thomas described the challenge of managing gay men's masculinity:

> With a guy it's like, okay, yeah, I'm a dude, so I know what a guy wants. A guy hates to be questioned. He wants to feel like a man. He still wants to be felt made special although… he want it in the masculine way, you know. With a guy it takes more work because it's more walls you have to break down. Because they're so masculine and want to be so manly and, you know, you can't mess with a man's ego… It takes a lot of knowledge and a lot of learning. It takes a lot. And people don't realize that. They think it's just so easy.

According to my respondents, gay relationships take more effort to negotiate, because as Kenny asserted, men do not typically participate in communication and compromise. From respondents' statements, it appears some gay men try to fulfill expectations of hypermasculinity, to the detriment of romantic relationships. Herein lies an interesting paradox: Even when Black and Latino men are acting on same-sex desires, and perhaps because they are doing so, they may feel the need to enact an exaggerated masculinity in order to be seen as authentically Black (Collins 2004). As the men point out, however, the difficulty of managing two men's masculinities at once is too great to sustain a relationship.

Notably, because young gay men of color perceive difficulty in sustaining relationships, many of them begin relationships with the expectation of failure. As a result, they may put less effort into their relationships because, as Thomas contended, they do not expect their relationships to build into anything more. Similarly, Darrell Noble said he would like to be in a relationship, but "I feel like I'm going to get in the relationship knowing that this relationship is not going to last." Forming relationships based on an expectation of failure certainly does not foster relationship durability.

Respondents who identified as bisexual expressed that negative societal views about a bisexual identity influenced the way they approached relationships. For instance, Thomas had been in long-term relationships with both men and women and self-identified as bisexual, though he was uncomfortable with that label. He believed men are not allowed to identify as bisexual; people expect you to be either gay or straight:

> It's really no such thing as being bisexual, as far as if you're a guy... It's about the rest of the world. You can't be chilling or see a girl and think she's fly and you like her and be like oh, well, I'm bisexual. It's like, what? You know, you're gay. You fuck with men because you're gay, so I don't know.

Similarly, Raul reported that both male and female potential partners had expressed suspicion that he would cheat because he identified as bisexual, and Raul perceived that they were hesitant to start a relationship with him because of this suspicion.

Internalized homophobia shaped the way that Thomas viewed same-sex relationships, even as he expressed a sure attraction to men. Although he was open to being in another long-term relationship with a man, he at one point described the notion of being in a life partnership with a man as "nasty." Furthermore, Thomas had not disclosed his sexual identity to his family, and thought his family might reject him if they found out about his same-sex attraction. Arguably, his fear of being alienated by his family has shaped how he interacts with potential male partners, thus constraining his ability to form gay relationships. The fears that Thomas sought to avoid—being labeled as gay, being rejected by his family, being stigmatized by society—are arguably the same fears of many other men of color. An internalization of gay relationships as "nasty" and immoral surely keeps some gay men from entering into serious relationships. Forming serious relationships often entails disclosure of the relationship to others and participation in public displays of affection, both of which could come with detrimental consequences.

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For those who were able to maintain long-term relationships, they still grappled with the effects of internalized homophobia. Mentioned earlier, Aaron Norris grew up in a deeply religious household with a pastor father who beat Aaron on the suspicion he was gay. Prior to the interview, Aaron was in a long-term, loving relationship with a man, but they had recently broken up. Aaron said that, because he never truly learned how to give or receive love, he could not understand how someone would love him. As a result of his low self-worth, he sabotaged the relationship with this partner and has regretted it ever since. This example demonstrates the negative effects of internalized homophobia within romantic relationships, despite the desire of both partners to be in the relationship.

As a result of his own dissatisfaction with being gay, Kenny said he has considered choosing a heterosexual identity and marrying a woman in the future:

> I think as I get older and I'm more comfortable with myself and I'm not with anyone, I'm single, I think I will take the avenue of even marriage or being with a woman and having kids… As of right now, yes, I have sex with men, so homo, gay, whatever, yeah, I'm all that. But until, if I get tired of it or whatever, then I'll be straight or whatever you want to call it.

Kenny perceived the barriers to establishing and maintaining a gay relationship to be so overwhelming that he believed he might only find happiness in a straight or heterosexual relationship. Based on respondents' stories, it seems a daunting task for two men to simultaneously surmount these numerous obstacles in order to form a relationship with each other. As a result, gay men may see casual sex as a less challenging option to engaging in social and sexual connections than forming a serious same-sex relationship.

Finally, another barrier to maintaining same-sex relationships is that most of these men have not been exposed to long-lasting same-sex relationships. Watching others negotiate and transition within relationships provides a model for what works or does not work in

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relationships. Many of the men were unaware of the progression of successful relationships.

Their exposure to romantic relationships, including their own, has influenced how they

conceptualize their future families, and for some has dampened their hopes of ever attaining

healthy, long-term relationships.

Many respondents witnessed same-sex relationships that were short-lived and rife with

jealousy and infidelity; exceptions were rare. Some respondents based their knowledge of long-

term gay relationships on what they read in books and magazines or saw on television:

> I honestly say I haven't seen any of 'em. I've only read about them in books in stuff and
> magazines and stuff like, you'll see like people who've been together 50 years, but like I
> haven't really seen anybody with my own two eyes. (Elijah)

Few of my respondents could identify any long-term same-sex couples in their lives. Justin and

Brandon were two respondents who had seen successful gay relationships. Brandon describes the

relationship model he has witnessed:

> They're actually still together to this day, and they're going on their sixteenth year
> anniversary. Like they've been together for forever and they got a ovah [amazing] house,
> too. But they've been together for forever, and it really made me like think about my own
> bright future. Like you know if you can stick it out for 16 years, then ya'll might as well
> die together. It's a possibility in coming from being so young and not seeing that around.
> Like you be good if your relationship lasts three days. So you know, for them to like just
> be like just keep going, you can do it. And they got like two kids, a dog. They have a boy
> and a girl.

Although Justin knew a long-term same-sex couple, he still seemed to question the possibility:

"How do people last that long?" Apparently, even though Justin had witnessed a long-term gay

relationship that he could potentially emulate, he could not use that knowledge to sustain his own

gay relationships.

To summarize, homophobia and lack of acceptance from their families and their

racial/ethnic communities tended to push my respondents out of their homes and neighborhoods

(Cantu 2009; Green 2007; Moore 2010b; Ocampo 2012). Furthermore, the men I studied faced

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racism and classism from the mainstream gay community and larger society, limiting the spaces where they could comfortably enact gay identities or find potential romantic partners. Many of my respondents found it difficult to sustain successful same-sex relationships because they believed that most gay men are not interested in commitment. A lack of positive relationship models shaped the men's perspectives on relationships because they had not witnessed many successful different-sex or same-sex relationships. For some, feelings of internalized homophobia impacted their self-esteem and made them hesitant to fully participate in a relationship without suspecting that one's partner would cheat or leave soon. In fact, some respondents expressed hesitance about remaining in the gay "lifestyle" because they felt they could not form meaningful long-term relationships with men. Negative views of gay men and of same-sex relationships influenced the way these men thought about their futures in terms of long-term relationships and children. Because they did not have support from their families and communities and lacked models of positive relationships, many of my respondents were doubtful that they would be able to maintain a long-term same-sex relationship or form their ideal future families.

Expectations for Future Families

For the Black and Latino men I studied, experiences within their families of origin, racial/ethnic communities, and larger society shaped their expectations for future family. Respondents with families who did not accept their sexual orientation and those who were exposed to negative religious messages had a difficult time accepting themselves as gay or bisexual, which in turn fostered internalized homophobia among some respondents. Difficulty with self-acceptance further translated into difficulties in romantic relationships. Moreover, due to the numerous barriers to forming and maintaining successful same-sex relationships, many of

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the men had adjusted their expectations for future family formation to account for the obstacles they faced.

Most respondents wanted long-term relationships, marriage, and children—but many anticipated challenges in attaining their ideal future families. In this section, I show how their family background experiences and attitudes toward same-sex relationships influenced respondents' ideal future family outcomes and what they thought was more possible or probable for their futures. As a result, the men developed ideas about their future families that did not always align with traditional notions of family. Nevertheless, they constructed meaning around future family within the existing cultural framework of marriage and children.

In response to the barriers these young men perceived to achieving their future family goals, my respondents developed strategies for family formation based on what they thought they could reasonably achieve. This is demonstrated through a comparison of their desired futures and their expected or probable futures. Similar to Young's (2004) study of disadvantaged Black men, I found that respondents had developed distinct visions of their futures, often distinguishing between ideas of future family that were ideal or desirable and those that they viewed as possible or probable for their futures. Although many hoped to establish rather traditional family structures in the future, many saw these ideal futures as unrealistic. As a result, many respondents had adjusted their expectations to accommodate perceived barriers to establishing long-term same-sex relationships and having children.

As they negotiated multiple marginalized identities, the men I studied faced barriers to forming families due to their sexual orientation, their racial/ethnic background, and their poverty status. Most lived in disadvantaged neighborhoods, where they were exposed to an array of nontraditional family structures and few successful marriages. Several saw single fatherhood as a

probable or desirable option for achieving their desired future families. Children were an important component to future family for most of the men I studied, and many preferred to have biologically related children. Finally, some respondents expected successful same-sex relationships to be impossible and instead had constructed a heterosexual future family in order to marry and have children.

Long-term same-sex relationships and marriage

All the young men I interviewed wanted long-term relationships or marriage in the future, and most envisioned these relationships with men. In addition, the men want monogamous relationships, despite finding them incredibly difficult to attain within the gay community. The majority of young men who want long-term relationships with men also want to marry their partners, or are at least open to marriage. Some evoked a romanticized, middle-class, American dream family model when describing their desired futures, including a house with a two-car garage and, for some, children attending private school. In some visions, both partners are employed, either for economic necessity or for prestige. Raul Moreno, a 21-year-old Latino man, expressed his desire to be part of a "gay power couple" in the future.

Notably, for respondents that I interviewed in the first round, same-sex marriage had recently been legalized and then banned in 2008. For those in the second round of interviews, same-sex marriage became legal in June 2015, in the middle of the interview period. Some respondents in the first round of interviews, during which same-sex marriage was not legal, developed definitions of marriage that did not fit with traditional ideals of marriage. For example, Brandon describes marriage as "commitment. I won't say for the rest of my life because marriages fall apart every day. But it means commitment." As a result of the failed relationships and marriages he has witnessed throughout his life, Brandon has constructed a less

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permanent meaning of marriage. While his definition still entails a serious commitment, he does not expect it to last forever.

When I asked respondents their thoughts on gay men cannot currently marry, respondents initially convey a lack of concern with the legality of marriage. It is not the marriage license that really matters:

> We don't have to have a title to feel like we're married, just to know we're married. I think when two people love each other, then it's like no paper, no law, no anything is gonna come between that. (Anton)

However, when further discussing their ideas about marriage, they convey a sense of importance around the idea of legality. Despite saying the marriage license was not important to them, legal ties were still significant:

> Girl, honey, there are other things, there are power of attorney. Honey, I can leave him in my will. Honey, I don't need no piece of paper to let [nobody] know we're married. I can go to Daniel's Jewelry and get him a ring. We can both get rings. Honey, I don't need that. Because honey, I can leave shit how I want it and he can be in charge of it… If you want anything, you gotta talk to him… Check with my man! (Andre)

Andre has constructed his own meaning of legal commitment: He and his future partner can utilize legal options of power of attorney and wills to ensure they are able to make medical and financial decisions for each other, if necessary. Similarly, Anton suggests he and his partner can legally change their surnames to match, if they so choose. In response to the government prohibiting gay marriage, they have forged strategies to create their own ideas of marriage by using the term in alternative ways. To them, "marriage" is a commitment between two people who decide they want to be married, regardless of whether they have an official document. However, they are not rejecting the institution of marriage, but rather developing different interpretations within the existing structures of marriage. This is evident through the ways in

which they have constructed meanings by using legal strategies to make gay relationships official.

In both groups, there were respondents who want long-term relationships but expressly do not wish to marry; they feel marriage is simply not for them. As noted above, some men have witnessed unsuccessful marriages, prompting them to avoid marriage altogether. James summarizes what several of the men express: "Pertaining to marriage, I never really cared about all that. Um, it's not really for me, I don't think. And honestly, I haven't really seen many people as examples in my life married." James's assertion that he was not exposed to many successful marriages throughout his life is echoed by the others who do not care to get married. In fact, Raul believes "marriage is an awful thing from what [he has] seen." Similarly, Justin sees marriage as "work." Based on the examples he has seen on "all [his] little dating shows and the wedding movies, it ends up ugly." Justin's exposure to marriage has been primarily through the media. He seems most afraid of dealing with child custody issues should he divorce a partner with whom he is raising a child. He sees a long-term relationship, as opposed to marriage, as being safer for both him and his future child. Certainly, the relationships to which these men have been exposed influence how they view relationships and, in turn, the meanings they attribute to different forms of relationships.

Expectations for future parenting

Gay men who become fathers within same-sex relationships challenge conventional meanings of family as well as traditional gender expectations (Doucet 2006; Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004). Nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents expressed a strong desire to have children or were open to the possibility. Though past research has revealed that gay men associate a gay identity with a childless future, few respondents mentioned experiencing this feeling upon

realizing they were gay. This may speak to the fact that these men were transitioning into adulthood during a time that is increasingly accepting of same-sex parents. Also of note is that none of my respondents reported having children at the time of the interview. This is consistent with previous findings that young gay men are adopting gay identities at earlier ages so fewer are having children within heterosexual relationships before identifying as gay (Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer 2013).

While most respondents expressed the desire to have children in the future, a few expressed ambivalence about becoming parents, and only a few explicitly stated that they do not ever plan on having children. For example, Andre explained, "Actually, I don't want any kids because of my childhood." He was raised primarily by his grandparents and never had a good relationship with his "party mother." Nor was he close to his father, who was in prison throughout much of Andre's adolescence. As a result of the instability and negative experiences associated with his childhood, Andre plans to not have children. Here, Andre clearly indicates that his meanings for future family are predicated on his past family experiences. The barriers he endured in developing successful relationships with his parents have led him to conceptualize future family without children.

For those who would like to have children in the future, the decision to do so requires much thought and planning to determine the means by which they will construct their families (Lewin 2009; Mallon 2004). Many of my respondents had invested considerable time evaluating how they will accomplish their goal of having children. Some respondents indicated the number of children they would like, the desired sex and order of their future children (i.e., older boy or younger girl), the names they have chosen, the age at which they would like to have children, as well as the method through which they will have children (i.e., adoption, surrogacy and/or

alternative insemination). For instance, Justin has decided he would rather adopt a child than go through the process of surrogacy due to his perception of the challenges involved with surrogacy—the expense, the process of finding a surrogate mother, and making decisions about her role in the child's life.

Most respondents who wanted to have children preferred to have biologically related children. Thus, respondents tended to construct meanings of family with children that are consistent with the bias toward blood relations in traditional, heterosexual family ideals, which assumes parents and children must be biologically related (Parry 2005). For example, James had internalized this assumption and perceived potential difficulties in adoption. He anticipated that adopted children will be resentful toward him when they realize he is not their real father, and he wanted to avoid the distressing experience of finding his children's biological parents. As a result of these barriers to adoption, James formulated a plan to conceive a child with a close female friend (though not through intercourse):

> The thing is, we both don't really want to be together at all, but at the same time, we both wouldn't mind kids, and we know that we can make a beautiful kid. And we also have a great understanding of how we could balance it out to where you know custody and all that stuff. So it's like everything's already worked out, it's just about us saying, ok when do we want to have it, and are we financially ready to do all that?

Similarly, Aaron describes his preference for having a biological child, passionately conveying his hope that his son would look like him, saying it would be "like watching myself grow up." Because Aaron would want the mother to remain in his child's life, he plans to "hand select" the surrogate mother. The surrogate will not necessarily participate in the day-to-day raising of the child, but will provide what Aaron sees as the necessary influence of a woman.

Others who preferred surrogacy echoed Aaron's sentiment of wanting the surrogate mother to remain in the child's life. Elijah said, "I feel like they would need like some type of

female presence in their life, especially if I'm gonna have a girl. So I wouldn't mind having like the surrogate mother in their life, too. I had that planned out at 15." Through these plans to have biological children via surrogacy and to maintain the presence of the surrogate mothers in their children's lives, the men have constructed a sense of family that aligns somewhat with popular family ideologies, affirming biological ties and the necessity of the mother-child bond. On the other hand, it is possible these men have internalized the stereotype that men, especially gay men, are not capable of raising children on their own. Nevertheless, while these men inherently challenge traditional family ideals by their desire to become fathers, they simultaneously navigate their family goals within the existing framework of marriage and children.

Nevertheless, respondents anticipated great impediments to achieving long-term gay partnerships. After describing their desired futures, several of the men depicted what they saw as more *possible* and/or *probable* futures: They planned to raise children on their own even if they did not find long-term partners. These men saw raising children as more attainable than securing a long-term relationship. Their expectations reflect the high value placed on having children among impoverished communities (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Like the poor single mothers in Edin and Kefalas' (2005) study, my respondents viewed romantic relationships as less stable and more difficult to attain compared to parenthood. Further, children are central to a meaningful life among poor heterosexual women (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Many of my respondents grew up with poor single mothers who may have reinforced this narrative. In turn, the Black and Latino men I studied seemed to internalize the cultural depiction of poor men as unreliable romantic partners, and this was reinforced for many respondents through the unsuccessful romantic relationships they had experienced themselves.

Ideally, these men would like to raise children with long-term partners, but in the words of 30-year-old Derrick, "rationally" they do not expect to find partners within the timeframe in which they would like to have children. Furthermore, 27-year-old James, who plans to have a child with his female friend, explains:

> I'm not worried about no partner. I don't, good luck, I don't even think I'll find love, I don't know. But I'm not worried about that. I want to be financially ready to take care of my kid by myself if I have to. And plus, I know that the mother will still be in their life so I'm not concerned. I'm not concerned about that.

At 21 years old, Justin was also willing to have a child even without a partner. He believed it would be "easy" to adopt a child on his own, who would become his "soul mate." In contrast, Justin believed finding a long-term partner would be "rare."

Furthermore, 18-year-old Dewayne conveyed his belief that he would potentially have to choose between having either a child or a long-term partner. He recognized barriers to gay couples adopting children or using surrogacy and perceived fewer barriers for a single man:

> And possibly wow, could I have both? Could I have a child, because see I struggle with this because like the views on gay marriage and stuff like that and adoption and raising children you know. Would I be able to have both in the future you know or would I have to have to choose one? Either live the rest of life with the man I love dearly, or would I sacrifice that in order to be a single dad and raise a child? Because I feel they would give the child to a man that's able to do for that child and that's a single father rather than a gay, a married gay couple because they feel that I'm doing all this and they would probably deny me to see my child… I would probably have to choose one or the other.

Some of these men expressed that they would not want to expose their children to unreliable relationships and potential divorce or disruption. And some seemed to view children as more important to ensuring happiness in their lives, rather than waiting to find a long-term relationship. This again echoes the findings of Edin and Kefalas (2005), who showed that poor heterosexual mothers perceived poor men as unreliable partners in part because of poor men's precarious situation in the labor market. Poor men were viewed as inconsistent providers.

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Among poor heterosexual mothers (Edin and Kefalas) and among my respondents, children were viewed as a sure sense of accomplishment, while romantic relationships and marriage were more tenuous. This finding speaks to the argument that there is a "lack of marriageable men" in poor communities (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Wilson 2009). When coupled with the belief held by most respondents that gay men are also unreliable partners, the young men I studied perceived great obstacles to future long-term relationships. Indeed, some respondents believed there was a "lack of men" in the gay community who would be good long-term partners.

Because of their race/ethnicity, their poverty status, and their gay identities, respondents negotiated and navigated multiple barriers to achieving their ideal future families. Considering the men's family backgrounds and the normative family formation patterns within disadvantaged communities, they may not view single parenthood as a negative situation. Many of the men who grew up with single mothers had close relationships with and admired their mothers. Having been raised in low-income neighborhoods, they may see financial struggle as simply part of living, rather than associated specifically with single parenthood. For these reasons, being a single parent may seem a viable option, particularly when barriers to forming meaningful partnerships are so discouraging. In this way, these men are constructing meaning around family by drawing from cultural models available within their neighborhoods and racial/ethnic communities, when they are not able to attain the models espoused by larger society.

To an extent, they can choose when to begin the process of adoption or surrogacy, but they do not feel they have control over finding a partner, let alone a long-term partner with whom they would want to raise children. By working hard enough and saving money, they may be able to afford a house and children. As Elijah said, "I'll pay them money" to have a child through surrogacy. However, he cannot simply pay for a meaningful long-term relationship.

Elijah emphasized that, by having children, he will create a family, regardless of whether he finds a partner. While this aligns with traditional, heterosexual standards that children are needed to form a family, it simultaneously challenges the ideal of the nuclear family.

Additionally, these men may face barriers to integrating their future families into their families of origin due to homophobia within their racial/ethnic communities. While many expressed that, without a doubt, they will incorporate their future long-term partners and children into their families of origin, a few were not so sure. For example, Justin says he will definitely integrate his child into his family of origin, but hesitates when considering the same for his future long-term partner, saying it will depend on how his partner feels about it. This equivocation suggests that Justin perceives potential obstacles to introducing his partner into his family of origin. These young men indicate that children would be accepted and easily integrated into their families of origin, but a partner may pose problems or at least take longer to successfully integrate. As they describe potential integration between future and past families, it becomes clear that their families of origin may be more accepting of single parenthood than of gay relationships. This may reinforce their expectations of becoming single parents in the future.

Due to a generally negative childhood and tenuous relationships with his parents, Elijah's meaning of family applies specifically to his future family. As a result, he will shelter his new family from his family of origin:

> Oh, it's funny, 'cause I feel like that's my own world… I feel like that would be exclusive you know. The most important thing would be me and my husband and my kids… I think I would kinda like shut everybody else out… Like I would talk to them, keep in contact, keep in touch or whatever. But I feel like they're a threat. So you know I'll be more protective of my family.

He feels his future long-term partner and children will need to be protected from the homophobia and rejection he experienced from his family of origin. This again illustrates how experiences of

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homophobia from one's family of origin impact one's vision of future family. Elijah has constructed his ideal future in such a way as to protect himself and his future family from past negative experiences.

Constructing Heterosexual Futures

As suggested earlier, a few of the men perceived such intimidating barriers to maintaining gay identities into the future that they had constructed ideas of *probable* future families within the context of a heterosexual framework. For example, Kenny ultimately wanted a long-term relationship with a man but had become so cynical about its likelihood that his future relationship aspirations lean toward marriage with a woman. His overall relationship goals of monogamy and trust seemed more attainable in the context of a heterosexual relationship, making marriage to a woman seem more feasible and perhaps even more desirable. In response to the obstacles Kenny perceived to forming long-term gay relationships, he constructed a heterosexual vision of the future, despite truly believing he is gay.

Additionally, Jarrod identified as gay but believed that it was a sin. He planned to "become straight," marry a woman, and have children in the future because he believed it to be morally appropriate. In this way, his religious beliefs served as a cultural resource to structure his life. Religious homophobia had become so internalized that he did not see a gay identity as possible when considering his future family. He had not yet made the transition to this straight lifestyle, "'cause I love men too much." Expressing ambiguity, he struggled to choose between the same-sex desires he felt and what he believed was right.

Furthermore, Thomas grappled with societal and internalized homophobia when discussing his future family. He expressed attraction toward men and women and was open to the possibility of being in a long-term relationship with a man in the future, though at one point

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he called it "nasty." Although he readily admitted to wanting children, he seemed to associate the idea of a family and children with marrying a woman. He revealed fears of being rejected by his family and community if he had a child with a long-term male partner. Therefore, the stigma attached to being gay played a significant role in Thomas' construction of what constitutes a family. Through the stories of these three young men, it is evident that the ambiguity some men faced in adopting a particular sexual identity—due to homophobia and fear of rejection—made their futures uncertain and encouraged them to construct meanings of family that did not align with their sexual desires.

Despite their detailed plans for the future, these men perceived obstacles to creating their ideal future families. Although some wanted families that include children, many thought this was not an attainable goal because they faced barriers in terms of finding a long-term partner, overcoming the stigma surrounding gay men becoming parents, surmounting the financial obstacles to having children through adoption or surrogacy, and integrating their future families into their families of origin due to homophobia within their families and racial communities.

Discussion

The Black and Latino men I studied negotiated multiple marginalized identities—in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and socioeconomic status—while navigating family responses to their sexual orientation, forming romantic relationships, and developing expectations for future family formation. Respondents experienced minority stress (Meyer 2003), not only based on their sexual identity but also due to their racial minority and poverty statuses. Indeed, many of the Black men in my study reported experiencing racism in larger society and in

mainstream gay spaces, such as West Hollywood. Yet at the same time, they experienced homophobia from their families and their racial/ethnic communities.

Responses from their families of origin and their racial/ethnic communities shaped the way they viewed themselves as men with same-sex desire (Ocampo 2014) and in turn how they viewed relationships and future family goals. Respondents reported mixed levels of acceptance of their sexual orientation by their families. Those who felt accepted by their families generally were more positive about the idea of family and expectations for future family. In contrast, those who faced negative responses or negative religious views toward homosexuality tended to have a more difficult time reconciling their sexual orientation with their racial identities, leading to internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer 2012). In turn, these respondents expressed greater concern about the possibility of establishing long-term same-sex relationships or reaching their future family formation goals.

Although religion was important in the lives of many respondents, they reported diverse responses from their families. Notably, some of the men I studied reported that their families did not fully accept their sexual orientation, but their families still expressed unconditional love and support of their sons. Negative religious views about homosexuality did not always translate into rejection from their families. For some respondents, the value placed on family among their parents was strong enough that respondents felt loved even if they did not feel complete acceptance for their same-sex desire (Del Pino et al. 2014; Rosario et al. 2004).

From a different angle, many Catholic respondents—who also tended to identify as Latino or Hispanic—reported that they had not heard the message that homosexuality is a sin in church or that their families did not believe homosexuality is a sin (Maher et al. 2008). These respondents seemed less likely to have internalized homophobia and felt generally positive about

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themselves as young men with same-sex desire. In fact, several Catholic respondents felt that Christian beliefs, in comparison to Catholic beliefs, were associated with harsher responses from families and a greater likelihood of being rejected by one's family. Several Black and Latino respondents believed that race/ethnicity was a factor in this relationship as well in that Black families were generally viewed as less tolerant of homosexuality. Future research should further explore this association in order to better understand the processes that create varying racial/ethnic and religious responses to homosexuality.

In this paper, I also showed that young men of color with same-sex desire develop expectations about future family based on their past family experiences and the structural barriers they face. Their expectations are shaped by the various family schemas to which they are exposed. Many respondents wanted long-term romantic relationships or marriage and children in the future, reflecting a conventional nuclear family structure. Yet many also recognized barriers to achieving these ideal family forms, due to their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status. In response, they also developed adjusted expectations for future family that accommodated these perceived barriers (Young 2004). A sizeable group of respondents, both Black and Latino, reported a willingness—and for some, an expectation—that they would be single fathers in the future. When explaining why they viewed this as a more possible future for themselves, they echoed the responses of poor heterosexual women in Edin and Kefalas (2005). Many respondents expressed doubt that they would be able to establish a long-term same-sex relationship because gay men generally do not make good partners. This narrative was reinforced by messages within poor communities that there is a "lack of marriageable men" and that poor men are not reliable partners (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Wilson 2009). Taken together,

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my respondents' expectations were shaped by exposure to multiple family schemas as they negotiated multiple marginalized identities.

Furthermore, the poor or working-class status of the majority of respondents will undoubtedly influence whether they will be able to achieve their desired futures including long-term relationships and children. Most of the young men I studied want to have children in the future, and many of them expressed a strong desire to have biologically related children through surrogacy. A few respondents preferred to adopt children, but most saw this as a secondary preference to surrogacy and a biological connection to their children. Notably, because they are women, poor heterosexual women (Edin and Kefalas 2005) have a greater chance of being able to have children, whether or not they are married or economically stable. However, my respondents recognized that they would have to be economically successful before they would be able to have children through surrogacy or adoption. Yet, because of their disadvantaged socioeconomic statuses during childhood and currently, it will likely prove difficult for many of these men to achieve their family formation goals. Many of my respondents were unemployed at the time of the interview and were struggling financially. In fact, many respondents identified their economic situation as the greatest barrier to achieving their future goals both in terms of career and future family.

Given that single-parent families are more common within poor and working-class communities, the expectation of single fatherhood among my respondents appears to be a response to their economic situations but also a means of navigating family support. Several respondents believed it would be easier to become a single father than to become a parent within a same-sex relationship. This belief appeared to be stronger among respondents who did not feel their sexual orientation was entirely accepted by their families. Indeed, some felt that their

families would accept their future children more readily if they became single parents, and that integrating a same-sex partner into their family of origin would be more difficult.

My findings should be considered within the context of this study's limitations. First, this analysis is based on a convenience sample of young Black and Latino men with same-sex desire who live in the Los Angeles area. Therefore, my results are not generalizable to larger populations of young gay and bisexual men of color. Because I accessed participants through the setting of a community agency, my respondents may be different from other Black and Latino men with same-sex desire. Young men who participate in community organizations may be more comfortable talking about their sexuality and voicing their concerns around same-sex relationships and expectations for future family formation. Second, this study does not account for the influence of respondents' immigrant status, although a few respondents did identify themselves as children of immigrants. Moreover, all respondents spoke English fluently so my study does not account for the experiences of young men of color with same-sex desire who do not speak English and may be more institutionally disenfranchised.

In addition, notable differences existed in the social and political settings during each round of my interviews. For respondents that I interviewed in the first round (2009), same-sex marriage had recently been legalized and then banned in 2008. For those in the second round of interviews, same-sex marriage became legal in June 2015, in the middle of the interview period. The shift in legal climate may influence what respondents view as possible for themselves, allowing respondents in the second round to perhaps have greater confidence in their ability to form same-sex relationships and families. I heard from respondents and in ethnographic observations the belief that Black men have a tougher time being gay, coming out to family, negotiating family acceptance, and dealing with racism, as compared to Latinos and other

racial/ethnic groups. Interviewed in 2009, Black respondents tended to be older than the Latino respondents interviewed primarily in 2015. In addition, Black respondents were more likely to be involved in programming at the agency. As a result, Black respondents may have had more experience talking about their sexuality prior to the interviews and may have been more comfortable discussing same-sex relationships and expectations for future families. Future research should further explore the similarities and differences between Black and Latino men with same-sex desire in order to better understand their experiences around sexual identity within their families and racial communities.

All in all, this paper showed that young gay and bisexual men of color are constrained and enabled by their multiple marginalized identities as they try to form same-sex romantic relationships and develop expectations for future family formation. My findings demonstrated that support from families of origin played a crucial role in how men with same-sex desire developed their sexual identities and, in turn, how they thought about future family formation. Future research should examine how young gay and bisexual men of color envision forming families throughout the life course and how other factors, such as immigrant status, impact their experiences related to sexuality and family formation.

Chapter 3 – Appendix A
List of Respondents

Respondent	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Sexual Identity	Interview Year
Aaron Norris	22	Black & Other	Gay	2009
Abel Soriano	21	Mexican	Gay	2015
Adam Santos	24	Hispanic & Other	Gay	2015
Adrian Quinonez	22	Latino & Other	Gay	2015
Alejandro Ruiz	19	Hispanic	Gay	2015
Alex Avila	18	Latino	Gay	2015
Andre Young	22	African American & Other	Gay	2009
Anton West	26	African American	Bisexual	2009
Ben Ramos	27	Latino	Gay	2015
Brandon Davis	26	Black	Gay	2009
Bryce Clark	18	African American	Gay	2009
Carlos Villalobos	23	Hispanic/Latino	Bisexual	2015
Darrell Noble	23	Black & Other	Gay	2009
David Herrera	21	Hispanic/Latino	Gay	2015
Derrick Smith	30	Black & Other	Gay	2009
Dewayne Seaborne	18	Black	Gay	2009
Eddie Duran	19	Mexican & Other	Bisexual	2015
Elijah Lawrence	24	Black & Other	Gay	2009
Emilio Zamora	22	Latino/Hispanic	Gay	2015
Isaac Trujillo	28	Latino & Other	Gay	2015
Jacob Jennings	21	Black	Gay	2009
James Hargrove	27	Black	Gay	2009
Jarrod Griffin	24	Black & Other	Homosexual	2009
Javier Ortega	19	Hispanic	Gay	2015
Jordan Price	22	Black & Other	Gay	2009
Justin Wilkins	21	Black	Gay	2009
Kenny Walker	26	Black	Gay	2009
Leo(nardo) Alvarado	21	Hispanic/Latino	Gay	2015
Marquis Burris	23	African American	Gay	2009
Martin Anaya	32	Hispanic & Other	Gay	2015
Mateo Martinez	21	Latino	Gay	2015
Raul Moreno	21	Latino	Gay/Bisexual	2009
Ruben Macias	20	Hispanic	Gay	2015
Sal(vador) Gonzalez	19	Latino/Hispanic	Gay	2015
Thomas Wheeler	25	Black/African American	Bisexual	2009
Victor Garcia	21	Hispanic & Other	Gay	2009

Background

- How old are you?
- Family background
  - How do you identify racially/ethnically?
  - Where were you raised and by whom? (parent/guardian)
  - What were your parents/guardians' occupations while you were growing up?
  - Tell me about your relationships with your family when you were growing up.
    - Who were you closest to?
    - What was your relationship like with your parents/guardians?
    - What was your relationship like with your siblings?
    - Were you close with any of your extended family members or relatives?
  - What are your relationships like with your family today?
  - Are you satisfied with the relationships you have with your family?
  - Is there anything you wish you could have changed about your family when you were growing up?
  - When you need support, whom do you talk to? Who is your support system?

Current activities

- Are you currently in school or working?
- What's the highest level of education you have achieved?
- How do you feel about your current situation in terms of school/work? Are you satisfied?
- Who do you live with now, and in what city/neighborhood?
- Are you or have you ever been involved in community organizations for youth?

Sexuality: Attraction, Behavior, Identity

- When did you first know you were attracted to someone of the same sex?
- Tell me about the first time you acted on your attraction to someone of the same sex.
  - How old were you both when this happened?
  - What did it feel like to act on your attraction?
  - Who did you tell about this experience, and what was their response?
- What do you consider to be your sexual orientation?
  - What does it mean to you to identify in that way?
  - What role does sexuality/sexual identity play in your life?
  - Do you feel closer to others who share your sexual orientation or to those who share your same race/ethnicity? (perhaps closer ties with a particular community)
- When did you first think about yourself as gay/bisexual/same-gender-loving?
- Does your family know about your sexual orientation? How do they feel about it?
- Is there anyone who doesn't know about your sexual orientation?
- Are there people you haven't told because it's easier not to tell them?
- Are there any places you visit where you have tried to hide your sexual orientation?

- What has your experience been with your sexuality in school settings – past and present?
- Where / in what setting are you able to be most yourself?
- How has HIV impacted your life?
- Do you know anyone who has HIV/AIDS? Tell me about that person. How has that person's experience affected the way you live your life?

Religion and Relationships

- Were you raised in the church? Tell me about your experiences.
  - o Do you still go today? How often?
  - o How does that fit with your sexuality?
- Have you ever been in a relationship with a man? With a woman?
- Have you ever been in a long-term relationship?

Ideas and Goals for the Future

- What are your future goals for yourself related to education and/or career?
  - o Are you doing anything currently to reach those goals?
  - o What challenges have you faced or do you expect to face in reaching those goals?
- What does family mean to you?
  - o Who do you consider your family?
  - o How do you envision your future in terms of (romantic) relationships and family?
  - o What do you want your family to look like? Describe your ideal family.
  - o Do you want to have a long-term partner? Children?
  - o How do you feel about "gay marriage"—for yourself and for larger community?
  - o How do you imagine integrating your future family with your family of origin?
  - o Tell me about a past family experience that has affected the way you look at relationships.
  - o Do you personally know any gay or lesbian individuals or same-sex couples with children?
- What are some of the MAIN challenges you feel you have in your life right now? Who can you turn to for help with these challenges?
- What would you say is the best part about your life right now? What are you most proud of?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about these topics?

Chapter 3 References

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DISSERTATION CONCLUSION

This dissertation project employed multiple methodological approaches, drawing on quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews, to examine family formation experiences and expectations among sexual minorities. In particular, I highlight the experiences of sexual minorities negotiating multiple marginalized statuses, who have been typically overlooked in previous research on LGB people and their families. Using an intersectional theoretical framework, I addressed several overarching research questions: How does parental sexual orientation shape the experiences of children raised by same-sex parents, and what is the role of children's access to household-based resources? How does sexual orientation shape sexual minorities' parenting preferences and perceived barriers to realizing those preferences? How do sexual minorities with multiple marginalized identities develop expectations for future family formation, and how do they negotiate the barriers to forming families?

In Chapter 1, I explored the well-being of children living with same-sex parents, compared to children living with different-sex parents. Using the 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS), I examined how access to household-based resources impacts the educational progress of children living with same-sex parents and different-sex parents. I showed that children living with same-sex parents are more theoretically comparable to children living with different-sex cohabiting parents and to stepchildren in different-sex parent households, based on their access to household-based resources, family transition histories, relationship to resident parents, and a lack of access to marriage among children with same-sex parents. When controlling for these factors, I found that children with same-sex parents made regular progress through school at similar or higher rates than children with different-sex cohabiting parents.

Furthermore, children with same-sex parents were not significantly different from biological children with different-sex married parents in terms of regular school progress—except among children living in the most disadvantaged households in terms of parental education. In other words, socioeconomic status and family transition histories had a greater impact on the likelihood that children made regular progress through school than parents' sexual orientation.

Supporting the general consensus of previous research, children with same-sex parents did not display worse well-being overall compared to children living with different-sex parents (see reviews by Gates 2015; Manning, Fettro and Lamidi 2014). Where there were differences, family stability and economic resources largely explained variation between children with same-sex and different-sex parents. My findings have important policy implications, including that sexual orientation should not be used to discriminate against same-sex parents and single LGB people who want to foster or adopt children. Future research should continue to examine how parental marriage benefits the educational well-being of children with same-sex parents (Reczek, Spiker, Liu and Crosnoe 2016; Rosenfeld 2014). Moreover, because same-sex couples now have access to marriage nationwide, population-based surveys such as the American Community Survey should more explicitly and thoroughly incorporate questions that recognize same-sex marriage, address same-sex relationships, and ask respondents to identify their sexual orientation. This would provide more accurate data for researchers so that they do not have to rely on approximate measures of sexual minorities.

In Chapter 2, I examined parenting desires and intentions among sexual minorities, using the 2002 and 2006-2010 National Surveys of Family Growth (NSFG). Consistent with previous research (Gates et al. 2007; Kazyak, Park, McQuillan and Greil 2014; Riskind and Patterson 2010), I found that gay men and lesbians were less likely to report wanting children as compared

to heterosexual men and women. Using a larger sample than previous studies, my analysis reveals variation in parenting desires within sexual identity groups by gender, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. Moreover, I found variability in sexual minorities' perceived barriers to parenthood, as measured by a discrepancy between their reported parenting desires and intentions. Gay men who reported wanting children appeared to perceive the greatest barriers to achieving their child desires, compared to heterosexual and bisexual men. Lesbian and bisexual women were more likely than heterosexual women to report a discrepancy between their desires and intentions for children, and the association varied further my age. Across sexual identity groups, having higher levels of educational attainment was generally associated with fewer perceived barriers to achieving their parenting desires, though this relationship varied by women's race/ethnicity.

Moreover, Chapter 2 showed the importance of an intersectional approach to evaluate how multiple marginalized identities interconnect to shape sexual minorities' relationships and family lives. Findings contribute to demographic knowledge about the family formation preferences of sexual minorities' preferences related to fertility, childbearing, and raising children. Although the NSFG provides measures of sexual orientation, it does not specifically recognize same-sex relationships. As I recommended above for the ACS, the NSFG should incorporate questions on same-sex and different-sex relationships to account for diverse family forms. Future research should explore how sexual minorities' parenting preferences and the perceived barriers to achieving their child desires change as same-sex relationships continue to gain legal and social support.

In Chapter 3, I used a qualitative approach to examine expectations for future family formation among young gay and bisexual men of color in Los Angeles. Supporting an

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intersectional approach, I found that young men of color with same-sex desire developed preferences and expectations related to future family based on their family backgrounds and existing structural barriers. Most respondents wanted to form long-term relationships and marry, and the majority of respondents wanted to raise children or were open to the idea. Many of these men, however, were aware of the considerable barriers they would face in achieving their future family goals. Based on their multiple marginalized identities, my respondents recognized challenges due to their race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

Perhaps the most notable finding in Chapter 3 is that a considerable portion of the Black and Latino men I studied were willing, and some even preferred or expected, to become single fathers in the future. These men perceived biological and structural barriers to parenthood, given that they cannot bear children and expected to face obstacles to adoption or surrogacy because of their sexual orientation. Some expected that they would experience a smoother pathway to fatherhood if they attempted to adopt as a single man rather than part of a same-sex couple. Moreover, this group of men believed that becoming a single father would be more possible than maintaining a long-term gay relationship or finding a reliable partner to help raise the child. Finally, some of these men acknowledged that their families of origin may be more open to them and their children if they were single fathers, rather than exposing their family of origin to same-sex relationships. This suggests that young gay men of color engage in "moral management" (Ocampo 2014) when developing expectations for future family formation that are more acceptable to their families.

Chapter 3 contributes to a growing literature on the experiences of LGB people of color as they form relationships and form families (e.g., Moore 2011; Ocampo 2012, 2014). Future research could extend this work by more purposively including young sexual minority men of

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varying race/ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds, in order to better understand the interconnected relationships among gender, race, class and sexuality in shaping expectations for future family and in shaping the barriers to achieving desired families. Given that same-sex marriage is legal, future studies could more explicitly examine how access to marriage impacts expectations for future family formation among young sexual minority men, and how these expectations might evolve in the presence of greater legal and social supports for same-sex couples. Finally, future research should further explore the connection between experiences of poor black women (e.g., Edin and Kefalas 2005) and those of poor gay men of color, both of whom tend to view poor men of color as unreliable partners, potentially encouraging them to opt into single parenthood.

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