

## Review Article

# Changes Over the Decades in Selected LGBTQ Research Findings

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**Abstract**

Research has been ongoing regarding homosexuality and same-sex parenting for over fifty years, yet a recent (2020) review of the literature stated that the field was still in its infancy. Here research on same-sex parenting and child outcomes is reviewed, considering how our knowledge base has or has not changed in various topical areas. Consistently, the predominant paradigm has been the “no differences” hypothesis, meaning that there are no differences between same-sex and opposite-sex families, parents, or children. This review finds that population estimates of same-sex families have changed over time and enough empirical evidence has accumulated to challenge the “no differences” paradigm in some areas, while in other areas, the paradigm has held or the available evidence has been mixed.

**INTRODUCTION**

Research on LGBTQ issues cannot be described as “having stood still” over the past fifty years. Huge changes in the quantity and quality of research have occurred, along with similarly dramatic changes in law regarding and social acceptance of LGBTQ persons. After a brief review of some of that history, this report will focus on changes within the area of same-sex/LGBTQ parenting that have occurred over the past fifty years. For a summary of research with LGBTQ individuals, see Schumm [1] and Maher et al., [2]. Space prevents this report from being comprehensive, but I hope to present enough information on changes in research findings to give readers pause about accepting any sense of continuity over that time, at least in some topic areas. A focus will be on a few selected issues, namely the “no-difference” hypothesis, the number of same-sex parents raising children, any tendency for LGBTQ parents to raise LGBTQ children, the stability of same-sex parent relationships, the mental health and related outcomes for children of same-sex parents, and gender role outcomes for children of same-sex parents.

**Overlooked research issues**

Before continuing with this literature review, a few methodological notes are in order. This area has often intersected with law and policy issues, which tend to be binary in outcome (win/lose, approve/disapprove) whereas social science is usually a gray area and not deterministic in real life. Let’s consider military families in which at least one parent has made a career of the military, compared to civilian families in which no parent has done so (we will also assume one child per family). Common

sense (and unpublished research by this author) suggests that the children of military families would be more likely to join the military as adults, a likely association between the military associations of parents and children. What would it take for such a difference to be statistically significant? If we had 20 families in each group, then a 40%/10% outcome would be significant by a Pearson chi-square (4.80,  $p = .028$ ), a one-sided Fisher’s exact test ( $p = .032$ ), a Pearson’s  $r$  (.346,  $p = .029$ , two-tailed), and an odds ratio (6.00,  $p = .040$ , two-sided). Such results would be very unlikely if the null hypothesis or “no difference” hypothesis were true.

However, we might not need a control group to figure this out. If the true probability of a child joining the military was .10 or less, the chances of getting eight binomial “successes”, using a binomial test calculator, would be very low ( $p < .0005$ ). Even if the true probability was as high as .20, the chances of eight successes or more would be low ( $p = .031$ ). Even with such odds, one could *not* say that if a child was from a military family, they were guaranteed to join the military nor could one say that it was guaranteed that no child from a civilian family would ever join the military. Even if the true chance of a child from a civilian family joining the military was only .15, the chances of none of the children from 20 civilian families joining would remain low ( $p = .055$ ). If we had 1,000 civilian families and the true probability of a child joining the military was as small as .01, the chances that none would join up would be trivial ( $p < .00005$ ). The point is that even though statements such as “no child of XYZ parents has ever done XYZ” may sound great for the courtroom or for policy development, they are not scientifically realistic. We will see applications of these probability issues shortly.

## Changes in Research Foci over Time

It is widely recognized that research on same-sex parent families has increased over the past few decades and has gained greater visibility [3]. Research initially tended to compare lesbian parents with heterosexual mothers, sometimes comparing single parents, often mostly White, highly educated mothers. Early on many same-sex families began in the context of a heterosexual divorce but more recent research has tried to focus on families of choice, in which lesbians or gay men have created their own families without an initial heterosexual partnership, often through adoption. Research is also beginning to study bisexual couple families and gay fathers to a greater extent. Research on same-sex families and adoption is increasing since same-sex families may be several times more likely to adopt than heterosexual families [3: 745]. As research expands, it often begins with younger children and only eventually studies adolescent or adult children of a given family type [4]. While older lines of research tend to use larger size samples, newer lines of research often start with small, qualitative studies. Even more recent research has shifted to the experience of trans families and gay fathers using surrogacy as an avenue to becoming parents. In general there has been a call to move away from a defensive position on same-sex parenting to explaining how such families – including gay father, transgender, polyamorous, and bisexual families - develop resilience and provide positive benefits for their children (Lytle, 2019). Ball [5] thinks that future developments will include the abandonment of gender-segregated bathrooms while Fischel [6] argues for the same civil rights for polygamist families as for other families. However much change has been seen, one basic tenet has remained the idea that same-sex families are little or no different from heterosexual families, called the “no-difference” hypothesis (NDH). Another important methodological weakness that has remained over the decades is apparent resistance to complex modeling of potential pathways from parental sexual orientation to child outcomes through mediating or moderating variables. In many ways, parental sexual orientation is a distal variable from overt child outcomes and it could be argued that more proximal intervening process variables might well be more important in predicting child outcomes than more distal demographic factors such as parental sexual orientation; even so, distal factors might have important indirect effects on child outcomes even if direct effects were not significant statistically.

### The “no-difference” hypothesis (NDH)

The “no-difference” hypothesis makes the case that there are no differences at all between same-sex parents and heterosexual parents or between the children of same-sex parents compared to the children of heterosexual parents. I think it’s safe to say that most progressive scholars and scholarly professional organizations have adopted this idea as a basic fact. Fetro and Manning [7-9] recently argued on several occasions for several outcomes of the validity of this hypothesis. Many other scholars have concurred. For example, Cooper and Cates [8: 91] stated that “Among social scientists, whether parental sexual orientation has an impact on children’s development is no longer an open question or a subject of debate. Because a well-developed body of research has answered that question, it is well-settled that children raised by gay parents are just as healthy and well-adjusted as their peers. Indeed, there is consensus among all of

the major professional organizations in the social science fields... that being raised by lesbian or gay parents does not adversely affect children’s development in any way”. A similar quote came from Webb and Chonody [9: 414] who stated that “research has found no emotional, developmental, or social differences between children raised by opposite-sex or same-sex parents”. Ball [10] commented on the apparent inability of conservative scholars to present any evidence contrary to the NDH during major court cases on same-sex marriage. Mason [11: 89] likewise noted the apparent consensus “of the social science literature” that “same-sex marriage and parenting do not harm children”. Garwood and Lewis [4: 593] in a recent review of the literature on adult children of same-sex parents argued for the NDH in terms of multiple outcomes, such as emotional and behavioral adjustment, sexual orientation, stigmatization, gender role behavior, gender identity, or cognitive functioning. Lytle [12: 187, 193] has stated that “There is no empirical support to suggest that LGBT parents are any less suitable than heterosexual parents” pointing out no-difference outcomes for children in terms of a variety of areas. While many advocates [13] were advancing the NDH as factual and irrefutable before public opinion, media, and the courts, some [14] have admitted that scientific consensus could be incorrect, given the possibility of campaigns to promote certain ideas, regardless of the actual evidence for those ideas [15: 21-24]. Bucking the system can be costly for those with enough courage (or foolishness) to try [15: 267-306]. Those who know this author know how things have not gotten better but rather worse since 2018 [15] in terms of ad hominem attacks, most likely related to the political incorrectness and unpopularity of my research, even if disguised in other terms. However, in my book [15] and elsewhere [1,16-19] my research has found problems with the NDH, with some areas in which it is almost certainly invalid and in other areas where the low quality of research regarding it makes conclusions more uncertain than valid. A discussion of some of those concerns follows.

### Number of same-sex parents

As detailed in Schumm, Seay et al. [20], early estimates of the numbers of same-sex parents and their children ranged from seven to twenty-eight million in the United States. Over one hundred legal and scholarly articles accepted such estimates as valid from the late 1980’s into the past decade, even though one of the earliest reports came from a USA Today newspaper article [21]. Only two or three scholars challenged such estimates between 1987 and 2005. Only lately did the Williams Institute [22] estimate that there were only 114,000 intact same-sex couples raising children under the age of 18 in the United States, an estimate even lower than my own of 200,000 parent couples with 400,000 children [15: 73] or that of Fetro and Manning [7: 285] of about a quarter of a million children living in the United States with a same-gender intact couple family. In other words, the estimates of how many same-sex couples were raising children were wildly exaggerated for decades, until relatively recent estimates were far lower.

### Sexual Orientation of Children of LGBTQ Parents

Dozens of scholars and legal experts have gone to great lengths to deny any association between parental sexual orientation and children’s sexual orientations [15: 113-118]. As early as 1975 Riley [23] argued in favor of the “no-differences”

hypothesis in this area. Such arguments have continued to recent times. For example, Golombok [24: 68] reported that the idea that children brought up by lesbian mothers would themselves grow up to be lesbian or gay was “not supported by the evidence”. Patterson and Farr [25: 131] concluded likewise. Goldberg and Sweeney (3: 751) supported the “no-differences” hypothesis in terms of sexual orientation identity while admitting to some differences among children in terms of other aspects of sexual orientation or behavior. Clarke [26] saw the problem not of gay parents encouraging their children to be gay but of heterosexual parents suppressing their children’s homosexual potential with compulsory heterosexuality (15: 115). Not only was the “no-differences” hypothesis supported in this area; some scholars even decried any other idea as “delusional” (27: 5) or a “myth” (28: 384). I was able to list over 150 scholarly statements in support of the “no-differences” hypothesis here [1]. My own review of 72 literature reviews between 2001 and 2017 found that over 90% of those reviews concluded in favor of the NDH and the few that did not support it, usually cited only one or two articles that might have reported contrary results [29,30]. Most recently, Garwood and Lewis stated that no more than a minority of the adult children of same-sex parents would identify as LGBTQ [4: 592]. The rare scholars who challenged this were hit hard with harsh criticism, even failure to attain tenure. When I first determined that in one study the daughters of lesbian mothers were more likely to engage in same-sex sexual behavior even if they were not same-sex attracted [31], few noticed. However, when I published a report contrary to the “no-difference” hypothesis in 2010 [32], there was intense internet criticism. Upon publishing an entire chapter on research contradicting the “no-differences” hypothesis in this area using 12 studies comparing at least 20 children of LGBTQ parents with at least 20 children of heterosexual parents, and 19 studies without heterosexual comparison groups [15: 113-138], criticism increased, leading ultimately to my early retirement. Adding more recent studies [33,34] would increase that latter number to 21. Space does not permit a detailed review of all of these 30+ studies, but some are especially notable. Zweig [35] compared the two groups of children and found rates of 57.5% versus 3.9% of non-heterosexuality. Sirota [36] found that daughters of gay fathers were more likely to identify as lesbian or bisexual (34.3%) than were a comparison group of daughters of heterosexual fathers (3.0%). Golombok and Tasker’s [37] study found that the children of lesbian mothers were more likely to have considered possibly having a same-sex romantic relationship (63.4%) than were children of heterosexual single mothers (16.7%). Murray and McClintock [38] found that 39% of the children of LGB parents were LGB themselves compared to none of the children of their comparison group with heterosexual parents. You might notice that most of those studies have seldom been cited, probably due to their inconvenient findings [39]. Most recently, Gartrell, Bos, and Koh [40] found that nearly 69% of the daughters of lesbian mothers reported lesbian or bisexual attractions, 54% same-sex sexual behavior, and 30% a lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation identity; respective percentages for sons were 27%, 10%, and 33%. The rates for the children of lesbian mothers were reported as significantly higher than for a comparison group of children of heterosexual parents. Easterbrook [34] found that 65.5% of the children of LGBTQ parents were identified by their parents as LGBTQ. Thus, there is increasing evidence that the NDH is not

correct in this area, despite decades of arguments to the contrary, which represents a dramatic change in research conclusions over time. If there really were no differences in an adult child’s sexual orientation as a function of their parents’ sexual orientations, one would not expect to see percentages of LGBTQ children (of same-sex parents) ranging as high as 35%-65% unless heterosexual parents were having nonheterosexual children at nearly as high rates as well. The dilemma is that either heterosexual parents are having LGBTQ children at similarly high rates (so that there are no differences in rates) or if they are not having LGBTQ children at similar rates (e.g., 10-15%), then the differences between the children of the different groups of parents would more likely be statistically significant in terms of those differences, assuming medium to large sample sizes ( $N > 50$ ).

### Gender Identity

Golombok echoed many other scholars, stating that “in all the studies conducted so far, not one child with gender identity disorder has been identified” [24:68]. Trub et al. [41:703] have argued that there is no relationship between same-sex parenting and children’s gender identities, even though some may make negative assumptions that they could be related. However, Sarantakos [42] reported that teachers found the children of gay and lesbian parents to be “more confused about their gender” [43:26] with, in another study [44], finding that about half of gay men and lesbians felt like they were in the wrong gendered body (which might confuse their children). In my summary of six studies, I found a rate of transgender children of about eleven percent, much higher than for heterosexual parents [15:139-143]. Easterbrook [34:43] found that of 91 parents reporting on the gender identity of their children, 8.8% indicated that their children were not cisgender. The chances of getting eight or more non-cisgender children from 91 families are very low, even if the true probabilities were as low as .01 ( $p < .000005$ ), .02 ( $p < .0005$ ), .03 ( $p < .007$ ), .04 ( $p < .03$ ) or even .05 ( $p < .09$ ). In other words, 8.8% should grab one’s attention due to its low probability of happening aside from notable true probabilities (i.e., the chances of LGBTQ parents having a transgender child being likely to be .05 or greater). Nonetheless, there are far too few studies in this area; more research is needed before drawing much in the way of definitive conclusions. However, at the same time, I don’t think the NDH hypothesis looks tenable from the limited data available so far; at the very least, the idea that no research has ever discovered non- cisgender children among the children of LGBTQ parents [24] has been proven incorrect.

### Gender Roles

Most scholars have supported the NDH here. Patterson stated that “the overall findings suggest that children of lesbian mothers develop patterns of gender-role behavior that are much like those of other children” [45: 669]. Golombok stated that “research on this aspect of gender development has shown girls to be no less feminine, and boys to be no less masculine, than girls and boys from heterosexual homes” [24:68], which fit her conclusions for gay fathers as well as lesbian mothers [24:191] and which she reiterated recently [46: 77]. Many other scholars have reached the same conclusions [15:145] with only a few feeling that same-sex parents might accept less rigid gender role stereotypes among their children [3:750;15:146]. However, Martin-Storey and August [47] assessed the masculinity and femininity of 251

college students as a function of gender and sexual orientation, finding that heterosexual men rated themselves higher on masculinity and lower on femininity than did gay men with opposite findings for heterosexual women and lesbians, lesbians rating themselves higher on masculinity and lower on femininity [15:153]. It might be difficult to expect such differences among parents to not carry over to their children at least some of the time. Golombok et al., acknowledged that children with same-sex parents might “show less sex-typed behavior than children with heterosexual parents” [48:456]. Elsewhere, I have reviewed several studies that found such an effect [15: 146-156;43,49-52]. However, one recent study found mixed and small effects [53]. Other studies have found that same-sex parents may deliberately discourage gender role stereotypes among their children by their own attitudes and even the child’s bedroom décor. The challenge is determining if such differences represent gender role flexibility or more radical gender role changes. On that, the evidence is mixed, with some effects being in a smaller range ( $d < .30$ ) of effect sizes with other effects being larger ( $d > .50$ ). When the ranges of gender role scores have been reported [15:150], some of the children of same-sex parents have scored to such an extreme, one might wonder if they were transgender. As with mental health outcomes among transgender children [52], in some cases, effects of parental sexual orientation on children’s gender roles may be seen in relative rates of extreme outcomes rather than in mere averages.

### Mental Health

Here again, many scholars have argued for the “no-differences” hypothesis. Even though they acknowledged a relative lack of empirical evidence, Maher et al. concluded that the “children of same-sex couples are as psychologically healthy as the larger population” [2:943]. Golombok has stated that “With respect to psychological adjustment, not a single study has shown that children raised by lesbian mothers are more at risk for emotional or behavioural problems than are peers from heterosexual homes” [24:66]. Ball affirmed that “studies show no association between parental sexual orientation and children’s psychological adjustment and social functioning” [10:94]. Patterson and Goldberg not only concurred but claimed that those who disagreed with the “no-differences” theme had “been discredited by reputable scholars and by major scientific organizations” [54,55:2]. Judge Vaughn Walker in Perry concluded that “Children raised by gay or lesbian parents are as likely as children raised by heterosexual parents to be healthy, successful and well-adjusted. The research supporting this conclusion is accepted beyond serious debate in the field of developmental psychology” [42:1]. One court found that the “no-differences” hypothesis here was “so far beyond dispute that it would be irrational to hold otherwise” [19: 667; 56: 240]. Ball [57] opined that support for the “no-differences” idea was so scientifically supported that it was irrational, indefensible, and practically unconstitutional to think otherwise. Goldberg and Sweeney reaffirmed the “no-differences” hypothesis in terms of self-esteem, quality of life, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and social functioning [3: 749]. While many other scholars agreed [15: 165-168], Mezey went further, saying that the children of LGBT parents “fare better in terms of mental health than children with heterosexual parents” [58: 64], as did

Bosisio and Ronfani who stated that children of same-sex parents “show fewer social and behavioural problems than their peers who have grown up in heterosexual parent families” [59: 455].

A few scholars have called for deeper research into this area [60: 364]. One reviewer of Schumm [19] appreciated my effort to look “behind the research curtain” here. I agree with the no-differences hypothesis when one only considers the self-reports of same-sex parents, rather than data from independent observers (e.g., teachers) or from children themselves. Several researchers have acknowledged the issue of social desirability in parent self-reports [15: 169; 18: 40]. Almost no studies have measured or controlled for social desirability response bias in this area of study. Some studies have found mixed results, but I will present clear-cut results that should not exist if the no-difference hypothesis had absolutely no support in the literature.

Tan and Baggerly [61] in a sample of 733 adopted children found that the preschool children of lesbian mothers scored less well on internalizing problems ( $d = .37$ ), externalizing problems ( $d = .33$ ), aggressive behaviors ( $d = .80$ ), being withdrawn ( $d = .80$ ), and for emotional reactivity ( $d = .47$ ) compared to children with heterosexual parents; for older children, they found similar adverse results for internalizing problems ( $d = .44$ ), externalizing problems ( $d = .66$ ), social problems ( $d = .37$ ), thought problems ( $d = .72$ ), attention problems ( $d = .39$ ), and combined problems ( $d = .49$ ). While few of those results were significant statistically, they represented medium to large effect sizes. Sullins [62, 63] in an analysis of ADD HEALTH data found that as of WAVE IV, adolescents with same-sex parents had higher rates of depression ( $d = .85$ ), suicidal ideation ( $d = .97$ ), obesity ( $d = .84$ ), greater distance from one or both parents ( $d = .71$ ), and perceived stigma ( $d = 1.17$ ), all significant, although when he controlled for 12 variables with his 20 children of same-sex parents, the parental sexual orientation variable became non-significant. Several studies have found higher rates of illegal drug use among children of same-sex parents; Goldberg, Bos, and Gartrell [64] found a 60% rate among children of lesbian mothers versus 21% for heterosexual mothers ( $d = .89$ , a large effect size). Two studies found that children of heterosexual parents rated themselves higher on cognitive and physical competence than did children of lesbian parents ( $.14 \leq d \leq .94$ ) [15: 174]. Sullins [63] found that children from same-sex families had higher rates of conduct problems ( $d = .53$ ). Tasker and Golombok [65] found higher rates of high risk sexual behavior among their children of lesbian mothers [15: 178]. Reczek et al. [66] found that same-sex parents rated their children as less well-behaved ( $d = .41$ ) and later, Reczek et al. [67] found that the children of same-sex parents had more emotional difficulties than children from heterosexual families. Sirota [35] found that 78% of the daughters of gay fathers compared to 44% of daughters with heterosexual fathers reported problems with insecure attachment ( $d = .72$ ) or feeling uncomfortable with close relationships (44%/12%,  $d = .75$ ). Vanfraussen et al. [68] found that teachers of children rated the adjustment of lesbians’ children lower than that of heterosexuals’ children ( $d = .52$ ). Gartrell, Bos, and Koh [69] found adverse rates of depression and related measures in their study ( $.22 \leq d \leq .46$ ) for adult children of lesbian mothers. The point is that there are quite a few studies whose results contradict the “no-differences” hypothesis, most of which feature results unfavorable to

children from same-sex parent families. While research has been consistent over the decades with respect to lesbian mothers' reports of their children, reports from the children or their teachers have, at least some of the time, yielded results that were less optimistic than those usually reported by lesbian mothers. A more detailed discussion is available elsewhere [15, 16, 19] for issues relating to gay fathers or transgender children [54].

### Parental Stability

Most scholars accept the theory that parental relationship stability (assuming a non-conflictual relationship) is beneficial for their children [70: 657] and that parental instability is not [71]. That may be why Kurdek stated that "perhaps the most important 'bottom-line' question asked about gay and lesbian couples is whether their relationships last" [72: 252]. Thus, it was not surprising that Justice Kennedy in the *Obergefell* decision argued that marriage would afford "the permanency and stability important to children's best interests" [73: 307, 310]. Finding answers has not seemed to be easy in this area. Ball [74: 726] claimed that there was not any study available that compared the stability of lesbian versus heterosexual parents while Peplau and Fingerhut said that "we currently know little about the longevity of same-sex relationships" [75: 412]. As late as 2015, one scholar reported that there remained little research on the stability of same-sex relationships [58: 105]. Goldberg and Sweeney stated that "Studies of relationship dissolution in LG parent families are rare, but they suggest similar rates of dissolution across family types" [3: 749].

With an apparent lack of research, scholars turned to theoretical arguments. Rohrbaugh [76: 471], Goldberg [77: 26] and Joyner, Manning, and Bogle [78] argued that lesbian couple parent relationships should be more stable than heterosexual ones, because of women having better interpersonal skills than men. Many other scholars [46: 78, 79] accepted the idea of "no-difference" here; for example, Cooper and Cates stated that "Not a single study has found anything unstable about the families created by lesbian and gay parents" [8:87]. In the case of *Perry vs. Schwarzenegger*, one prominent scholar argued that opposite-sex and same-sex couples were no different in terms of relationship instability [29: 71].

To be fair, some scholars noticed instances in research where same-sex couples seemed to have higher rates of instability (e.g., 80: 177; 81-86] but differences were usually deemed to be slight. But Schumm [19] found studies featuring substantial differences with respect to instability/break-ups for parents, including relative rates of 39% versus 6% over seven years [87,88], 43% versus 13% over six years [51], 48% versus 30% over ten years [89], and 56% versus 36% over seventeen years [90: 1201]. Potter and Potter [91] seemed to have found instability rates, over about 6 years, of 69% for gay and lesbian parents versus 43% for heterosexual couples with children. In Norway, Wiik et al. [92] found break-up rates over ten years of 37% for lesbians, 30% for gay men, and 20% for heterosexual couples (all starting in formal legally recognized unions there). Koh, Bos, and Gartrell [93] found a break-up rate of more than 62% over 25 years for their sample of lesbian parent couples. Studies without heterosexual comparison groups have found high rates

of instability for lesbian parents, even higher than for gay male parents [15: 79-81]. Gates concluded, contrary to most previous scholars, that "I argue that the research on same-sex parenting is remarkably consistent. It shows that children raised by same-sex couples experience some disadvantages relative to children raised by different-sex married parents. But the disadvantages are largely explained by differences in the experiences of family stability between the two groups" [94: 74]. Gates' concern may be why Rosenfeld [95] controlled for parental instability when further analyzing Regnerus's [16, 96, 97, 98] data. Some have suggested that lesbian couples have lower thresholds for breaking up [99] or have relationships based on freedom rather than commitment [100]. Green [101] found examples of lesbians wanting to get married in order to have more freedom to engage in sexual liaisons outside of their primary one, due to the extra security afforded by marriage. In contrast, I doubt that many heterosexual women would "buy" into the idea that their husbands were eager to marry them so they could have the extra security to engage immediately in extramarital sexual liaisons with other women (or men).

The Rosenfeld [102] study was cited during the *Obergefell* trial as evidence that same-sex relationships had similar stability rates among couples who felt they were married. However, when Allen and Price [103,104] took a new look at Rosenfeld's [102] data, they found that break-up rates over five waves of the study were not largely different between couples in a formal union who had no children (9.4% vs. 4.9%, same-sex vs. heterosexual) but for those couples with children, the break-up rates were much more disparate (43% vs. 8%). According to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell* one might have expected that the difference for parents in informal unions would have been larger than for those in formal unions – and it was – for heterosexual parents (45.9% vs. 8% break-ups) but not much different for same-sex parents (47.8% vs. 43%). In another data set, Allen and Price [102] found greater discrepancies for parents (16% vs. 1%, same-sex vs. heterosexual) than for non-parent couples (10% vs. 2%) and then 22% vs. 11% (parents) and 27% vs. 17% (non-parents) in a second data set. These apparent interaction effects between parental sexual orientation and the presence of children were found to be statistically significant. In summary, adding children to the family tended to increase the stability of heterosexual couples but tended to decrease the stability of same-sex couples. There is some small degree of evidence that marriage may not increase stability for same-sex couples with children, although it appears to do so for heterosexual couples; more future research is needed to confirm that possible interaction effect.

### Other Topics

Space precludes addressing other topics related to same-sex parenting, including parental sexual abuse of children [15: 91-97], values of same-sex parents [15: 99-105], educational attainment of children of same-sex parents [15: 174-177], teasing and bullying victimization [3: 751-752], division of household labor among same-sex couples [3: 746, 99], intersectionality issues [30], or the legal/health/media contextual influences on same-sex families [3: 733-734], among others.

## CONCLUSION

It's remarkable after more than 50 years of research on homosexuality and LGBT relationships; it can still be said in a major review of the literature that "Research on LGBT parents is in its infancy" [104: 2]. However, rarely do scholars acknowledge that there might be alternatives to the "no differences" theory; diverse families do not necessarily equate to deficits, but many scholars have been fearful of the political consequences of recognizing many aspects of family diversity. When there are apparent problems, hiding from those problems is not being helpful to families in need and will only delay implementation of support services to assist families. In some area of same-sex parenting results are consistent over several decades (e.g., lesbian mothers rate their children favorably). In other areas, research is increasingly suggesting genuine differences among families (parental stability, parental effects on child sexual orientation), while in some areas the evidence remains mixed (parental effects on gender roles of children). Research is indicating far fewer children being raised by intact, stable same-sex couples than had been reported in the last century but still a rather large number of children being raised by single LGBT parents or having been raised in the past by LGBT parents. My hope is that scholars will feel more comfortable dealing with such changes (even if they are not comfortable with this author!) so they can continue to advance our growing knowledge in this arena, so perhaps we can escape the "infancy" [99] stage of this field of knowledge more quickly.

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