The Bisexual Parent Advantage:
How Bisexual Parents Overcome Stigma and Excel at Parenting

By

ROWAN HAUS
DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Sociology

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

Approved:

Laura Grindstaff, Chair

Maxine Craig

Chris Smith

Committee in Charge

2023

Abstract

Bisexual parents tend to be categorized as either straight, lesbian, or gay depending on the gender of their relationships, supporting the assumption that bisexuality has no impact on parenting. The present study examines bisexual parents separately from their non-bisexual peers to understand how bisexuals might parent differently. In particular, this project investigates how bisexual parents navigate conversations about sexuality with their children, given that a parent's bisexuality is rarely obvious. This project employs a mixed-method approach, using both survey and interview data. The sample contains 6,638 survey respondents and 103 interviewees. The majority of interviewees identify as bisexual parents (n=71), although gay (n=8), lesbian (n=13), and straight (n=9) parents, as well as two adult children of parents, are included for comparison. Closed survey questions were coded primarily for descriptive statistics. Open-ended survey questions and interview transcripts were coded using grounded theory to identify emergent themes as they unfolded.

The majority of bisexual parents in the sample desired conversations about bisexuality with their children, though they often reported feeling lost about how best to have these conversations given the lack of representation of bisexuality in media and parenting resources. Typically, parents used a child-centered approach, prioritizing concerns for their children's development and decentering themselves in conversations about bisexuality. When asked how their parenting compared to the parenting of non-bisexuals, bisexuals insisted that they were more open-minded and better prepared for conversations about sexuality and gender with their children. Bisexual parents explained that their experiences being marginalized by both straight and lesbian/gay communities enabled them to better empathize with their children no matter how their children identified in terms of sexuality or gender. When comparing bisexual parents'

opinions toward various topics to the opinions of lesbian, gay, and straight parents, bisexual parents were particularly more open-minded toward their children's bisexual and transgender identities. This phenomenon is referred to as the "Bisexual Parent Advantage." When analyzing parents' responses by gender, this study reveals that men were less likely to talk openly to their children about bisexuality compared to women. Bisexual men tended to focus solely on the physicality of their attraction, which often led them to feel less comfortable talking to their children about their bisexuality. In contrast, bisexual women described their bisexuality as a romantic rather than sexual identity, leading them to talk to children of all ages about their bisexuality. Differences in gender are linked to hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, suggesting that bisexual men may be more invested in describing their bisexuality in non-romantic terms in order to maintain masculine expectations of fatherhood, and bisexual women may describe their bisexuality as a romantic identity in order to distance themselves from non-feminine stereotypes of hypersexuality.

This research has three major academic implications: (1) I demonstrate that bisexuals experience systemic erasure and stigma which separates them from gays or straights and incentivizes studying their unique experiences further; (2) I complicate the popular narrative in LGBTQ+ parenting research that the gender of parents "matters," in favor of a more complex analysis aligned with feminist standpoint theory which considers not just gender, but also the impact of experiences with oppression or marginalization on parenting practices; and (3) By highlighting the diversity of opinions and experiences within a large group of bisexual parents, I showcase a need for conducting more intersectional research in the sociologies of sexuality, gender, and family. This research also provides justification for federal protections of LGBTQ+ adoption and foster care.

Acknowledgements

Above all, I am grateful to the parents who volunteered their time and vulnerability for this project. I encouraged my participants to be deeply introspective, sometimes inspiring them to examine painful or difficult feelings and experiences. I do not take for granted that my participants shared their stories with me. I am particularly appreciative of the bisexual parents in my sample who trusted me even when it felt unsafe to confide in anyone else. I am honored to hold space for you. Thank you also to the larger community of bisexual activists who are working tirelessly to advocate for bisexual representation in academia and beyond. Being out as bisexual in 2023 feels palpably different than being out as bisexual felt when I started this project in 2016, and I am so proud to be a part of the community pushing for that change.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my faculty mentors. My chair, Laura Grindstaff, provided thoughtful feedback and encouragement every step of the way. I could always rely on her to point me in the right direction when I felt overwhelmed by my data, or when I needed help anchoring myself in theory. She no doubt made me a better writer through her careful reading of my work. Chris Smith provided me with invaluable hands-on support throughout my entire graduate career. When I felt totally lost as a first-year graduate student, she taught me to take small, measurable steps which made my academic goals feel remarkably more achievable. And when I was overwhelmed with anxiety at the prospect of taking my qualifying exams, she comfortingly assured me that I was already an expert in my field. Maxine Craig provided brilliant, essential feedback on intersectionality and feminist theory throughout my dissertation which greatly improved the final product. And I am so grateful to Erin Hamilton for her guidance specifically related to my survey research. When I started this project, I felt very uncomfortable with quantitative methods—But Erin made me feel

like my project was possible; and when I published my first article, she celebrated me and encouraged me to pursue my survey research even further. Thank you also to Elizabeth Culatta and Patricia Richards who first ignited my passion in sociology and feminist theory when I was an undergraduate at the University of Georgia.

A big thank you to my research assistants: Jadelynn Alboro, Cianna Book, Benjamin Freed, Hajiran Rehman, Angela Aragon, Anoushka Sharma, Julia Hagelberg, Kit Lee, Kevin Kwon, Phung Pham… and especially Davenna Morales, Mariann Lactaoen, Natalie Ottoboni, and Caroline Wolski. When I hired research assistants for this project, I never expected to develop such a productive, tight-knit community like this. Even when I ran out of funding, my research assistants continued working on this project with me, purely out of passion and commitment to the project's goal of increasing the representation of bisexuality in sociological research. It has been such a pleasure to watch all of them graduate and advance in their respective careers. I am thrilled to still be working with this group, even as the dynamic and focus of our work shifts. I also want to thank the American Institute of Bisexuality for providing me with funding to support my research assistants and the project as a whole.

I must end by sharing my deep appreciation for my chosen family. When I moved to Davis, I never expected that my fellow graduate students would become my closest friends. So many little things needed to fall into place for me to wind up here at the same time as Alana, Lyss, Ori, and Ellie—and I cannot imagine a better set of people to go through this process with. They have encouraged me intellectually as I tackled this project; but more importantly, they have added joy and purpose to my life. I am also indebted to my sweet friends Ari, Gillian, and Kristin for reminding me that there is a light at the other end of this proverbial grad school tunnel. The past seven years have certainly not been the easiest—but with love and support from my friends

(and therapists!), they have no doubt been the best years of my life. And finally, a big thank you to my partner, Myles, who has spent many hours listening to me ramble about this project, and who has lovingly nudged me to slow down and celebrate my success along the way.

This dissertation is dedicated to my very first bisexual role model, Sam, and their marvelous wife, Rese. They have provided me with unwavering validation, tenderness, and acceptance as I have grown from a "baby bisexual" to somewhat of a "bisexual expert." And during one the most challenging times in my life, they chose to share a surname with me. I am so proud to be their kin.

Table of Contents

Introduction: (How) Does the Bisexuality of Parents Matter?

Bette is a 39-year-old mother. She and her husband, Dennis, have been in a relationship for nearly two decades. Together, they have two children: an 11-year-old son and an 8-year-old daughter. Bette spends most of her time working at a reproductive rights nonprofit and driving her children across town to theatre rehearsals, hip hop classes, and renaissance fairs. Dennis, meanwhile, is busy attending his nursing classes and managing his *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign. As a family, they love watching *Bob's Burgers*, and together they attend a Unitarian Universalist church. From the outside, Bette and Dennis seem to be a typical American family. But in actuality, Bette and Dennis are both bisexual.

Bette describes their relationship as "stealthy." People meeting Bette and Dennis for the first time tend to assume that they are both straight. However, upon getting to know their children, it is clear that their bisexual identities play a central role in their family. For instance, their daughter recently was disciplined at school for teaching her peers about LGBTQ+ identities (she attends a school that prohibits talking about LGBTQ+ topics). Bette explains that she knows her life would be different if she were married to a woman. People in her Northeastern town are not generally accepting of same-gender couples, and Bette recognizes her privilege in numerous ways. For example, her children's school forms ask for signatures from a "mother and father," rather than using gender-neutral terminology like "parent" or "guardian." In spite of their ability to blend in and live stealthily, Bette feels that her and her husband's bisexuality largely influences the ways that they parent their children.

Typically, when arguing for or against non-heterosexual marriage or parenting, academics use the terms "gay," "LGBTQ," and "queer" interchangeably to refer to individuals in same-gender relationships (e.g., Ammaturo 2019; Bernstein 2015; Garbagnoli 2016). These scholars

often create a false binary between LGBTQ+ people in same-gender relationships and everyone else who is implied to be heterosexual. For example, in discussing the Vatican's arguments against LGBTQ+ parents, Garbagnoli (2016) wrote,

> Rather than claiming the inferiority of LGBTQ people, [the Vatican] shifts to the notion of 'natural family' understood as the bedrock of humanity. Following this logic, if the 'natural family' exists and it is the conjugal heterosexual one, the child becomes the innocent victim of the hedonism and egoism of LGBTQ individuals (197).

The acronym LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) implies the inclusion of gay as well as bisexual people in opposition to the "natural family." Yet bisexuals are, by definition, capable of entering relationships with people of their own and different genders. In arguments for and against LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) parenting, it is generally unclear whether having an LGB identity renders bisexual parents like Bette and Dennis similar or different to lesbian and gay parents. But when it comes to actual critiques for and against LGB parenting, most arguments centralize a discussion of gender. In particular, people against LGB parenting assume that children need both a mother and a father (e.g., Garbagnoli 2016), and people in favor of LGB parenting assume that two mothers parent better than a mother and father (Biblarz and Stacey 2010).

In efforts to counter harmful misinformation about LGB parents and advocate for equal parenting rights, sociologists studying LGB parenthood tend to focus on lesbian and gay parents in same gender relationships (e.g., Stacey and Biblarz 2001). This is because anti-LGB parenting rhetoric often criticizes LGB parents on the basis of the gender of their relationships. However, the absence of bisexual representation in LGB parenting research is an unintended consequence of this focus. Research tends to operate under the assumption that bisexuals will parent similarly

to lesbian, gay, or straight parents depending on the gender composition of their relationships (Bowling, Dodge, and Bartelt 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013). In this dissertation, I focus on the experiences of bisexual parents in a variety of different relationship types, and I complicate the assumption that the gender of one's relationship is far more impactful than how one personally identifies when it comes to parenting. Using survey data from 4,674 respondents and interview data from 103 interviewees, I find that bisexual identity impacts parenting in a number of ways, regardless of the gender composition of parents' romantic relationships.

In this introduction to my dissertation, I define bisexuality and ground my motivations for studying bisexual parents in prior work on sexuality and parenting. I then outline my mixed-methodology and summarize the subsequent chapters of my dissertation.

WHAT IS BISEXUALITY?

Broadly speaking, bisexuality is defined as a sexual or romantic attraction to more than one gender. Among my sample, some parents define their bisexuality using a binary understanding of gender, such as Millie, a 26-year-old Puerto Rican cisgender woman who explains she is "romantically and sexually interested in both men and women." Whereas others define their bisexuality to explicitly include trans/nonbinary genders, such as Puck, a 38-year-old White transgender man, who says, "I'm attracted to both men and women as well as nonbinary individuals outside of that gender-binary that we use in the US." And many describe their bisexuality with even broader language, such as Jacy, a 38-year-old White cisgender woman, who says, "I am attracted to folks of any and all genders," and Ricky, a 33-year-old mixed-race genderfluid person who defines bisexuality as "being sexually and romantically attracted to one's own gender and others." While there is nuance regarding exactly who a bisexual person may be attracted to, consensus supports a general definition of bisexuality as multigender attraction.

Though seemingly a straight-forward sexual orientation, bisexuality is the focus of much debate and controversy. Many people argue that bisexuality is not even real. For instance, Sarah, a 38-year-old Latinx cisgender lesbian whom I interviewed for this project, explains, "People who claim to be bisexual… I don't think they truly represent what it means." This denial of bisexuality is a symptom of *bisexual erasure*, a concept developed by Yoshino (2000) to explain the reality that many lesbian, gay, and straight individuals simply do not believe that a bisexual identity is possible. Yoshino (2000) explained that both lesbians/gays and straight people are invested in a sexual binary because the existence of this binary allows them to feel secure in their own sexual identities. In denying bisexuality's existence, monosexuals (people who are attracted to only one gender) experience less pressure to prove the validity of their own sexuality. Consequentially, bisexuality is underrepresented in media and research, and the little representation of bisexuality that does exist tends to be riddled with negative stereotypes (Dyar and Feinstein 2018).

Typically, bisexuals are stigmatized as untrustworthy, promiscuous, non-monogamous, mentally unstable, and even transphobic (Dyar and Feinstein 2018; Joyner 2016). Many of the bisexuals in my sample have encountered these stereotypes firsthand. For example, James, a 56-year-old White cisgender father says he often talks to people who assume that "bisexuals can't be trusted. They can't be committed to the same relationship." Similarly, Shay, a 19-year-old White bigender bisexual parent, worries that their bisexual identity will lead people to criticize their parenting. They explain the harmful stereotypes they have encountered as a bisexual femme parent: "Oh bisexual women and femmes… they're slutty, so you can't trust them… Since they're slutty, they must be bad with kids, and they can't be good parents." And Scott, a 32-year-

old White transgender man, talks about how bisexual erasure and stigma prevented him from identifying with the bisexual label when he was younger. He says,

> I thought of being bisexual as a fence-sitter identity. I wanted to commit. I had a lot of stereotypes that I believed… [For example] that bisexual people were really one or the other… That bisexual girls were doing it for attention, or that somehow their identity was inauthentic.

The belief that bisexuals are fence-sitters or claiming the identity for attention stems from bisexual erasure which posits that bisexuality is not a real identity.

Interestingly, some people are contradictorily invested in the idea that actually everyone is bisexual. For example, Charlotte, a 31-year-old White bisexual cisgender woman tells me that "everybody's bisexual," explaining that if people were more open-minded, everyone would recognize their own multigender attraction. And some researchers have even attempted to prove that everyone is bisexual through reporting straight and gay men's genital arousal to stimuli of different genders (Chivers 2017; Reiger, Chivers, and Bailey 2005). Of course, this research is controversial—both because it implies that gay people can comfortably choose to pursue straight relationships, and because it devalues the experiences of bisexuals who must fight for their unique experiences to be recognized. In my own research, I operate under the assumption that bisexuality does indeed exist. However, I choose only to focus on individuals who actually identify as bisexual, rather than adhering to the aforementioned research which suggests that everyone is bisexual. In doing so, I argue throughout this dissertation that people who identify with the bisexual label have unique experiences worth understanding which are distinguishable from the experiences of people who identify as lesbian, gay, or straight.

In this dissertation, I define *bisexuality* as a romantic and/or sexual attraction to more than one gender. Given the broad scope of this definition, I use bisexuality as an umbrella term which also encompasses pansexuality. In my sample, many parents use the terms "bisexual" and "pansexual" interchangeably. *Pansexuality*, which is often defined as an attraction to people regardless of gender, is more commonly adopted by young people and transgender people (Morandini, Blaszczynski, and Dar-Nimrod 2017). Pansexual people often explain that gender is irrelevant to how they experience attraction, such as Henny, a 33-year-old cisgender Mestiza who explains, "My [pansexual] attraction is not limited or defined by gender." In contrast, bisexual people often express gendered preferences—such as Whitney, a 59-year-old White cisgender woman, who says, "I'm like 75 percent attracted to men, 25 percent attracted to women." People often assume that the bisexual label does not encompass attraction to transgender or nonbinary people because of the bi- prefix, but my own research suggests that bisexuals often do express attraction to transgender and nonbinary people when explaining their sexuality. In my interviews for this dissertation, I met many bisexuals who explicitly define their bisexual attraction as inclusive of transgender and nonbinary genders, often acknowledging that others might use the pansexual label to describe them. Florence, a 28-year-old mixed race cisgender woman explains, "The way I would define it [bisexuality] is probably close to the Internet term for pansexual, which is that I define my basis of liking someone based on their personality and not their gender." As such, I use the bisexual label throughout this dissertation to inclusively refer to anyone who identifies with multigender attraction—however, when referring to specific individuals, I use whichever term they prefer to describe their own sexuality.

SEXUALITY AND PARENTING

Symptomatic of bisexual erasure, bisexuals are rarely the focus of social science research (Ross and Dobinson 2013). Instead, bisexuals tend to be categorized in research as straight, lesbian, or gay depending on the gender dynamics of their romantic relationships (Bowling et al. 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013). As a result, parenting research is one of many areas where bisexuality is underrepresented. In contrast, lesbian, gay, and straight identities are often central to analyses in parenting scholarship (e.g., Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Stacey and Biblarz 2001). In the following section, I briefly summarize the extensive research on lesbian, gay, and straight parents. Then, I introduce the limited body of work on bisexual parenting. Using this research, I argue that bisexuality has a significant impact on parenting, and I provide justification for the focus of this dissertation.

Sexuality emerged as a salient identity in parenting research as discussions of the legalization of same-sex marriage progressed (e.g., Stacey and Biblarz 2001). Given this context, much of the research on sexuality and parenting compares the outcomes of children raised by gay versus straight parents. The vast majority of this research concludes that lesbians and gays parent differently, but not worse, than straight parents (e.g., Stacey and Biblarz 2001). In fact, researchers often report that lesbians and gays offer their children unique advantages, making their parenting potentially better than straight parenting. For example, lesbians and gays seem to have better relationships with their children compared to straight parents (Crowl, Ahn, and Baker 2008). Children of lesbians and gays score higher on measures of psychological, behavioral, and academic well-being compared to children of straight parents (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Crouch et al. 2014; Gartrell and Bos 2010). And lesbian and gay parents tend to spend more time with their children and show more warmth and affection toward their children (Biblarz and Savci 2010).

Lesbian parents in particular are found at an advantage, with researchers concluding that two mothers parent better than one mother and one father (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Biblarz and Stacey (2010) explained that straight fathers tend to perform the worst on measurements of parenting skills and investment, meaning that children of straight parents may be worse off. Finally, research suggests that lesbian mothers are particularly open-minded toward their children's gender transgressions (Sutfin et al. 2007), and lesbian mothers are more likely to teach their children about diverse sexual orientations (Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011).

Research on sexuality and parenting also highlights that straight parents are particularly invested in encouraging their children's heterosexuality. Martin (2009) found that straight mothers assumed their children to be straight and used a variety of strategies to normalize heterosexuality while making lesbian and gay identities invisible. Straight fathers also play a crucial role in normalizing heterosexuality for their children (Bucher 2014; Kane 2006). Although mothers are often responsible for talking to their children about sexuality (e.g., Baldwin and Barnoski 1990; El S-Shaieb and Wurtele 2009), Kane (2006) found that straight fathers were even more likely to normalize heterosexuality for their children. Both mothers and fathers seem to be more invested in their sons' performances of heterosexuality than in their daughters'. Kane (2006) attributed this to hegemonic masculinity, explaining that straight fathers who subscribe to hegemonic masculinity viewed homosexuality as less masculine and, therefore, worse than heterosexuality. Masculinity is more valued than femininity, so while sons are taught to keep up with masculine ideals, daughters are encouraged by their straight parents to challenge (some) gender norms. In contrast, gay fathers are less likely to teach their children that heteronormativity is a crucial part of masculinity (Bigner 1999), and many lesbian mothers

report being dedicated to teaching their children about non-heterosexual identities (Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011).

None of the aforementioned research specifies how bisexuals parent in comparison to straight, lesbian, or gay individuals. Yet bisexual parents are in a unique position because bisexuality is rarely apparent in the way that lesbian, gay, or straight identities might be. For children of straight, lesbian, or gay couples, their parents' sexuality likely seems obvious. If they have a mother and a father, they might view their family as "normal" and their parents as straight. Similarly, many children of lesbians and gays gradually understand their parents' sexuality over time, rather than recalling a specific "coming out" moment (Tasker 2005). In contrast, bisexual parents navigate how and when, if ever, to discuss their sexuality with their children. The limited body of work on bisexual parenting tends to focus on this unique experience of bisexual parents' identity disclosure. For example, in my prior work, I surveyed a diverse group of 767 parents and explored bisexual parents' reasons for planning to disclose or not disclose their bisexuality to their children in comparison to lesbian and gay parents (Haus 2021). However, the majority of work on bisexual parents focuses primarily on small groups of White bisexual mothers, offering a very limited understanding of bisexual parents' experiences (e.g., Bowling et al. 2016; Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie 2022; Delvoye and Tasker 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013; Tasker and Delvoye 2015).

Research on bisexual mothers suggests that many women feel forced to choose between their bisexuality and motherhood (Lynch 2013; Tasker and Delvoye 2015). In fact, some bisexual mothers report intentionally living a traditional, "heterosexual" life during their children's upbringing, and exploring their same-gender attraction later in life (Tasker and Delvoye 2015). Less is known about bisexual fatherhood, although the existing research suggests

that bisexual fathers may be more fearful about disclosing their bisexuality to their children, partially due to HIV stigma (Bowling et al. 2016). In my prior work, I reported that bisexual fathers were five times less likely than bisexual mothers to say they planned to disclose their bisexuality to their children—and bisexual fathers were significantly more likely to report feelings of shame around their bisexuality (Haus 2021).

Regardless of the fear associated with disclosing their bisexuality, research suggests many bisexuals do talk to their children about their bisexuality. In my article (Haus 2021), I found that the majority of bisexuals, regardless of gender, did plan to tell their children about their bisexuality. In particular, parents planned to disclose their bisexuality in order to be honest and to convey solidarity with their children who might also be bisexual (Haus 2021). Similarly, in Bowling et al.'s (2016) study of 33 parents, more than half said they disclosed their bisexuality to their children. Many parents reported doing so in order to encourage their children to accept the LGBTQ+ community. In addition to coming out, bisexual parents reported taking their children to pride festivals and reading LGBTQ-friendly books to educate their children about sexual diversity (Bowling et al. 2016). Bowling et al. (2016) found that bisexual parents in different-gender relationships, however, were less likely to participate in these activities, and many feared being perceived as heterosexual in LGBTQ+ spaces. Tasker and Delvoye (2015) reported that bisexual parents in different-gender relationships may also be less likely to disclose their bisexuality in order to protect their children from bullying.

Small-scale studies have highlighted bisexual parents' experiences (e.g., Bowling et al. 2016), but so far I am the only researcher to work with a relatively large sample size and compare bisexual parents' experiences to those of lesbians/gays. Given the implication that lesbians and gays parent differently and perhaps better than straight parents, I feel it is crucial to

understand how bisexual parents fit into conversations about sexuality and parenting. In this dissertation, I utilize a diverse dataset from 4,674 survey participants and 103 interviewees (the majority of whom are bisexual) to explore how the bisexuality of parents matters. In particular, I examine the impact of bisexual erasure on parents' experiences with self-disclosure, I examine the perceived advantages of bisexual parenthood, and I look at the intersection of gender and sexuality to compare the experiences of bisexual mothers and fathers.

METHODOLOGY

I use quantitative and qualitative research methods in this dissertation, engaging with my own survey and interview data to comprehensively explore bisexual parents' identities and experiences navigating conversations about sexuality with their children. Every step of this project was approved by the University of California Davis' Institutional Review Board. In the following section, I explain the design, distribution, sample, and data analysis for both components of this mixed-method project. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I discuss the project's methodological limitations, as well as my relevant positionality.

Survey Design

Most researchers studying bisexuality conduct interviews with small convenience samples, comprised mainly of White cisgender women (e.g., Delvoye and Tasker 2016). This is likely because people who identify as bisexual are a minority and tend to be underrepresented in random samples. In order to reach a larger and more diverse sample of bisexual parents, I designed a 65-question survey on Qualtrics, a professional software for survey creation and analysis. The survey asked respondents to answer a variety of open- and closed-ended questions about their sexuality, family history, romantic relationships, parenting strategies, and demographics. Whereas most questions were closed-ended (e.g., "Do you currently have

children?"), some questions invited participants to write a response (e.g., "Please define or describe the sexual orientation you identify with"). Including open-ended questions in surveys allows for a mixed-method analysis of data. These answers can be numerically coded and quantified, but they also allow respondents' voices to be heard in a unique way often left out of survey research. Additionally, most closed-ended questions allowed respondents to write-in their own answer if none of the available choices matched their experience. Allowing respondents to write their own answer is an important way to avoid forcing participants into categories which do not accurately describe them.

With the exception of one question (i.e., "Do you believe it is possible to be sexually attracted to more than one gender?"), none of the questions were exclusively about bisexuality. Parents of all genders and sexual orientations were invited to answer questions about how they approached conversations about sex and sexuality with their children. The survey asked if parents had discussed or planned to discuss a variety of sexual topics (e.g., consent, masturbation, dating) and identities (e.g., straight, gay, bisexual, asexual) with their children. Additionally, parents responded about how they would feel if their children identified as straight, gay, bisexual, or asexual. Most importantly to this research, parents were asked whether they planned to tell their children about their sexual orientation. They were probed to explain why they intended to disclose or not disclose their sexuality to their children.

I designed the majority of questions myself, though some demographic questions were borrowed from existing resources. For example, I created a question about participants' gender based on recommendations from The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California, San Francisco (Sausa et al. 2009). Most demographic questions allowed participants to choose multiple options and to write-in their own categories. On average,

participants spent between 15 and 20 minutes completing the survey. The survey questionnaire is available in Appendix D of this dissertation.

Survey Recruitment

The survey was open to all adults, though I prioritized recruiting bisexual parents in the United States. In the first phase of survey distribution, I shared an advertisement to take my survey in 25 Facebook groups, chosen specifically because I understood them to be LGBTQ+ spaces, parenting spaces, or both. In total, the groups were populated by 93,628 members, though it is likely that some individuals were in more than one of these groups. Some members of these groups also shared my survey to their own Facebook pages, email listservs, and messaging boards, producing a snowball sample. This particular phase of distribution yielded 1,210 completed survey responses and 316 partial responses.

During this first phase of survey distribution, I used a theoretical sampling frame by purposefully recruiting sexual minority parents whose experiences tend to be underrepresented in quantitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define theoretical sampling as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes [their] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop [their] theory as it emerges" (45). I staggered survey distribution across a 6-month period, although most responses occurred within the first 24 hours of sharing the survey to a new Facebook group. In the first round of data collection, I primarily distributed to self-identified bisexual and LGBTQ+ groups. Although most of these groups were targeted specifically towards bisexuals, some members shared the survey with friends who did not identify as bisexual. I encouraged this sharing—many chose to share the survey with their own friends, listservs, and support groups. In addition to creating a snowball effect, this led me to expand my sampling

frame. In a snowball sample, an initial group of respondents are targeted and encouraged to share the survey with others. After analyzing my preliminary findings, I noticed bisexual respondents were answering the survey differently than lesbian and gay respondents. Following this analysis, I adapted my sampling frame to include lesbians and gays, and I began distributing my survey to LGBTQ+ groups more broadly. At this point in the distribution and analysis process, it became clear that gender was a significant predictor for planning to disclose, but my sampling strategy was mostly weighted toward cisgender women. My next round of distribution targeted bisexual and gay men to provide better comparisons. I then distributed the survey in nonspecific parenting groups in order to generate a comparative sample of straight parents.

The use of social media as a sampling frame for underrepresented populations has increased in popularity in recent years. For example, Brickman-Bhutta (2012) recruited 4,000 baptized Roman Catholics to answer their survey by posting to several Facebook groups. They encouraged respondents to share the survey with others, producing a snowball sample similar to my own. A snowball sample is a cost-effective way to reach a large, diverse group of participants who are often underrepresented in random samples, or who are not asked important questions about their identities when they are represented in random samples. However, the main critique of snowball samples generated from social media is their non-randomness, meaning certain groups are more highly represented than in the general United States population (Schneider and Harknett 2016). Although I welcome some of this "non-randomness" (i.e., I desire a higher number of bisexual respondents than would be achieved in a random sample), recruiting specifically in these 25 Facebook groups also limited the diversity of my sample in some unwanted ways.

In the second phase of survey distribution, I attempted to address these limitations in diversity by using grant funding from the American Institute of Bisexuality to create and distribute paid advertisements on Facebook to a wider range of parents who were not in the Facebook groups from the first stage of survey distribution. Although adding to my sample by using paid Facebook advertisements does not randomize my sample or make it any more generalizable, it does help to ensure that a more diverse range of voices is represented in my research, which meets the goal of my theoretical sampling frame. In total, I spent $3500 on paid advertisements targeting bisexual parents, as well as specific groups that were previously underrepresented in the sample (i.e., people of color, men, religious people, and politically conservative people). Given my plans to compare bisexual parents' experiences to non-bisexuals, I also targeted smaller groups of straight, gay, and lesbian parents. This phase of distribution yielded 6,638 completed survey responses and 2,156 partial responses.

Survey Sample

Among the 6,638 who completed my survey, 4,674 were parents. Within this group of parents, 47 percent are straight, nine percent are lesbian or gay, 25 percent are bisexual or pansexual, three percent are queer (unspecified), almost one percent are asexual, less than one percent are questioning their sexuality, and almost two percent identify with another sexual identity. Additionally, 13 percent of my sample identify with multiple sexualities. For instance, 139 people identify as straight *and* bisexual or pansexual, and 28 people identify as straight *and* asexual. There are various reasons why someone might identify as bisexual *and* straight or bisexual *and* gay*;* however, given that I am unable to ask my survey participants for further clarification, I have opted not to re-categorize these people as only bisexual, straight, or gay. In terms of gender, 79 percent identify as cisgender women, 13 percent identify as cisgender men,

less than one percent each identify as transgender women or transgender men, two percent identify as genderqueer or nonbinary, less than two percent identify as something else, and more than two percent identify as multiple genders. Roughly 97 percent of participants live in the United States, with about 29 percent from the West, 28 percent from the South, 23 percent from the Midwest, and 15 percent from the Northeast. Nearly half (49 percent) of parents are in their thirties. The vast majority (84 percent) of parents are White. Though, many parents (8 percent) identify with multiple races. Black (1 percent), Latinx (2 percent), and Asian (1 percent) identities are underrepresented. Nevertheless, given the total sample size of parents (N=4,674), my survey participants are more racially diverse than prior research on bisexual parents. My sample is highly educated, with 72 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, 69 percent earn an income of $50,000 or higher. Finally, about eight percent identify as politically conservative and 18 percent identify as politically moderate, while the majority of participants (66 percent) identify as liberal. A more detailed table of survey participants' demographics is in Appendix B.

Survey Analysis

Given that my survey contains a mixture of closed- and open-ended questions, I used multiple forms of analysis to interpret my data. I used *Stata* to code and analyze closed-ended survey questions for demographic information, and I used qualitative coding methods to analyze some open-ended survey responses to support my interview findings. In particular, in Chapter One of this dissertation I include a qualitative analysis of responses to an open-ended survey question which asked parents why they planned to tell (or not tell) their children about their sexuality. To code this data, I read through each response, identified emergent themes, and assigned numeric values to these themes so that I could analyze respondent's answers by

demographic information. I plan to continue analyzing my survey data for future research related to this project.

Interview Design

Although surveys are useful for reaching diverse groups, they are primarily descriptive tools which seldom explore the depths of how people think about and experience their coexisting identities. Interviews are necessary in order to answer my research questions regarding how bisexual parents navigate their coexisting identities as both bisexuals and parents. After completing the distribution of my survey, I conducted interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. I divided my interview guide into four key sections: gender and sexuality, relationship, parenting, and demographics. During each interview, I followed the interview guide, occasionally adjusting my questions depending on the natural flow of my conversations with participants. I designed interview questions with the intention of deepening my understanding of a variety of topics that emerged from my initial analysis of survey data. While the survey covered a wide range of topics, interviews with participants allowed me to ask more open-ended, thought-provoking questions. For instance, toward the beginning of each interview, I asked participants how they view their sexuality influencing their life, which is a question that incited a diverse range of responses which would be difficult to capture in a survey question. Given the focus of my dissertation, I used the majority of interview time to ask questions related to parenting. My interview guide covered topics related to parenting style, challenging parenting experiences, parent-child sex education, disclosure of LGBTQ+ identities to children, and the influence of LGBTQ+ identities on parenting experiences. At the end of each interview, I asked participants what they felt was the most important thing I should know about their parenting experience. Interviews lasted an average of 90 minutes, and all interviewees received a $25

Amazon gift card as a thank you for participating in the research. My interview guides for bisexual parents, gay parents, and straight parents are included in Appendix C of this dissertation.

Interview Recruitment

At the end of my survey, I provided a space for people to volunteer to be interviewed during the second phase of my research. 2,545 people provided me with their contact information in order to be contacted for a follow-up interview. I chose 98 of my interviewees from this sample of volunteers, whereas the remaining three parents and two adult children were introduced to me by people I previously interviewed. In order to maximize diversity, I opted to interview volunteers from across the United States. As a result, all of my interviews were conducted via video or phone. I purposefully sampled interviewees in order to increase the diversity of my interview sample. For example, because White bisexual women in relationships with men were overrepresented in my group of volunteers, I contacted one in every ten of them to be interviewed. In contrast, I contacted one in every two Latinx bisexual women in relationships with men. Given that men were underrepresented in my sample of volunteers, I contacted every single bisexual man who volunteered to be interviewed. For similar reasons, I contacted every single Black bisexual parent who volunteered to be interviewed. About 30 percent of the people whom I contacted agreed to schedule an interview with me. The result of this method is a non-random sample that has much greater gender and racial diversity than existing studies on bisexual parents.

Interview Sample

My dissertation interview sample includes 101 parents (71 bisexual or pansexual, 8 gay, 13 lesbian, and 9 straight) and two adult children (one pansexual daughter of a bisexual father

and one bisexual daughter of a straight mother). Among the bisexual interviewees, 17 are in same-gender relationships, 40 are in different-gender relationships, eight are in multiple relationships, and six are single. Despite occupying a marginalized sexual identity, most interviewees retain a certain amount of privilege in their day-to-day lives. Many of the respondents are non-Hispanic White (55 percent), hold a bachelor's or graduate-level degree (72 percent), and earn an annual income of $50,000 or greater (70 percent). Among the 71 bisexual parents interviewed, 38 identify as cisgender women. Thus, this research presents a more diverse sample of bisexual parents compared to prior research which tends to only focus on White cisgender women. A table of interviewee pseudonyms and selected demographics is in Appendix A of this dissertation.

Interview Analysis

The American Institute of Bisexuality provided me with funding to pay for 500 hours of undergraduate research assistance on this project. I used these funds to hire a team to help me transcribe my 103 interviews. While still conducting and transcribing interviews, I carefully coded my interview notes by hand to identify emergent themes. Following grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I occasionally revised my interview guide after noticing commonalities in my data. For example, I observed that most parents were volunteering information about their perceived advantages of bisexuality, so I added a question to my interview guide about the advantages and disadvantages of bisexual parenting. After I coded interview notes, I analyzed transcripts using Microsoft Word and the qualitative coding software MAXQDA. I developed a large codebook with descriptive codes such as "homophobia in family of origin" or "avoiding gendered clothing," before eventually pairing down my analysis and linking my codes to larger theoretical themes, like "bisexual erasure" and "hegemonic

masculinity." During this coding process, I identified numerous shared experiences of the bisexual parents in my sample. I highlight three of the most interesting findings in the following chapters of my dissertation.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Chapter One

In Chapter One, titled "Are Bisexual Families Special Too? Parents Navigate Identity Disclosure Without a Bisexual 'Coming Out' Script," I use the theoretical framework of cultural scripts and strategic outness to explore bisexual parents' experiences with disclosing their bisexuality to their children. I broadly define *cultural scripts* as narratives that are familiar to and resonate with an audience. At the beginning of the chapter, I introduce readers to a common cultural script which parents often use to explain lesbian and gay identities to their children. I refer to this script as the "each family is special" script. This script, which explains to children that some families have two mothers or fathers, does not help explain bisexual identities to children. In fact, I find that parents are totally lacking a cultural script to explain bisexuality at all. Nevertheless, I report that the vast majority of bisexual parents in my sample do discuss or plan to discuss bisexuality with their children. But without clear guidelines, parents must decide why, when, and how to explain their bisexuality to their children. I engage with Orne's (2011) concept of *strategic outness* which suggests that "coming out" is not a singular scripted moment, but rather a continuous process of managing one's sexual identity which varies across context. In discovering that parents often talk to their children about their bisexuality spontaneously and repeatedly, I move away from the verbiage of "coming out" in favor simply of "identity disclosure." Ultimately, I conclude that bisexual parents are eager for a clearer cultural script to help navigate instances of identity disclosure.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two, titled "The Bisexual Parent Advantage: Open-Minded and Better Prepared," provides a comparative analysis of bisexual, gay, and straight parents' feelings toward their children's gender and sexuality. Regardless of whether they are in same- or different-gender relationships, I find that bisexual parents tend to view themselves as more open-minded and better prepared than lesbian, gay, or straight parents to navigate their children's gender and sexual exploration. Bisexual parents explain that their experiences with bisexual erasure and bisexual stigmatization from both lesbian/gay and straight communities render them deeply empathetic to their children's marginal gender and sexual identities. Although lesbian and gay parents also view themselves as open-minded, I find that bisexual parents are more explicit about their support for bisexual and transgender children specifically. In contrast, lesbian and gay parents are slightly more inclined to talk negatively about bisexual and transgender people. And straight parents often appear misinformed on topics related to gender and sexuality, causing them to feel less prepared to raise LGBTQ+ children.

In understanding these findings, I engage with *feminist standpoint theory* (Hartsock 1983; Smith 1974), which explains how women's underprivileged position provides them with epistemic privilege through a deeper understanding of patriarchal oppression. This theory is widely used by feminists of color, like Audre Lorde (2007), who wrote about how experiences with racism and sexism often lead Black women to have a greater understanding of social systems of oppression, which they impart onto their children. Even though most prior scholarship on lesbian and gay parents attributes the advantages of their parenting to gender dynamics, I find in my interviews that lesbian and gay parents actually tend to attribute their good parenting to their understanding of oppression, which they feel enables them to better

empathize with their children. For bisexual parents, this understanding of marginalization sometimes feels deepened because they are experiencing bisexual erasure and stigmatization from both straight and lesbians/gay people. I conclude this chapter by suggesting a shift away from attributing lesbian and gay parenting advantages to gender dynamics, in favor of a more nuanced approach which accounts for parents' experiences with marginalization and privilege.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three, titled, "Sex Without Love, Love Without Sex: How Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity Shape Bisexual Parents' Conversations about Sexuality with Their Children," showcases gender differences in the ways that bisexual parents conceptualize their bisexuality. I find that bisexual men tend to describe their bisexuality as a sexual attraction to multiple genders, and bisexual women describe their bisexuality as a romantic attraction to multiple genders. Given this gendered difference in conceptualization, I also discover that bisexual men are less comfortable discussing their bisexuality with their children than bisexual women. Bisexual fathers tend to worry that conversations about their bisexuality will be inappropriate, whereas bisexual mothers are quick to desexualize the identity in order to explain it to young children. To understand these gender differences, I engage with Connell's (1987; 2005) theories of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.

Connell explains that *hegemonic masculinity* is a hierarchical system where some forms of masculinity are associated with greater privilege and power. Although attributes of hegemonic masculinity differ geographically and temporally, researchers continue to find a link between hegemonic masculinity, heterosexuality, and homophobia (e.g., Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Grindstaff and West 2011). In my interviews, I find that bisexual men are particularly concerned with being perceived as less masculine, which leads

them to deromanticize and privatize their sexual orientation. Concurrently, I find that bisexual women sometimes engage in *emphasized femininity*, or act in compliance with patriarchal standards, by desexualizing their bisexuality while simultaneously taking on the emotional work of teaching their children about sexuality. I conclude that in order for bisexual parents to talk dyadically about bisexuality as both a romantic and sexual identity, more needs to be done to destigmatize LGB men and to dismantle the patriarchy. For bisexual men to feel more open and less ashamed of their bisexuality, it is important that we continue disentangling heterosexuality and homophobia from dominant constructions of masculinity. And for bisexual women to feel more comfortable talking about their identity as nuanced and sexual, we must unpack the ways in which women continue to feel held to a standard of sexual passivity, even as cultural norms around sex shift.

Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, I connect my findings back to a larger theme of bisexual erasure and parenting. I explore the methodological limitations to this project, including a conversation about my own positionality as a White, bisexual, nonbinary, and "feminine-presenting" person who is not a parent. I identify three major academic implications of my dissertation, arguing that my work: (1) demonstrates that bisexuals experience systemic erasure and stigma which separates them from gays or straights and incentivizes studying their unique experiences further; (2) complicates the popular narrative in LGB parenting research that the gender of parents "matters," in favor of a more complex analysis aligned with feminist standpoint theory which considers not just gender, but also the impact of experiences with oppression or marginalization on parenting practices; and (3) highlights the diversity of opinions and experiences within a large group of bisexual parents, thus showcasing a need for conducting

more intersectional research in the sociologies of sexuality, gender, and family. Finally, I explore policy implications from this research, primarily focusing on a need for federal protections for LGBTQ+ foster care and adoption.

Chapter One. Are Bisexual Families Special Too? Parents Navigate Identity Disclosure Without a Bisexual 'Coming Out' Script

> *"Heather has two pets: a ginger-colored cat named Gingersnap and a big black dog named Midnight. Heather also has two mommies: Mama Jane and Mama Kate… One day Mama Kate and Mama Jane tell Heather they have a surprise for her. 'You're going to start school next week!' Mama Kate says… 'What does your daddy do?' David asks Heather. 'I don't have a daddy,' Heather says. She looks around the circle and wonders, Am I the only one here who doesn't have a daddy? 'I have an idea,' Ms. Molly says, 'Let's all draw pictures of our families.' … Ms. Molly looks at all the pictures. 'It doesn't matter how many mommies or how many daddies your family has,' Ms. Molly says. 'It doesn't matter if your family has sisters or brothers or cousins or grandmas or grandpas or uncles or aunts. Each family is special. The most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love each other.' Soon Heather's first day of school is over. When Mama Kate and Mama Jane arrive to pick her up, Heather shows them all the pictures… Mama Kate and Mama Jane laugh as Heather gives each of them two kisses. Then she takes their hands and they all head home."*
> – Lesléa Newman, Heather Has Two Mommies

In *Heather Has Two Mommies* (1989), Newman introduces us to young Heather on her first day of preschool. While at school, Heather and her classmates discover that families can look many different ways. For Heather, having two moms is just a mundane fact of life. Of all the children's books mentioned by the parents that I interviewed for my dissertation, *Heather Has Two Mommies* was undoubtably mentioned the most. This book has become a staple for talking to young children about families with same-gender parents. Though Mama Kate and Mama Jane's sexualities are never mentioned in the book, the book is most commonly understood to be about a lesbian couple.

In my interviews with lesbian and gay parents, preschool seems to be a common time for children to learn more about their same-gender parents' sexual orientations. Parents often reflect on preschool as a time where their children begin to recognize how their families differ from the more typical heteronormative family model that many children are born into. For example, Rana, a 32-year-old Asian cisgender lesbian, recently started her two-and-a-half-year-old son in

daycare. Since starting daycare, Rana has noticed some changes in how her son understands their family. She says,

> Our son used to call us 'Mom' and 'Mama.' Just in the past few weeks, he's been calling my wife 'Daddy.' And I think it's because at day care… they watch this video about who is in your family. It's always 'mommy and daddy,' and not 'mommy and mommy.' So, he associates her with that paternal role in the family. It was never like that before.

She shares her strategy for explaining her family structure to her son:

> We just kind of tell him that every family is different. Some families have a mommy and daddy. Some families have a dad and dad, a mom and mom, or even grandparents or aunts or uncles, you know. So, we try to make it feel normal for him, I guess. We never really have talked about us being different. We just say that every… family dynamic is different.

Rana and her wife have taken a very similar approach to talking about their family as the adults in *Heather Has Two Mommies*, embracing the "each family is special" cultural script. I broadly define cultural script as a narrative that is familiar to and resonates with an audience – in this case, an audience of lesbian and gay parents. While the "each family is special" script is a useful tool for same-gender couples to slowly introduce their children to their lesbian/gay identities, bisexual parents in different-gender relationships benefit less from this approach. Although bisexual parents in different-gender relationships might also explain to their children that families can be made up of different types of people, talking about families with two moms or two dads does not give their children the same perspective that their own mother or father might be capable of loving someone of their same gender. In this chapter, I use cultural scripts as a theoretical lens to explore the familiar ways that parents talk to their children about lesbian and gay identities, while highlighting the absence of cultural scripts available to talk to children about bisexual identities.

In my interview research on bisexual parents, I discover that there are no widely used cultural scripts like "each family is special" that help explain bisexuality to children. Instead,

bisexual parents feel that bisexual erasure, or the popular assumption that everyone is either straight or lesbian/gay (Yoshino 2000), is heightened in children's media and parenting resources. As such, parents must decide not only how to disclose their bisexuality to their children, but also if, why, and when they should disclose their bisexuality to their children. In this chapter, I explore each of these aspects of bisexual parents "coming out" to their children. Most of the bisexual parents in my sample do plan to talk to their children about their bisexuality. Parents primary motivations for disclosing their sexuality include a desire to be honest with their children and a desire to convey solidarity to any children who might also be bisexual. However, because parents are navigating these conversations without cultural scripts, parents sometimes disagree on when to talk to their children about bisexuality, as well as how bisexuality should be explained. Ultimately, I find that although bisexual parents in my sample do disclose their sexuality to their children, their "coming out" experiences differ from those of lesbian and gay parents.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural Scripts

In sociology, the term "cultural script" is most closely linked to Clive Seale's (1998) work on dying and bereavement. In his research, Seale (1998) used the term "cultural script" to describe four common ways that people in the contemporary United States talk about death. He briefly defined cultural scripts as "rhetorical resources for explaining and justifying [people's] actions" (21). More recently, scholars have used the language of "cultural scripts" to discuss popular narrative devices in agricultural communities, government lockdowns, sporting events, youth suicide, and more (Abrutyn, Mueller, and Osborne 2020; Cossu 2022; Vanclay and Enticott 2011). The term "cultural script" has no clear origin in sociology, and scholars across

disciplines have introduced and defined the concept in various ways. Psychologist Abelson (1976) developed his version of script theory, which suggested that scripts are "coherent sequence(s) of events expected by the individual, involving him as a participant or an observer" (33). And Abelson's (1976) script theory is sometimes talked about in conjunction with symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy as an influential framework in sociological social psychology (Schlenker 1980). Linguists Goddard and Wierzbicka's (2004) theory of cultural scripts is also popularly cited. They defined cultural scripts as a "technique for articulating cultural norms, values, and practices in terms which are clear, precise, and accessible for cultural insiders and outsiders alike" (153). While there is no singular definition of the term, scholars tend to describe cultural scripts as narratives that are widely used by people to discuss specific ideas.

In the present study, I use the term "cultural script" in reference to the familiar narratives used by parents to discuss sexual orientations with their children. I identify an existing cultural script, "each family is special," which is commonly used by parents in same-gender relationships to explain lesbian and gay identities to their children. Yet I find an absence of cultural scripts for explaining bisexuality to children. The "each family is special" script relies on a discussion of family structures and is not easily modified to include bisexual parents who may be in same- or different-gender relationships. Without a clear cultural script for talking about bisexuality with children, I find that bisexual parents struggle to navigate whether to explain their bisexuality to their children… and if they do plan to explain bisexuality to their children, then why, when, and how should they do so?

Strategic Outness

Simultaneously, I engage with Orne's (2011) concept of strategic outness, which suggests that "coming out" is not a singular scripted moment, but rather a continuous process of managing

one's sexual identity which varies across contexts. Orne (2011) developed the concept of strategic outness in response to the breadth of social science research which tends to underrepresent the complexity of LGB identity management and disclosure. Orne (2011) explained that "coming out" is often talked about as a singular developmental event rooted in verbal disclosure (e.g., Cass 1979; Coleman 1982; Rhoads 1995; Troiden 1989), when in reality, LGB people often manage the presentation of their identities in varied ways across contexts. For example, Orne (2011) found that gay men tended to use different strategies for presenting and talking about their sexual identities depending on context, and gay men were often out to some but not all of the people in their lives. Although Orne (2011) did not use the language of cultural scripts, they did engage with Goffman's (1963) work on identity management, which they defined as "the ways in which people control access to and type of information about their identities" (682).

In extending Orne's theory, I find that cultural scripts are one common tool that LGB people use to manage the ways that their identities are understood by others. Parents develop strategies for talking about sexuality with children that differ from how they might talk about sexuality in different relationships or contexts. For lesbian and gay parents, the "each family is special" script is often used to normalize same-gender parents and reassure both parents and children that a family with parents of the same gender is no more peculiar than any other family structure. Without comparable cultural scripts, bisexual parents work to strategically manage their identities around their children in inventive ways, while often wondering if, why, when, and how conversations about bisexuality should occur.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bisexuals are more likely to become parents than gays or lesbians (Gates et al. 2007; Pew Research Center 2013), but there is little research on how this group thinks about their bisexuality in relation to their parenting status. It is especially interesting to consider how bisexual parents navigate disclosing their sexual orientation to their children, given the ways that bisexual erasure particularly impacts people in monogamous relationships, which many parents are in. Whereas the sexuality of straight parents in different-gender relationships and gay parents in same-gender relationships are made obvious to their children by the gender composition of their relationships (Tasker 2005), the sexuality of bisexual parents in either same-gender or different-gender relationships are not readily apparent to their children (or anyone else).

Because bisexual erasure renders bisexual parents' sexuality less obvious to their children, bisexual parents can decide whether to disclose their sexual orientation to their children. Whereas lesbian and gay parents often feel a need to tell their children about their identities in order to explain to their children that most families do not have two parents of the same gender (Haus 2021), bisexual parents are given more room to contemplate the pros and cons of identity-disclosure. This is true even for bisexual parents in same-gender relationships because their relationship only reveals that they experience same-gender attraction, not that they are bisexual. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of bisexual parents are in different-gender relationships. The Pew Research Center reported that nine-in-ten partnered bisexuals were in different-gender relationships (Brown 2019). Brown (2019) explained, "the pool of potential same-sex partners is much smaller than the pool of opposite-sex partners" because LGB adults make up a relatively small portion of the population.

It is worthwhile to consider how bisexual parents handle identity disclosure for many reasons. Bisexuality is uniquely stigmatized in our culture, and many aspects of this stigmatization are in direct opposition to our cultural values around parenthood. For example, bisexuals are stigmatized as untrustworthy and mentally unstable (Dyar and Feinstein 2018). In addition, bisexuals are assumed to be incapable of monogamy, and those who do enter monogamous relationships are expected to cheat on their partners (Dyar and Feinstein 2018). Some bisexual parents, especially those in different-gender relationships, might forego disclosing their identity in order to avoid being subjected to this oppression. Yet many bisexual parents disclose their identity in spite of, or perhaps because of, this stigma.

Of course, lesbian and gay parents also must navigate the oppression of their identities. However, over the past few decades, western culture has adapted in many ways to increase positive recognition of lesbian and gay parents. There is a growing collection of lesbian and gay parents represented in popular culture. And this representation ranges from TV shows like *Modern Family,* made for an adult audience, to popular illustrated children's books like *Heather Has Two Mommies* (1989), geared toward preschool-aged children. As I am writing this chapter, a quick Google search of "gay parents in television" leads to numerous listicles (e.g., "17 T.V. Shows Featuring Gay Dad Characters" on www.gaywithkids.com and "The 10 Most Out Gay Parents on TV and in Film" on www.mom.com). In contrast, searching for "bisexual parents in television" produces no results. The same is true for parenting books and children's media.

Few studies focus on bisexual parenthood. In earlier work, I analyzed a survey sample of 767 United States parents and identified several reasons why bisexual parents planned to disclose (or not disclose) their bisexuality to their children (Haus 2021). Tasker and Delvoye (2015, 2016) published two articles based on their interviews with seven bisexual mothers about how

they constructed positive sexual identities and balanced their bisexuality with motherhood. However, neither study looked specifically at how mothers disclosed their bisexuality to their children. Bowling et al. (2016) interviewed 33 bisexual parents and reported on parent-child communication about a variety of topics related to sexuality, ranging from sexual identity to sexual behavior and STDs. In their sample, more than half of the bisexual parents interviewed had disclosed their bisexuality to their children. However, identity disclosure was not their research focus. Most recently Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) interviewed 29 bisexual mothers about how they talked to their children about their bisexuality. Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) found that bisexual mothers often felt there was a right time to discuss bisexuality with their children, and that mothers tended to be child-focused when explaining bisexuality. These claims are supported and elaborated on in my own research outlined in this chapter.

The aforementioned studies were limited by their sample sizes, though the sample gathered by Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) had the benefit of being international. The majority of existing work on bisexual parents is also limited by racial homogeneity. Of Bowling et al.'s (2016) sample of 33 parents, 76 percent identified as only non-Hispanic White, which the authors considered a limitation. All of the women in Tasker and Delvoye's (2015, 2016) sample were White. And 90 percent of Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie's (2022) sample self-identified as White. At this point, the literature desperately needs more racially diverse samples, given that people of color are more likely than White people to identify as bisexual (Newport 2018). Furthermore, Bowling et al. (2016) and I (Haus 2021) were alone in including bisexual fathers in our analyses of bisexual parenthood. My dissertation differs from this prior work by showcasing the largest and most diverse sample of bisexual parents in terms of race, gender, religion, and political ideology.

In this chapter, I consider how bisexual parents navigate identity disclosure without cultural scripts, because in addition to the daily erasure and stigma that all bisexuals encounter, bisexual parents are additionally underrepresented in cultural narratives of bisexuality, including television shows, children's media, and parenting resources. I examine which bisexual parents demographically are the most likely to talk to their children about their identities. I also review my research on why many bisexual parents plan to disclose, maybe disclose, or not disclose their identity to their children. Next, I look at the various reasons bisexual parents choose to either tell their young children or wait until their children are older to disclose their bisexuality. And finally, I explore how bisexual parents talk to their children about bisexuality in order to understand whether these conversations actually constitute "coming out" as it is commonly understood.

WHO DISCLOSES THEIR SEXUALITY TO THEIR CHILDREN?

Bisexuals Are Less Likely to Disclose

Research suggests that bisexuals are significantly less likely to tell people about their bisexuality in comparison to lesbians and gays. The Pew Research Center found that 75 percent of lesbians and gays reported that all or most of the important people in their lives knew about their sexual orientation (Brown 2019). In contrast, only 19 percent of bisexuals in their study said that all or most of the important people in their lives knew about their bisexuality (Brown 2019). Furthermore, only four percent of lesbians and gays said that none of the important people in their lives knew about their sexuality compared to the 26 percent of bisexuals who said the same. In my own interview research, I find that people often assume bisexuals are either straight or lesbian/gay depending on the relationships that they are in, and many bisexuals do not feel a need to correct these assumptions. Whereas lesbian and gay sexualities are often made obvious

by same-gender relationships, bisexuals find that they must do more work to explain their sexuality to people, and sometimes this process of identity disclosure feels tedious and unnecessary.

Of the bisexual parents I surveyed during the first phase of quantitative data collection for my dissertation, however, the overwhelming majority planned to tell their children about their bisexuality. I found that 95 percent of bisexual mothers, 73 percent of bisexual fathers, and 98 percent of genderqueer bisexual parents had either already told or planned to tell their children about their sexual orientation (see also Haus 2021). See Table 1 for a further breakdown of which survey participants planned to tell their children about their sexual orientation based on gender. Given that my interviewees were selected from people I had previously surveyed, the majority also already disclosed or planned to disclose their identities to their children. The parents in my sample may be biased toward disclosing their identities to their children because most were sampled from bisexual-related Facebook groups, which indicates some willingness to publicly associate with the bisexual label.

Table 1. Percentage of parents who had already disclosed, who planned to disclose, and who had no plans to disclose based on gender and sexuality

	Already Disclosed (%)	Not Disclosed, Plans to Disclose (%)	Not Disclosed, No Plans to Disclose (%)
Bisexual Women (n=236)	62.6	31.9	5.5
Bisexual Men (n=60)	55.3	18	26.7
Bisexual Genderqueer (n=47)	73.2	24.6	2.2
Lesbians (n=188)	80.5	17.4	2.1
Gay Men (n=37)	75	14.2	14.2
Gay Genderqueer (n=10)	57	43	0

Plans to Disclose One's Bisexuality Differs Based on Gender and Race

White women tend to be the face of bisexual motherhood in scholarly research (e.g., Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie 2022; Delvoye and Tasker 2016). Although many people believe that women are "naturally" more sexually fluid than men – for example, psychologist Kanazawa (2017) theorized that women's sexual fluidity has an evolutionary advantage – it is difficult to find data that supports this claim. Rather, what we do know is that women are significantly more likely than men to tell people that they identify as bisexual. Instead of assuming that women are more likely to be bisexual, I associate this difference in disclosure of bisexual identity with the reality that bisexual men are more heavily stigmatized than bisexual women, lesbians, or gay men. In their measurement of straight people's attitudes toward LGB identities, Eliason (1997) found that 26 percent of participants considered bisexual men to be very unacceptable, followed by 21 percent for gay men, 14 percent for lesbians, and 12 percent for bisexual women. More recently, Friedman et al. (2014) found that bisexual men continued to face wider disapproval than bisexual women. Heterosexual men in particular show high rates of disapproval toward bisexual and gay men, and researchers have attributed this both to heterosexual men's fears of sexual advances from LGBTQ+ men as well as heterosexual men's sexualization of LGBTQ+ women (Worthen 2013). Worthen (2013) explained that sexual advances from LGBTQ+ men may be perceived as a threat to straight men's heteromasculinity, and studies repeatedly have shown that straight men attribute their discomfort with LGBTQ+ men to their aversion with being the object of men's sexual desire (Eliason 1997; Worthen 2013). Concurrently, researchers have theorized that heterosexual men have positive attitudes toward bisexual women and lesbians because these identities have been conceptualized as attractive and erotic for straight men (Worthen 2013). Bisexual women in particular may be more widely accepted as erotic

because “not only will they kiss girls, they may also kiss guys” (Wothen 2013). These varying opinions toward bisexual men and bisexual women explain why bisexual men may be less likely to disclose their bisexuality.

According to the Pew Research Center, 88 percent of bisexual women disclose their bisexuality to a close friend, compared to only 55 percent of men (2013). Additionally, the Pew Research Center found that 65 percent of bisexual men report that only a few or none of their close friends and family know about their bisexuality (2013). My findings on bisexual parents reflect this gender discrepancy, as shown above. Bisexual fathers seem less interested in disclosing their bisexuality to their children compared to bisexual mothers. For example, Jacob, a 37-year-old White cisgender man, says he is not interested in disclosing his bisexuality to his two seven-year-old children because he does not want to make them uncomfortable. He explains,

> I am still grossed out by all the sexual things I know about my parents, which admittedly aren’t that many… But few people are like, ‘Yeah, I’m glad I walked in on my parents…’ I wanna let them know that I ‘m open and accepting to all kinds of ideas, but I don’t want to in any way tell them my fetish… Like I don’t want them to think about anything exactly sexual… I don’t want to tell them in the sense that I don’t want them to think about their parents [being sexual].

Because Jacob thinks about his attraction to men as a fetish, he prefers not to disclose this identity to his children. In part, Jacob’s description of his sexual identity as a fetish may relate to the fact that men’s bisexuality is routinely reduced to discussions of men’s sexual arousal, even within social science research. Researchers are still trying to (dis)prove the existence of men’s bisexuality by discussing the ways that men’s genitals respond to erotic stimuli (e.g., Jabbour et al. 2020; Rosenthal et al. 2012). Rosenthal et al. (2012) exemplified this need to prove men’s bisexuality, hesitantly concluding that “some bisexual-identified men have bisexual genital arousal patterns, although it remains unclear how common they are” (135). Interestingly, no comparable studies seem focused on proving the existence of bisexual women through sexual

arousal. Rather than thinking of men's bisexuality as a complex identity with room for both romantic and sexual attraction, cultural narratives tend to portray men's bisexuality as something that happens below the belt. In contrast, bisexual women are given fuller range to explore their bisexual identities beyond their experiences of arousal (Although bisexual women also report high levels of fetishization from straight men, as in Watson et al. 2021). When the bisexual men in my sample reduce their bisexuality to sexual rather than romantic attraction and describe their bisexuality as private or shameful, they are simply adhering to a familiar cultural script on men's bisexuality. This script of men's bisexuality as overtly sexual and shameful helps provide context for why men in general are less likely to disclose their sexuality to the important people in their lives. By not disclosing their bisexuality, bisexual men are rendered less visibly bisexual compared to women who do self-disclose. My findings also highlight genderqueer or nonbinary parents who are left out of reports by the Pew Research Center and suggests these parents may be even more likely than women to disclose their bisexuality to family members.

Although research on bisexuals tends to center White women, recent data indicates that people of color are actually slightly more likely to identify as bisexual than White people (Newport 2018). The Gallup found that roughly four percent of White people, five percent of Black people, six percent of non-White Hispanic people, and five percent of Asian people identify as bisexual. The Pew Research Center also found that 44 percent of non-White LGBTQ+ individuals say that being LGBTQ+ is extremely or very important to their identity, compared to 34 percent of White LGBTQ+ individuals (2013). My data does not show significant racial differences in parents' plans to disclose their sexuality to their children, and I did not measure parent's feelings about the overall importance of their sexual identities. However, parents of color in my sample regularly explain that conversations about familial racial

identity and racism feel more pressing and happen more frequently than conversations about sexual identity or heterosexism. While my data does not contradict the Pew Research Center's (2013) findings that non-White LGBTQ+ individuals place more importance on their sexuality compared to White LGBTQ+ individuals, I do find that parents of color often prioritize conversations about race over sexuality with their children. For White middle- and upper-class families, parents' LGBTQ+ identities are often the family's only alignment with marginalization. Yet for parents of color, racism impacts both parents and children and is central to conversations on family identity and inequality.

In summary, although bisexuality is often portrayed as a White woman's identity, White mothers are not the most likely parental group to identify as bisexual. Nationally representative data suggests that people of color are more likely than White people to identify as bisexual. Further, although women are more likely than men to share their bisexuality with a friend, it is difficult to say whether women are actually more likely to identify this way. A parent's gender and race, among other identities, does seem to impact whether and how bisexual parents disclose their identities to their children. In particular, I find that fathers are less interested in disclosing their bisexuality compared to mothers and genderqueer parents. This phenomenon is explored in greater detail in the third substantive chapter of this dissertation.

WHY DO PARENTS DISCLOSE (OR NOT DISCLOSE) THEIR BISEXUALITY?

In the first stage of this project, I surveyed bisexual parents and asked, "Do you plan to tell your children about your sexual orientation? Why or why not?" Using the data from this survey question, I identified several reasons why parents plan to tell their children, consider maybe telling their children, or plan not to tell their children about their bisexuality (Haus 2021). My interview data is consistent with my survey data on this topic. In this section, I briefly

summarize these findings. A more in-depth analysis. of the reasons why bisexual parents plan to disclose or not disclose can be found in my *Sexualities* article (Haus 2021).

Plans To Disclose

Overwhelmingly, the most common reasons why bisexual parents of all genders planned to disclose their bisexuality to their children were 1) to be honest, and 2) to convey solidarity with their children who might also identify as LGBTQ+. In contrast, lesbian and gay parents typically said they had no choice in talking to their children about their sexuality, explaining that their sexuality became obvious to their children once they learned that most families do not have two same-gender parents. Additional reasons why bisexual parents planned to self-disclose included: 3) teaching their children about diversity, 4) encouraging their children to be LGBTQ+ allies, 5) combatting bisexual erasure, and 6) out of necessity. Some parents did not provide an explanation for why they planned to share their bisexuality with their children.

Plans To Maybe Disclose

Bisexual parents were much more likely than lesbian or gay parents to say they were not sure if they planned to disclose their sexuality to their children. The parents who answered affirmatively said they would share their bisexuality with their children if asked, if their child was LGBTQ, or if they ended up dating someone of their same gender. Some parents did not provide a reason as to why they were undecided about self-disclosure.

Plans Not to Disclose

Although most bisexual parents planned to disclose their bisexuality to their children, some said they had no plans to do so. Bisexual men were the least likely to plan disclosure compared to any other demographic. Some bisexual parents said they had no plans to self-disclose because their sexuality was private, shameful, or confusing to their children. See Table 2

for a breakdown of percentages of parents from the first phase of quantitative data collection who provided each reason for planning to disclose, maybe disclosing, or not planning to disclose organized by gender and sexuality.

	Bisexual Women (n=236)	Bisexual Men (n=60)	Bisexual Genderqueer Individuals (n=47)	Lesbians (n=188)	Gay Men (n=37)	Gay Genderqueer Individuals (n=10)
Yes (%)						
Teaching Diversity	14	5	25.5	10.1	5.4	10
Encouraging Allyship	6.8	0	6.4	2.7	2.7	10
Combatting Bi Erasure	2.1	0	4.3	0	0	0
Being Honest	35.2	23.3	25.5	19.7	10.8	20
Conveying Solidarity	19.1	15	21.3	4.8	5.4	0
Necessity	18.6	13.3	19.1	38.3	40.5	40
No Explanation	20.3	25	12.8	31.9	32.4	30
Maybe (%)						
If Asked	2.1	5	0	0.5	0	0
If LGBTQ+ Child	0.4	1.7	0	0	0	0
If Same-Gender Partner	0.4	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	5	2.1	0	0	0
No (%)						
It's Private	0.4	8.3	0	0.5	0	0
It's Shameful	0.4	3.3	0	0	0	0
It's Confusing	0.8	1.7	0	0	2.7	0
It's Obvious	0	0	0	0.5	0	0
No Explanation	0.8	1.7	0	0.5	8.1	0

Table 2. Reasons for planning to disclose, considering disclosing, or not planning to disclose by gender and sexuality

WHEN DO PARENTS DISCLOSE THEIR BISEXUALITY?

During interviews, I was able to explore the nuances of when conversations about parents' bisexuality happen. One of the primary things that parents consider when thinking about self-disclosing is the idea of "age appropriateness." Lacking cultural scripts for talking to young

children about bisexuality, some parents feel that it is not appropriate to talk about their bisexuality until their children are old enough to experience their own sexual attraction. However, many parents talk to their young children about bisexuality, while making sure they are using language that their children can understand. Scott, a 32-year-old White transgender man, explains how he plans to talk to his six-month-old daughter about pansexuality once she turns two or three years old…

> **Rowan**: Do you think you will want to talk to your kid specifically about your pansexual identity?
>
> **Scott**: Yes, I do… I think it won't come up as early [as talking about being in a same gender relationship], not because I don't think it's appropriate to talk about with a very young child… I think, when it first comes up, it'll probably be something like talking about sexual orientation in general in ways that are appropriate for a very young child, like, you know, 'Some people grow up and love men, and some people grow up and love women, and some people grow up and love men and women, and people who aren't men or women.' And I might say, 'And Daddy's like that, but Daddy's, you know, in love with [your other] Daddy.' Something like that, you know."
>
> **Rowan**: How old do you imagine your kid would be when you have that conversation?
>
> **Scott**: Honestly, we'd start having it probably, like [age] two or three, but it's not going to be, like, an 'I'm sitting you down' kind of conversation. It's just, you know, like right now, we make sure to have a couple of children's books that have… well, actually, we only have one children's book that has two dads [Laughs]… but we read that one a lot, and so, some more about just having it [their LGBTQ+ identities] be a normal part of talking about life and telling stories is the goal.

For Scott, age appropriateness is a concern when thinking about how he will talk to his child about his pansexuality. Rather than explaining pansexuality by talking about sex, Scott imagines explaining his sexuality using romantic attraction and love. This aligns with prior work by Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) who found that bisexual mothers often took a child-centered approach when explaining bisexuality by talking about love rather than sex. Scott predicts this conversation about pansexuality and multigender romantic attraction will happen

after an initial conversation about same-gender attraction, given the fact that his child has two fathers.

Although Scott suggests a possible script for talking to young children about pansexuality which is more specific than the "every family is special script," many parents struggle to imagine talking to their young children about multigender attraction. For these parents, waiting to disclose until their children express their own romantic or sexual interest seems to make the most sense. For example, Bette, a 39-year-old White cisgender woman, explains that she still has not talked to her 11-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter about her bisexuality. She says,

> **Bette**: Yeah… I mean I've probably talked to other people… but I've never said like, how I identify. I don't know. I don't know why I haven't.
>
> **Rowan**: Do you think that's something you would like to talk to [your children] about?
>
> **Bette**: I think… I think probably in theory I would. My son has never had crushes on anybody, and I'm always like, 'Hey, who's cute and cool? Any girls? Any guys?' And he's like, 'Mommy, no. I'd tell you.' And I think… When he starts telling me who he likes, that might be an easier time to talk about that. But I think, literally, I don't know if I've ever said the word bisexual in front of them…
>
> **Rowan**: You said maybe when your son starts expressing attraction in people, that would be the time where you would talk to him about it?
>
> **Bette**: I think so.

Both Scott and Bette's approaches to discussing their bisexuality with their children were common among my interviewees. However, my lesbian and gay interviewees seldom grapple with the age appropriateness of disclosing their identities to their children. As explained earlier, lesbian and gay parents rarely have the same autonomy when thinking about whether or not to disclose their identities to their children. Rather, their identities become the object of a necessary conversation about heteronormativity which typically occurs as soon as their children are attending daycare or preschool.

Since many parents feel a need to explain different family structures to their young children, parents have developed scripts for talking to young children about lesbian and gay identities over the past few decades. Lesbian and gay parents have their own terminology, books, and television shows to help guide these conversations. For instance, the term "rainbow family" is often used to describe families with two same-gender parents (e.g., Hanssen 2012), and parents have embraced the terms "gay family" and "lesbian family," applying the parents' sexual identity to the family identity as a whole (e.g., Laird 2003; Lambert 2005). Children's media has also increased representation of same-gender couples. Not only are there numerous popular children's books with lesbian or gay characters (Epstein 2014), but children's television has also evolved to portray same-gender couples more frequently. For example, *Arthur* and *Rugrats*, two of the longest running popular children's television shows, have both portrayed lesbian or gay reoccurring characters in the past few years (Maxouris 2019; Serrao 2021). The focus of this increasing representation is rarely to explain sexual attraction to children; rather, the focus seems to be on helping children understand and value different family structures. Families with same-gender parents are talked about in conjunction with single parents, live-in grandparents, divorced families, and more. Furthermore, rainbow imagery is often used alongside the "each family is special" script, and same-gender couples are portrayed waving rainbow flags at Pride festivals (e.g., Neilson 2022), depicting lesbian and gay identities as ethereal sources of joy and community.

Essentially, sex and sexuality have been removed from scripts about lesbian and gay parenthood to simplify the topic for young children. Parents sidle concerns regarding the age-appropriateness of lesbian and gay identities by focusing on family dynamics and "pride" rather than prioritizing conversations about sexual attraction. Another way to think about this is to

consider the fact that same-gender couples are rarely the focus of children's media. We're not learning "Heather has a girlfriend." We're learning "Heather has two mommies…" The representation keeps the focus on children who are tangentially related to lesbian or gay individuals, rather than dealing directly with the topic of sexual attraction. This parallels the way that sex education typically focuses on sex as reproduction rather than sex as pleasure (Lamb, Lustig, and Graling 2012). "Rainbow families" are typically defined as families with same-gender parents, and "bisexual families" are rarely talked about in the same way that "gay families" or "lesbian families" are talked about. This is likely because parents do not predict the same need for explaining bisexuality to young children. Despite the increase in representation of same-gender couples in media for young children, research shows that the concept of bisexuality is essentially absent from picture books and children's television (Epstein 2014). There seems to be an assumption that a parent's bisexuality has no effect on the child's life, and so it should not be prioritized as a conversation with young children – consequently, the effects of parents' bisexuality on young children are essentially erased.

Waiting Until Puberty

Many interviewees define "age-appropriateness" for learning about a parent's bisexuality to be puberty or when children express an interest in dating. For them, talking to a young child about their bisexuality does not seem to make much sense. Parents of young children are often focused on making their children feel secure in their families, and introducing a parent's bisexuality sometimes feels destabilizing. In particular, parents worry that their children will experience unnecessary fears about their parents' relationship ending if they acknowledge their attraction to other people. Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) termed this the "'What about daddy?' Issue." In my sample, single parents appear more comfortable talking to their young

children about the possibility that they may date people of different genders, especially if they are actively dating. In contrast, parents in monogamous relationships worry that talking about their bisexuality may destabilize their children's perception of the parent's relationship. Hope, a 35-year-old White bisexual cisgender woman raising a five-year-old daughter with her lesbian wife, explains this dynamic.

> **Rowan**: You mentioned that you haven't explained to her [5-year-old daughter] that you used to date men, right?
>
> **Hope**: Right. I think that just wouldn't mean anything to her.
>
> **Rowan**: Do you think you'll ever have that conversation?
>
> **Hope**: Sure. I think that, certainly by the time she's hitting puberty and we're having discussions about dating and sexuality… that will be part of the conversation… It's something that I'm more hesitant about right now, in part because I want to make sure that we've established the stability of our family unit very much. So, I want her to feel like moms are together… this is a stable situation… I don't know if I would do it differently if I was straight, but I think that there's just not a lot of room for discussion of like… [My wife's] past or mine…

Instead of talking about her bisexuality with her young daughter, Hope focuses on making sure her daughter feels confident in the security of her parents' relationship. However, Hope does plan to talk to her daughter about bisexuality once she is going through puberty. She explains,

> **Hope**: Later, that will be part of the discussion… And the process of self-discovery and having some freedom to make those choices. I think that there's a good lesson in that for her, of you know… Sometimes you think that things are going a certain way, and you get a surprise, and things go differently…. So, I'm hoping that that will help her to be open-minded later on, to know like… Momma didn't realize she wanted to be with a woman until she was in her twenties. You know, there's a lot of room, and there's a lot of choices you can make, and you don't have to make them at any particular age… So, I think that will be useful later on. And I certainly expect to talk to her about it then.
>
> **Rowan**: So, for you… talking about your bisexuality with your daughter would be more in case she identifies as bisexual? Or… for her to understand the process of knowing her sexual identity?

> **Hope**: Yes, because my hope is… people are going to get more comfortable with the gender spectrum and the sexual spectrum. And I want her to see that fluidity now, and to continue to have that reinforced… that these are not hard and fast choices…

Hope's reasons for talking to her daughter about bisexuality during puberty aligns with what my survey data reveals: that bisexual parents often plan to disclose their bisexuality to their children to show solidarity in case their children also identify as bisexual. Hope feels like as people get more comfortable with the idea of sexual fluidity, the chances of her daughter identifying as bisexual are high. She imagines disclosing her own bisexuality at a time where it most benefits her daughter's self-exploration.

For parents who chose to wait to disclose their sexuality to their older children, the motivation was almost always to help their children understand and explore their own sexuality. Parents typically said they would wait until their child expressed an interest in dating, and they tended to predict this would happen anywhere between the ages of eight and thirteen. Shauna is a 39-year-old mixed-race bisexual cisgender woman married to a lesbian. She explains her motivation for waiting to self-disclose until her 7-month-old daughter's first crush but says she is not sure when this will happen.

> **Rowan**: Do you think you'll ever tell her that you're specifically bisexual?
>
> **Shauna**: I think so. I think, I think right now it's just, when she's younger it's more important for her to understand that I love her mom, her mom loves me, and we love her. I think as she gets older and starts navigating her own sexuality, I think at that point I'll let her know. Like, 'Listen… Mommy's a lesbian, and I'm a bisexual. Here's what that means.'
>
> **Rowan**: You said when she starts navigating her own sexuality, which of course you don't necessarily know when that'll be, but when do you think that might be?
>
> **Shauna**: I don't know. It seems to happen younger and younger these days. I had my little boyfriend in elementary school from what I can remember, right… And when I think about it… I was thinking I had crushes on a couple girls in my classes too, I just didn't act on them. I thought it was weird or like you're not supposed to. So, I mean, it could be as early as elementary school. We'll just kind of have to gauge it, but I think

> there's a moment she starts… talking about someone in school… that might be a clue for us to think maybe this is more than a friend and maybe there are feelings, and then we can talk about that.

By choosing to disclose their bisexuality later in relation to their children's own self-discovery, parents like Hope and Shauna express the idea that conversations about parents' sexuality should focus on issues that affect the child, rather than parents sharing their sexuality for the sake of personal disclosure. However, plenty of the bisexual parents I interviewed – roughly one half – argue in favor of talking to very young children about bisexuality.

Talking To Young Children

Parents who self-disclose their bisexuality to their young children tend to talk about their bisexuality rather matter-of-factly. These parents express less fears about destabilizing their children, and they seldom seem to experience any pushback from their children when they do talk about bisexuality. For example, Marg, a 54-year-old Italian American cisgender woman, explains how a conversation about her bisexuality unfolded with her teenage children when they were much younger.

> **Rowan**: You mentioned that you told them [the children] you were bisexual from really early on. Do you remember how you told them, and what that conversation sort of looked like?
>
> **Marg**: Well, they must have been two years old or three years old, so it's not like there was much of a conversation, you know. It was like, 'Well, you know, there are different kinds of people… some men like men, some men like women, and some people just like both men and women, and I'm one of them. I'm bisexual.' So that was pretty much it. And for them, because they were very young, they didn't have a preconception about it, so they were like, 'Oh, okay…' [Laughs] … That's the way it is. I think maybe later on, as they were growing up, we had to refine that a little bit more, because as they grew up, maybe they'd look at TV and they just saw straight people in movies, so I would try to point out every person in a movie that is not straight, and say… 'You can see there,' you know, 'that there is that [LGBTQ+ identity].' And nowadays it's much, much easier. I mean, even if you get Marvel comics… you can read the Marvel comics and see two men kissing each other, or two women kissing each other, so it's pretty normal.

As Marg explains, young children tend not to have preconceived ideas about how relationships should look, so when talking to her children about her bisexuality, she wasn't met with any anxiety or pushback. Marie, a 34-year-old Latinx cisgender mother, also talked about her pansexuality with her young son. To keep the conversation simple, Marie adapted a cultural script from the show *Schitt's Creek* and used an analogy comparing sexual preferences to juice preferences. She explains,

> I was like 'Some people only like orange juice, and that's it. Some people only like cranberry juice, and that's it. Some people like orange and cranberry. Some people like orange, cranberry, pineapple, and it doesn't matter what is on the label, they just like juice.' And he's like, 'I like juice.' I was like, 'Okay, great.' …And this is how it came up. It was something ridiculous. It was something silly, and he asked me what it was. I was like, 'Uh, here we go. We can do this.'

Parents who talk to their young children about bisexuality tend to simplify the topic by focusing on romantic attraction. Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) similarly found that bisexual mothers tend to talk about bisexuality in terms they think their children can comprehend. This typically involves talking about bisexuality as a form of romantic attraction rather than sexual attraction, though sometimes simpler metaphors are used if romantic attraction feels too complicated. Compared to lesbian and gay parents, it is less common for bisexual parents to use the "each family is special" script when explaining their identities to younger children. This is likely because bisexual erasure renders bisexuality invisible in most family structures.

HOW DO PARENTS DISCLOSE THEIR BISEXUALITY?

When I started this project, I imagined that the bisexual parents I talked to would recall specific conversations where they sat down with their children and "came out" to them as bisexual. I predicted these conversations were mostly happening with older children who would have preconceived notions about bisexuality, and I assumed it would mean something serious, or at the very least interesting, when their parents said they were bisexual. I expected these

conversations would be singular and memorable. And I figured that parents would spend a lot of time planning and anticipating the conversation where they disclosed their bisexuality to their children, similar to how young adults often ruminate over the best ways to disclose their sexuality to their parents. However, the bisexual parents in my sample tell a different story.

Regardless of whether parents disclose their bisexuality to their young children or wait until their children are older, the majority of parents in my sample do not share a typical "coming out" narrative – meaning, identity disclosure rarely feels like a developmental milestone culminating in a singular revelatory conversation, as it is often portrayed in research and media (e.g., Cass 1979; Coleman 1982; Rhoads 1995; Troiden 1989). For parents who talk about their bisexuality to their young children, conversations about sexuality are often so embedded in daily life that it is difficult to recall a memorable coming out moment. Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) referred to this phenomenon as "seed-planting," suggesting that bisexual parents often have several small conversations about bisexuality rather than one larger conversation. And with parents who talk about their bisexuality to their older children, conversations about bisexuality are typically sparked by situations happening in their children's lives, making self-disclosure spontaneous rather than planned.

Researchers often use the term "coming out" to describe the experience of disclosing one's sexuality. As Orne (2011) acknowledged, scholars rely on different definitions of the term "coming out," and many authors assume a shared meaning and fail to define the term. Early theorists used the metaphor "coming out" to refer to a development stage where gay people eventually accepted their identity and disclosed their identity to the people in their lives (e.g., Cass 1979; Coleman 1982; Rhoads 1995; Troiden 1989). These early definitions of "coming out" assumed that a person was eventually "out" to everyone in their life. In Orne's (2011) fantastic

summary of this literature, they introduced the concept "strategic outness" to account for the reality that "outness" is not necessarily a singular or linear experience. They explained that "the concept of strategic outness defies notions of an end point to the coming out process," and "highlights the contextuality of coming out, including the way it is embedded within social relationships and discourses" (688). To exemplify this strategic outness, Orne (2011) quoted a gay man in their study who said, "you will always have to 'out' yourself to new people" (687). When explaining that strategic outness is "embedded within social relationships and discourses," (688) Orne argued that people are often out in certain social contexts but not others, or that people are often out to those they deem socially close but not to strangers or acquaintances. At the same time, strategic outness does not consider that a person might need to out themselves repeatedly to the same person, or that a person might disclose their sexuality to someone who has no preconceived notions about sexuality. Yet this is the reality of many of the bisexual parents in my sample who considered disclosing their bisexuality to their children. Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) similarly found that bisexual parents often repeatedly disclosed their sexuality, sometimes because their children forgot and needed to be reminded of it.

For many of the bisexual parents in my sample, the idea of being "out" to their children does not really make sense. Most of the parents who talk to their young children about sexuality cannot even recall a specific time where they told their children they were bisexual. Instead, they say their bisexuality is always openly talked about. As their children develop, conversations about bisexuality deepen, but there is rarely an obvious moment when parents change from being "closeted" to "out" in their children's lives. For example, Carrie, a 45-year-old Black and White cisgender woman, has both an ex-husband and an ex-wife. This has given her a tangible way to explain her bisexuality to her seven- and four-year-old children in simple terms. She says,

> Well, I really message it in terms of like saying, you know, I used to be married to a man. [My children] actually know my ex-husband… He's a good friend and they refer to him as their uncle. So, I'm like, 'Oh I used to be married to Uncle So and So, and then I also used to be married to a woman, and blah blah blah…' I think I just kind of make it very matter of fact. And then we have a lot of friends who are part of the LGBT community who have kids, so I think they're just growing up kind of knowing that that's a thing.

In fact, Carrie explains that her bisexuality is such an embedded part of her conversations with her children, that she actually forgot to explain that people could be anything other than bisexual. She shares,

> So, I've always been like, you know, when you grow up, you might get married and maybe you'll get married to a man or maybe you'll get married to a woman or you might not get married at all, you know, whatever… So then one day, we were talking and my oldest said something about, 'Mommy, what if you get married again? You can get married to So and So.' And he named a friend of mine who's a straight woman. And I was like, 'Oh no. We wouldn't get married. She only likes men.' And he goes, 'What do you mean?' And I realized I had tried so hard to be bi-normative in the way I discuss marriage and relationships that I never explained to them that there was such a thing as monosexuality. They literally had no concept of it… And he was like, 'What do you mean she only likes men? I don't understand,' and so I had to explain to them the existence of monosexuality. And I said, 'Well, there are some people who, instead of, you know, loving men and women, they only love men, or they only fall in love with women.' And he was like, 'Oh, okay… Maybe you could marry So and So,' and he named a friend of mine who's a gay man. I was like, 'Oh no. He only likes men.' And He was like, 'Ugh!' You know, like just so exasperated that he kept coming up with these examples and finding out these people were disappointingly monosexual. He had just assumed that everyone was bi, just because that's how I always talked… At that point, I realized I've done my kids a disservice because if either of them are monosexual, I don't want them to feel like that's a bad thing. So, I said, 'You know, when you grow up… you might also feel that way, like you only fall in love with men or you only fall in love with women, and that's okay! You don't have to be someone who can fall in love with both.' And then my son says… he said that when he grows up, he intends to just fall in love with women. And I was like, 'That's cool! You can totally do that, there's nothing wrong with that.'

Though Orne (2011) did not talk about this as an essential part of strategic outness, there is an assumption in most research on "coming out" that LGB people are disclosing their sexuality to people who are already informed on societal norms about sexuality. For example, Cass (1979) assumed people have preconceived notions about sexuality and that "disclosure of a homosexual

identity naturally brings about a reaction of some kind" (234). Though some people fantasize about the idea of a "post-gay" society where you never have to out yourself because there is no such thing as a normative sexuality, evidence suggests that we have not reached this supposed utopia (Orne 2011). However, Carrie showcases that in some ways, young children are already living in this post-gay society where they have no preconceived notions about sexuality. Rather than Carrie having to out herself as bisexual to her children, she created a scenario where her bisexuality was the norm in her children's lives. Carrie did not tell her children that everyone is bisexual; Carrie just talked openly about her own romantic history and was open-minded about whatever gender her children might eventually be attracted to. For Carrie, the moment where she explained to her children that some people are not bisexual was more of a "coming in" moment than a "coming out" moment.

Furthermore, "coming out" is typically seen as an experience that centers the LGB person, but when bisexual parents talk about their sexuality with their children, they are often decentering themselves and using their bisexuality as a steppingstone to talk about their children's own identities. My findings here support those of Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022), who found that bisexual parents tend to take a child-focused approach to discussing bisexuality: using child-friendly language and allowing children to lead conversations about sexuality. In Cass's (1979) well-known model of homosexual identity formation, identity disclosure was presented as something that happens during the stage of identity acceptance. Cass (1979) and many prior researchers (e.g., De Monteflores and Schultz 1978; Rhoads 1995; Rust 1993; Troiden 1989) framed coming out as a step in a LGB person's personal development, which typically happens after an LGB person has grappled with and then accepted their sexuality. Orne (2011) criticized these stage-type approaches, explaining that LGB identity

development is not necessarily linear or removed from social influence. Cox and Gallois (1996) also criticized earlier representations of LGB identity development and expanded the conversation by integrating social identity theory, which suggests that LGB identity develops in reaction to social circumstances. Even when factoring in certain social dynamics, as in Orne's (2011) concept of strategic outness, the majority of work in this area assumes that LGB people are prioritizing their personal safety or well-being when deciding who to out themselves to. Yet the bisexual parents in my research are engaging with a different social influence. Rather than prioritizing their own well-being when deciding whether to disclose their identity to their children, they tend to prioritize how disclosing their sexuality will benefit or complicate their children's development. Instead of asking whether it is safe or personally beneficial to disclose their bisexuality to their children, they are asking whether self-disclosure will somehow help their children understand their own sexuality better. This is particularly true for parents who wait until their children are puberty-aged to discuss bisexuality.

Additionally, not only do these conversations decenter the parents, but often times, parents are not the ones initiating the conversations about bisexuality. Parents often let their children start conversations about sexuality, so they are responding to questions about their sexuality spontaneously, rather than encountering the typical anticipation and preparation experienced when people disclose their sexuality in their personal lives. In much of the literature on coming out, there is an assumed level of autonomy that LGB people have when deciding whether to out themselves. Especially when looking at older stage theories like Cass's (1979), researchers often assumed that LGB people were given time to question and accept their identity before choosing to share it. And though Orne (2011) diverged from stage theory, they still assumed a level of autonomy when explaining how LGB people often choose to be out to some

people but not out to others. I interviewed parents with varying levels of acceptance toward their bisexuality, and sometimes I spoke with parents who had not really considered disclosing their bisexuality to their children. Regardless of whether parents accepted their bisexuality or wanted to disclose it, children often asked questions which led to parents' identity disclosure. Florence, a 28-year-old multiracial cisgender woman, talks about how her nine-year-old daughter's curiosity led to a conversation about bisexuality:

> My daughter… She has had lots of questions about [sexuality] particularly after it became clear that my boyfriend was going to be in our lives for me in a romantic capacity. She began asking about how you know who you like and what sort of person you like. And I see the very earliest inklings of her having bisexuality herself. When she had asked me one day, like… 'What sort of person do you look for when you're looking for someone you want to date?' I said I look for someone who makes me laugh, and she said, 'Does it matter to you if they're a girl or a boy?' And I said it's never mattered to me if they're a girl or a boy, but does it matter to you? And she said, 'I don't think I could see myself marrying a girl, but they're so beautiful and I'd love to take them to parties.'

When Florence's daughter first asked the question about who she was interested in dating, Florence did not mention gender. Then, her daughter specifically asked Florence whether the gender of her dates mattered, and Florence answered no. Florence did not plan to talk about her bisexuality in this moment, but in came up organically because her daughter was curious. This quote also illustrates the tendency of bisexual parents to decenter themselves when disclosing their identity to their children. Immediately after Florence revealed that she was attracted to multiple genders, she asked her daughter the same question. At no point during this interaction did Florence intend to talk about her bisexuality, nor did she linger on her own bisexuality as a conversation topic.

In my prior analysis of the survey data for this project, I used "coming out" terminology to describe bisexual parents' experiences disclosing their bisexuality to their children (Haus 2021). Though I knew of and grappled with Orne's (2011) notion of strategic outness, at the time

I still assumed that the "coming out" metaphor was applicable to bisexual parents (Haus 2021). However, after careful analysis of my interview data, I realize that bisexual parents rarely come out to their children in the ways that most researchers discuss coming out. I argue that most published work on coming out assumes people come out to a knowledgeable audience, and most work centers the LGB person's own plans and desires to come out. In contrast, the parents in my sample often disclose their bisexuality while simultaneously shaping their children's knowledge and acceptance of LGB identities. And though some parents do plan to disclose their identity in advance, disclosure often happens when children ask or when parents feel it will most benefit their children. Because of these discrepancies, I have chosen to stray from the "coming out" metaphor in favor of a more literal description of bisexual parents' experiences with disclosure.

DISCUSSION

Lacking a clear cultural script for disclosing their bisexuality, bisexual parents choose if, why, when, and how they disclose their bisexuality to their children. Despite raising their children in a culture of bisexual erasure where bisexuality remains underrepresented in children's media, the majority of bisexual parents recruited during my first phase of survey research (95 percent of bisexual women, 73 percent of bisexual men, and 98 percent of bisexual nonbinary people) planned to disclose their bisexuality to their children. Among the various reasons bisexual parents give for disclosing their identities, they prioritize honesty and solidarity in their conversations with their children about bisexuality. Given the lack of representation of bisexuality in mass media, and children's media especially, parents vary in their views about age-appropriateness for discussing bisexuality with their children. Whereas some parents prefer to wait until their children go through puberty, others invent unique ways to talk to their young children about their bisexuality. Regardless of whether parents talk to their young or older

children about bisexuality, parents rarely follow conventional "coming out" expectations when discussing their bisexuality with their children. These findings further support the ongoing debate in queer theory that "coming out" may not be the best framework to explain identity disclosure among queer people.

For lesbian and gay parents, the "each family is special" script is essential for explaining same-gender families to young children. However, in this chapter, I explore the ways that bisexual families are sidelined in this script, leading them to develop unique and nuanced strategies for managing their children's knowledge of their bisexual identities. The absence of bisexuality in children's media and parenting resources seems to imply that a parent's bisexuality has little impact on how a family operates. Yet, in the next chapter, I argue that a parent's bisexuality is actually advantageous. The "bisexual parent advantage" suggests that a parent's bisexuality does impact the family system in a significantly positive way, which I argue provides a justification for increasing representation of bisexuality in children's media and beyond.

Chapter Two. The Bisexual Parent Advantage: Open-Minded and Better Prepared

Research suggests that lesbians and gays parent differently and sometimes better than straight parents (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Gartrell and Bos 2010; Crouch et al. 2014). In particular, lesbians and gays report closer relationships with their children, and their children tend to be more tolerant and open-minded compared to children of straight parents (Crowl, Ahn, and Baker 2008; Goldberg 2007). Typically, these advantages are attributed to gender and to lesbian households specifically. Studies indicate that lesbian mothers "bestow a double dose of caretaking, communication and intimacy," given that women score higher than men on each of these measures (Biblarz and Stacey 2010: 17). Bisexual parents are rarely mentioned in these conversations, often because they are categorized as either straight or lesbian/gay depending on the gender dynamics of their relationships (Bowling et al. 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013). In the present chapter, I find that bisexual parents, regardless of whether they are in same-gender or different-gender relationships, see themselves as parenting differently than either straight or lesbian/gay parents. Bisexuals feel they are uniquely empathetic to their children's curiosity and potential struggles with sexual identity, and thus more open-minded and better prepared to talk about sexuality with their children.

Bisexual parents believe they are more open-minded than non-bisexual parents about topics related to sexuality and gender. Additionally, they feel their attraction to multiple genders better prepares them to handle conversations about sexuality, regardless of how their children identify. In the current chapter, I explore these advantages by comparing my interviews with bisexual parents to those with lesbian, gay, and straight parents. My findings suggest that bisexuals do appear more open-minded than straight, lesbian, or gay parents on topics related to sexual fluidity and transgender identities. Additionally, although gay parents feel prepared to

raise straight children, straight parents feel significantly less prepared to raise LGBTQ+ children compared to either lesbian/gay or bisexual parents.

When asked about the origin of their open-mindedness regarding sexuality, gay parents in my sample explain that their experiences with discrimination lead them to be more empathetic and accepting of their children's sexual identities. Bisexual parents, in comparison, say that their experiences of marginalization from both straight and lesbian/gay communities leads them to be even more accepting toward their children's sexuality than gay parents. I argue that sexual identity and experiences with discrimination may be more influential than the gender makeup of relationships in determining certain positive outcomes associated with LGB parents. I make a case for studying bisexual parents separately from lesbian or gay parents, while additionally providing a framework to reexamine existing research on lesbians and gays which tends to attribute gender dynamics as primarily responsible for parenting differences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social scientists have a long history of researching the outcomes of lesbian and gay parenting compared to straight parenting. Some of this research discourages legal protections for same-gender parents by suggesting that lesbians and gays accrue worse outcomes for their children (e.g., the widely disputed Regnerus 2012), while the majority of this literature suggests that lesbians and gays parent differently, but not worse than heterosexuals (e.g., Stacey and Biblarz 2001). Moreover, a growing body of work suggests that lesbian and gay parents offer distinct advantages to their children. For example, Crowl, Ahn, and Baker (2008) found that same-sex parents reported having significantly better relationships with their children than heterosexual parents.

Despite the fears raised among opponents of same-sex marriage, several studies have concluded that children of same-sex couples tend to score better on measures of psychological, behavioral, and academic well-being in comparison to straight parents (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Crouch et al. 2014; Gartrell and Bos 2010). Given that same-sex couples often must take extra steps to conceive or adopt children, these parents unsurprisingly tend to spend more time with their children and show more warmth and affection toward their children in comparison to straight parents who tend to conceive through sexual intercourse (Biblarz and Savci 2010).

In Biblarz and Stacey's (2010) popular article "How Does the Gender of Parents Matter," the authors concluded that, based on the published research, "one could argue that two women parent better on average than a woman and a man, or at least than a woman and man with a traditional division of family labor" (17). Biblarz and Stacey (2010) made this claim based on their review of several published articles in the discipline. A key conclusion they reached is that families with two mothers tend to have similar strengths to those associated with straight families. Additionally, given that women in general tend to outperform straight men on measures of parenting skills and investment, research predicts that families with two mothers offer a stronger foundation for their children. In contrast, straight men tend to perform the worst on measurements of parenting skills and investment, meaning that children of straight parents may be worse off. Biblarz and Stacey (2010) also posited that gay men likely share similar strengths to lesbian women, though they noted that there is hardly any research on gay fatherhood.

Although Biblarz and Stacey (2010) did not explicitly state that same-gender parents are more open-minded or better prepared to talk about sexuality with their children, their reference to lesbians' greater parental involvement and parenting skills suggests that same-gender couples may be better suited for all types of parenting tasks, including those related to teaching children

about diverse topics and perspectives. Additional research supports this claim, particularly in relation to lesbian mothers' openness toward their children's gender transgressions (Fulcher, Sutfin, and Patterson 2007; Sutfin et al. 2007). Sutfin et al. (2007) found that lesbian mothers tend to hold fewer conservative views on gender and surround their children with less gendered physical environments. Similarly, Fulcher et al. (2007) found that lesbian mothers hold more liberal attitudes toward children's gender-related behavior compared to straight mothers or fathers. Little research has been done to explore gay father's open-mindedness toward their children's diverse identities.

Research also shows that lesbian mothers are more inclined than straight parents to teach their children about diverse sexual orientations (Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011). In contrast, Martin (2009) found that most heterosexual mothers assume their children will identify as heterosexual, and very few straight mothers prepare for the possibility that their children might be gay. Many straight parents prioritize talking to their children about sexually transmitted infections, teenage pregnancies, and various sexual behaviors; however, conversations about sexual orientation tend to be delayed or deprioritized (Bowling et al. 2016; El-Shaieb and Wurtele 2009). Additionally, Martin (2009) discovered that many straight mothers actively strive to prevent non-straight identities in their children. And Bucher (2007) found that fathers of gay sons often express homophobic sentiments toward their children. Straight fathers in particular seem to be invested in their sons' heterosexuality (Kane 2006). Overall, this research on straight parents tends to imply that straight parents are less open-minded than lesbian or gay parents, at least toward their children's sexuality and gender expression.

An important yet often overlooked point in much of the research on same-gender parents' open-mindedness is that parents' political leanings tend to be more salient than the gender

composition of their relationships when looking at parental acceptance of gender transgression and other areas of diversity (e.g., Fulcher et al. 2007; Sutfin et al. 2007). While research shows that lesbian mothers tend to be more liberal than straight parents (Fulcher et al. 2007), researchers should attend to diversity of beliefs within lesbian and gay communities. Furthermore, while Sutfin et al. (2007) and Fulcher et al. (2007) wrote of lesbian mothers' acceptance toward their children's gender transgressions, neither talked explicitly about the acceptance of transgender identities. Given the history of transgender-related discrimination within the LGBTQ+ community (Parameter, Galiher, and Maughan 2021; Stryker and Betcher 2016), it is important not to assume that lesbian or gay parents are inherently accepting of their children's transgender identities. Gabb (2004) highlighted an epistemological conflict in some research on lesbian motherhood, explaining that feminist research sometimes describes the lesbian motherhood experience monolithically while neglecting nuances in the personal outlooks and practices of lesbian mothers.

Nevertheless, children of lesbian and gay parents tend to describe themselves as more tolerant and open-minded than their peers. Leddy, Gartrell, and Bos (2012) found that children of lesbian mothers felt that being raised by lesbian mothers made them more tolerant and accepting of others. Similarly, In Goldberg's (2007) study of 46 adult children of LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) parents, the majority of participants felt they were more open-minded and tolerant of various identities, including sexuality as well as race and people with "alternative" lifestyles and interests. Goldberg's (2007) study provided support that parents' sexual identity rather than the gender composition of parents' relationships may be more influential in determining children's openness, given that several of the participants attributed their openness to their gay fathers despite being raised by their straight mothers.

Although there is now a robust literature describing the outcomes of children raised by same-sex couples across various measures of well-being, less is known about how bisexual parents fare in comparison. While some research does mention bisexual parents (e.g., Goldberg 2007), this research tends not to examine bisexuals separately from lesbian and gay parents. Instead, bisexuals in same-gender relationships are treated as equivalent to lesbian and gay parents, and bisexuals in different-gender relationships are treated as equivalent to straight parents (Bowling et al. 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013). This puts bisexual parents in the position where they may be grouped in with straight parents and assumed to be less open-minded than their lesbian and gay peers.

Bisexual scholars are currently attempting to remedy this challenge, though few studies have been published to date. One study on bisexual parents found that, like lesbian mothers, bisexuals in both same-gender and different-gender relationships intend to discuss sexual and gender diversity with their children (Bowling et al. 2016). In my prior research, I explored bisexual parents' reasons for disclosing their sexuality to their children, and I found that many bisexual parents intended to talk about their bisexuality in order to encourage their children to be accepting of various LGBTQ+ identities (Haus 2021). Similarly, the bisexual mothers in a study by Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie (2022) reported a desire to support their LGBTQ+ children and celebrate diversity in their families. Although bisexual parents are understudied, a growing body of work suggests that bisexual parents are similarly invested in teaching their children acceptance and tolerance of sexuality.

In this chapter of my dissertation, I extend this research by examining how bisexual parents view themselves not only as comparably open-minded and prepared to talk to their children about sexuality, but as actually *more* open-minded and *better* prepared than either

lesbian/gay or straight parents. Interestingly, this is true both for bisexuals in same-gender and different-gender relationships. Thus, my results align with those of Sutfin et al. (2007) and Fulcher et al. (2007), who wrote that identity may be more salient than gendered relationships when determining parents' open-mindedness toward children's gender transgressions. I am also in dialogue with Gabb (2004), who reminded us that same-gender couples are not a monolith, and with Goldberg (2007), who found that children of LGB parents felt they were more open-minded and tolerant than children of straight parents, regardless of whether they lived in same-gender households.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In some ways, bisexual parents talk about the "Bisexual Parenting Advantage" as a superpower, explaining that their bisexuality enables them to see another dimension and to understand concepts that straight, lesbian, or gay people could not possibly wrap their heads around. Bisexual parents tend to attribute this superpower to their experiences of being marginalized by both straight and lesbian/gay communities, rendering them without a sense of belonging. Research supports this idea that bisexuals face marginalization from both straight and lesbian/gay individuals (Dyar and Feinstein 2018; Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell 2009). Yoshino (2000) explained that bisexuals are discriminated by both straight and lesbian/gay individuals because each of these groups are invested in uplifting a binary framework of sexuality. According to Yoshino (2000), even acknowledging the existence of bisexuality complicates one's ability to prove that they are straight or lesbian/gay. As such, bisexuality threatens the safety that straight people feel in expressing their gender, and it threatens the bonds lesbian/gay people form in socializing with one another. From this perspective, Yoshino (2000) explained that bisexuals are discriminated against within the LGBTQ+ community because their

identity sometimes feels destabilizing to lesbians and gays who already struggle to have their identities recognized by the larger heteronormative culture. Additionally, as noted in Chapter One of this dissertation, bisexuals are uniquely stigmatized as untrustworthy, mentally unstable, and incapable of monogamy (Dyar and Feinstein 2018). Through this erasure and stigma, bisexual parents feel they acquire empathy and knowledge of different ways of being. Similar to feminist standpoint theory, which explains how women's underprivileged position provides them with epistemic privilege through a deeper understanding of patriarchal oppression (e.g., Hartsock 1983; Smith 1974), the Bisexual Parent Advantage unfortunately stems from bisexual stigma.

Feminist standpoint theorists explain that by experiencing oppression, marginalized groups develop greater awareness of oppressive structures, which tends to lead marginalized groups to have more complex and often better ways of understanding social inequality (Hartsock 1983; Smith 1974). Of course, marginalization is intersectional, meaning that multiple facets of our identities compound and influence how we experience oppression and understand inequity. For example, Audre Lorde (2007) explained in *Sister Outsider* that Black children of lesbian women have an advantageous mindset. She wrote, "Black children of lesbian couples have an advantage because they learn, very early, that oppression comes in many different forms, none of which have anything to do with their own worth" (2007: 64). Although oppression itself is certainly not a privilege, and although knowledge/experience of one type of oppression does not automatically "translate" into knowledge of another, these scholars provide evidence that the experiences of marginalized groups can afford them a more robust understanding of power and inequality in relation to their marginalization. Similarly, the bisexual parents in my study say that their experiences with bisexual stigma prime them to better understand the social construction of a sexual binary, which enables them to be more open-minded in speaking to their children about

sexuality and gender. In this chapter, I use feminist standpoint theory as a guiding theory to understand how bisexual marginalization leads to bisexual parent's unique open-mindedness and preparedness in raising lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children.

THE BISEXUAL PARENT ADVANTAGE

The bisexual parents in my sample (both in same-gender and different-gender relationships) discuss their bisexuality as uniquely advantageous to their parenting. These parents feel they have a unique advantage compared to straight *and* lesbian/gay parents. Bisexual parents feel that they are more open-minded and accepting of their children's sexuality and gender. Bisexual parents also feel that they are better prepared to talk to their children about sex and sexuality because they believe they can relate to their children no matter what gender they are attracted to.

The Advantage of Being More Open-Minded

Undeniably, bisexual parents link their bisexuality to their open-mindedness. Most bisexual parents in my sample say that being bisexual makes them more open-minded. Occupying a highly stigmatized (and often erased) marginal identity, bisexual parents feel that they are able to empathize with other marginalized individuals, and in particular, with bisexual and transgender individuals. For example, Olivia, a 34-year-old White transgender woman, talks about her experience being discriminated by both straight and lesbian/gay individuals, which she feels has led her to be more understanding of discrimination and more open-minded toward her 18-year-old son' sexual exploration. She says,

> I know that I've even faced my own sort of dismissal from people who were gay and even lesbians just for identifying as bisexual or being bisexual… There's even internal discrimination inside the community… I think people who are bisexual and who have had levels of discrimination from both sides are much more… are in a much better position not to denigrate people who have gone through really horrible stuff… I think the people who are bisexual who experience discrimination from even within the [LGBTQ+]

> community as well as without… I think they understand better how to be open to their child and who their child's [sexual] identity is.

For Olivia, her encounters with bisexual stigma are what ultimately enable her to empathize with her son's sexual exploration. Olivia explains that bisexuals have a unique experience with discrimination because they are often discriminated against by people within the LGBTQ+ community, as discussed in the theoretical framework section of this chapter. Olivia feels she grew to be an open-minded parent after identifying as bisexual and experiencing this marginalization from people both outside and inside her community. Olivia explains her ability to empathize with her son's sexual exploration and respect however he identifies because she palpably understands how it feels to be rejected for her own sexuality.

Bette, a 39-year-old White cisgender woman with two elementary-aged children, offers a similar perspective. Though she does not explicitly reference her experiences with bisexual stigma, she explains that being bisexual has increased her awareness toward less traditional romantic and family life paths. She explains,

> I just think [being a bisexual parent] makes me more open-minded for whatever my kids are gonna go through… It just gives me that different perspective. You know, I'm not automatically expecting them to follow that road… like "This is what you do, and this is how you grow up and who you partner with, and you have three kids, and you're all in your house…" I know that there's other options. There's other things that we can get into. And it won't be this devastating loss for me if they just do things differently.

Parenting research suggests that many parents have preconceived notions about how their children will identify. In particular, straight parents typically imagine their children will grow up to be straight (Martin 2009). The straight, lesbian, and gay parents in my study rarely expect their children to be bisexual when asked how they imagined their children might identify. Yet bisexual parents seem to actively expect that their children may identify in nontraditional ways. Bette explains that being bisexual allows her to see a different future for her children, and she

does not grieve the loss of a traditional heteronormative life for them. Many of the bisexual parents in my sample purport similar relationships to open-mindedness as Olivia and Bette. Although bisexuality is common, and bisexuals make up the largest portion of the LGBTQ+ community (Gates 2011), bisexuality is still highly marginalized and othered in our society. Through experiencing this marginalization, many bisexual parents feel they develop a broader understanding of the world that allows them to empathize with their children should they identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

By contrast, some bisexual parents view their open-mindedness as the catalyst allowing them to identify as bisexual, rather than attributing their open-mindedness to their bisexuality. For these parents, being open-minded feels like an essential part of their identity which enables them to explore their sexuality without judgment. Being open to sexual exploration is what leads them to experimenting and ultimately identifying as bisexual. Open-mindedness is also an essential part of their parenting, but they view this open-mindedness as a deeply intrinsic part of themselves, separate from their bisexuality. Emma, a 44-year-old White cisgender woman with a four-year-old daughter, explains this concept well:

> I guess I think part of my bisexuality is part of my general openness, and so I think that my parenting might be influenced by my general openness of which my bisexuality is a part of, but I don't know that it's a standout part… I think being open-minded allowed me to realize I was bisexual. I scored very high on the openness on all the personality measures and certainly did that before realizing I was bisexual, so I have a feeling it was openness that allowed me to realize it.

Other parents are more explicit about the connection between open-mindedness and discovering their bisexuality. For example, both Harper and Charlotte feel that bisexuality is almost an inevitability for open-minded individuals. Harper, a 46-year-old White cisgender woman with an 11-year-old daughter explains, "I think the more open-minded you are… identifying as bi is

more likely, versus choosing one side or the other." Put more bluntly, Charlotte, a 31-year-old White cisgender woman with teenage- and toddler-aged children, says,

> I think that it's a matter of just being open to finding who you're compatible with, versus putting a strict label on what you have to be attracted to. I think everybody's bisexual, honestly… at least a little bit. I think everybody was meant to be far more open than we are.

Harper and Charlotte both believe that being open-minded led them to identifying as bisexual. Charlotte explains that she believes everyone is bisexual, but most people are not open-minded enough to realize this about themselves. Open-mindedness is a large part of how these parents conceptualize themselves, but it is not attributed specifically to bisexuality.

The idea that everyone is "at least a little bit" bisexual has some support in research (Chivers 2017; Reiger, Chivers, and Bailey 2005), though there is harm in this narrative. The argument that everyone is bisexual can be weaponized against lesbians and gays to suggest they have a choice in who they are attracted to. And some bisexual parents that I interviewed dislike the implication that everyone is bisexual, saying it invalidates their attempts to have their own bisexuality recognized. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider the link here between open-mindedness and bisexuality, given that many of the bisexual parents I spoke with felt their open-mindedness was hugely advantageous in their parenting.

Regardless of whether bisexuality leads to open-mindedness or vice versa, the parents in my sample agree that these two identities are related. In particular, bisexual parents feel they are particularly open-minded toward their children's sexual and gender identities.

Open-minded toward children's sexuality. Research suggests that lesbians and gays are more accepting of their children's sexualities compared to straight parents (Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011; Martin 2009). Bisexuals are sometimes lumped into this research, with the assumption that bisexuals in same-gender relationships will be comparably accepting to lesbians

and gays, whereas bisexuals in different-gender relationships are routinely left out of the conversation (Bowling et al. 2016; Ross and Dobinson 2013). However, the parents in my sample (both in same-gender and different gender relationships) often feel their bisexuality makes them not just comparable to lesbians and gays, but actually more accepting than any other group of parents. For example, Florence, a 28-year-old mixed race parent, explains her observations of how this openness toward sexuality plays out differently as a bisexual parent to her nine- and four-year-old children. She says,

> I've noticed that in terms of parenting, the aspirations with sexual identity of your child tend to lean a little bit more closely to what the parent is in either end of that spectrum. I think straight parents tend to have the expectation that their children will bring home an oppositely gendered child or have a big thing when they tell them they're coming out, and I think gay parents kind of always have the hope that they will be the parents that a gay child is born to because they understand what that struggle is like, and they can deal with it with beauty and grace in a way that they can hope all straight parents will, but sadly a lot of gay children do not get. And what I've noticed of bisexual parenting that is true of me and a few other bisexual parent friends that I have, is that we tend to have less expectations of what our children are seeking in other partners other than their happiness. I think… and it's kind of an agreement among my bisexual friends and I… I would hope there's no coming out. I would hope that if my daughter enters a relationship with a woman, she will bring her home the same way she would bring a boyfriend home… There's no conversation about the gender of this person. There's generally less attachment, I think, to who they choose to love and in what fashion that takes, and more attachment to happiness for them.

Research does suggest that straight parents tend to assume their children will also identify as straight (Martin 2009). Florence's assumption that gay parents want gay children is not entirely accurate. While many gay parents in my sample do express a desire for LGBTQ+ children, parents typically do not explicitly distinguish between a desire for lesbian, gay, or bisexual children. And in fact, some of the lesbian and gay parents in my sample prefer to have straight children because they either do not want their children to experience the same marginalization they face, or they do not want to be told that they are responsible for causing their children to be lesbian or gay. With that said, it is interesting that Florence has observed this distinction between

lesbian/gay parents and bisexual parents in her friend group. Although the lesbian and gay parents in my sample express an openness toward their children's sexuality, bisexual parents are definitely more explicit in their support of sexually fluid identities.

James, a 56-year-old White cisgender man with four adult children, deepens this discussion, suggesting that monosexual people (people who are only attracted to one gender) simply might not be capable of really understanding bisexuality.

> **James**: I've likened the idea of bisexuals versus monosexuals as… if you've ever watched science fiction… Most science fiction shows are crossing a three-dimensional environment somehow. While we can look at a 3D environment, we can look at a 2D environment and recognize that a 2D environment can't understand the third dimension. And I think it's sort of like that with people who are strictly heterosexual or homosexual. They can't understand something beyond that. Whether it's bi or pan or omni or whatever else… They only see the black and White. The two dimensions. They don't have a concept of what the third dimension can be. It's really hard to explain that to somebody that doesn't understand that… I kind of feel like I've got this different dimension way of looking at things, and I can see things that are just heterosexual or homosexual… But I can also see this great stand in between them involving the middle category.
>
> **Rowan**: Do you think that having this broader idea of what's possible influences the way you look at your kids in any way?
>
> **James**: I think so. Because I see that they have an array of potentials, and not just this-or-that… I can see straight's a possibility. I can see homosexual as a possibility. But I can also see pan and bi as possibilities…

Because of his experience being bisexual, James feels he is able to imagine possibilities for his child's identity that straight, lesbian, or gay parents may not have access to. While it may feel extreme to compare bisexuality to a dimension that straight and lesbian/gay people do not have access to, James is right that bisexual parents are more prone to considering that their children might identify as something different than straight, lesbian, or gay. Plenty of the non-bisexual parents I interviewed say they are open-minded to LGBTQ+ children, but few explicitly mention bisexuality or elaborate that sexual fluidity is a possibility for their children. In contrast, the majority of bisexual parents in my sample articulate the possibility that their children may

identify as bisexual, and most joyfully welcome this prospect. Nora, a 37-year-old biracial parent, summarizes most of the bisexual parents in my sample's feelings toward their children's sexuality when she says, "I don't have any hopes for her [nine-year-old daughter's sexuality]. I just want her to be happy, really and truly."

Open-minded toward children's gender. Many bisexual parents talk about their open-mindedness toward their children's LGBTQ+ identities in general, including both sexuality and gender. In fact, bisexual parents in my sample often make comparisons between acceptance toward bisexuality and acceptance toward transgender identities, acknowledging that both of these identities face marginalization within the LGBTQ+ community (Parameter et al. 2021; Ulrich 2011). One way that bisexual parents talk about their acceptance toward their children's gender is to clarify that although they know their children's sex assigned at birth, they are not actually sure about their children's gender. For example, Dusty, a 39-year-old White cisgender father, says,

> I don't know if [my daughter] is straight… I don't even know if she's a girl, you know. That may change too. Those are all things that will be dealt with in a positive way and not anything negative towards her. No shame involved, I guess is what I'm trying to say… Because of [my wife's and my] experience as bisexuals, it goes over into our parenting in that by our very nature, we're going to be accepting and affirming of any differences that she might have in her own sexuality or gender identity that may come up as she gets older. It's not going to be a struggle at least within our household if she is queer…

Dusty gives his 9-year-old daughter a lot of room to explore her sexuality and gender. He attributes this acceptance toward her sexuality and gender to both his and his wife's experience being bisexual. Although he uses gendered pronouns for his daughter, he acknowledges that she might eventually express a desire to be referred to as something other than a cisgender girl. While many bisexual parents talk about their children's gender in this way, some go so far as to only refer to their children with the gender-neutral pronouns "they, them, and theirs" until their

children are old enough to declare their own gender. Andy, a 26-year-old multiracial genderqueer parent, explains their plans for referring to their expected newborn baby with gender neutral pronouns:

> We get a lot of push back from some older people… I mean like 50-plus… Every single appointment that we have, they ask, "You know what your child's gender is?" because that's being very well-meaning, and I know that there are people who want to keep their child as a surprise. And it's tiring to tell everyone, "We know the sex, but we're waiting for them to be able to articulate their own gender. It would probably be best for them to figure it out…" Probably what would happen is I will, depending on the situation, refer to our child as "they" or "she." And [my husband] will… refer to our child as "she" or "they." That's the option of gender neutrality without having to go into explaining to random people the pronouns.

Andy plans to refer to their child using "they" and "she" pronouns until their child is old enough to state a preference. Given their awareness that biological sex does not always correspond with gender (as explored extensively in texts related to the social construction of gender, such as Butler 1999 and Goffman 1977), Andy feels frustrated whenever people ask them about their child's gender, stating that they will not know the child's gender for some time.

Many bisexual parents in my sample seem not only aware of the possibility their children might be transgender, but also genuinely worried about the impact that traditional gendered language, clothing, or toys might have on their child's development. Although public awareness of transgender identities is increasing, research suggests that most parents continue to push their children toward gendered stereotypes (Martin 2009). "Gender reveal parties," or parties where parents announce the sex of their expected child with stereotypical gendered imagery, are quite common (Gieseler 2016). And children's toys are currently more gendered than ever before (Sweet 2014). Yet there seems to be a consensus among the bisexual parents in my sample that children should be able to discover their own gender identity and expression. Hope, a 35-year-

old White cisgender woman, explains how she is much more concerned about passing along traditional gender roles to her 5-year-old daughter compared to her lesbian wife:

> I'm always worried about how I choose to dress her… I am very anxious about her presenting in a very gendered way because I don't want other people to box her in, and I don't want her to get the message from me that these are the things I like for her to wear… I don't think [my wife] is that concerned about that, but it is always something that is on my mind… I will buy her skirts and dresses, but I think I am more protective of her liminal state… I want her to be able to, when she's getting old enough to start making those choices on her own… I've been waiting, waiting, waiting for that… because it has been, for me, kind of an oppressive responsibility to be like… Okay, I'm going to dress her in a way that is comfortable, but I don't need her clothes to declare one way or another where she falls in gender roles, and I don't want her to feel pressured about it.

Talking with Hope, I could sense the very real anxiety she had about accidentally pushing her daughter toward a gender identity or expression that wasn't right for her. She describes her role in dressing her child as an "oppressive responsibility," and eagerly looks forward to the day when her daughter can dress herself. Interestingly, Hope talks about how her wife, who identifies as a butch lesbian, is more comfortable dressing their daughter in feminine clothing. Apparently, her wife was also dressed in feminine clothing as a child but feels it did not prevent her from eventually exploring her own butch gender expression. However, Hope feels acutely aware that her daughter might not have the same resilience as her wife, and she says it is her own responsibility to make sure her daughter is allowed a wider range of gender expression as a child.

Overall, bisexual parents in my study echo these sentiments, demonstrating awareness that their children may be transgender and worrying about how best to support their children's relationship to gender. Bisexual and transgender people have a long history of advocating for each other, given that both groups have faced marginalization from the larger LGBTQ+ community. For instance, Ulrich (2011) described bisexuals and transgender people as "allies in invisibility," discussing the ways that both groups have fought for inclusion in communities which were originally created for only lesbians and gays. Similarly, Gamson (2001) explained

that bisexuals and transgender people are often hurt by pro-gay sentiment which attempts to normalize lesbian and gay families by comparing them to heterosexual ones. Bisexual and transgender people are often represented in media using common stereotypes. In contrast, lesbians and gays, if gender conforming and presenting in a traditional way, are comparable to heterosexual families, making them easier to accept (Gamson 2001). By definition, bisexuality defies traditional conceptions of sexuality as monosexual, and transgender identities defy traditional concepts of gender as fixed. This historical context explains why bisexual parents voice such strong support of their children's gender exploration. Research suggests that bisexuals are more prone to advocating for transgender issues compared to lesbians and gays, and so it is understandable why gender may be at the forefront of bisexual parents' minds.

Are bisexual parents more open-minded than lesbian or gay parents? Many of the bisexual parents in my sample feel they are more open-minded than lesbian or gay parents, given that they attribute their open-mindedness to their ability to recognize gray areas and empathize with a wider range of marginal experiences. However, research suggests lesbian and gay parents are also open-minded (e.g., Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011; Fulcher et al. 2007; Goldberg 2007; Sutfin et al. 2007). Often, research implies that lesbians and gays are more open-minded because their same-gender relationships minimize gender inequality within family dynamics (e.g., Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Yet plenty of the bisexual parents in my sample in different-gender relationships feel certain they are more open-minded compared to lesbians and gays. I find that most lesbian and gay parents are open-minded toward the possibility of LGBTQ+ children. However, the lesbian and gay parents in my sample do appear to be less informed on both bisexuality and transgender identities. This lack of awareness leads to instances where lesbian and gay parents appear less open-minded than their bisexual peers.

When asked, the lesbian and gay parents in my sample tend to also describe themselves as open-minded. For example, Ethan, a 45-year-old White transgender father, explains that being gay allows him "to see things from a different perspective where we can share with them [his three teenage children] that this kind of thing [gay identity] is okay." Tina, a 38-year-old White cisgender lesbian explains that she understood "the importance of open-mindedness" specifically because of her experiences with homophobia. And Lila, a 33-year-old White cisgender lesbian explains that her experiences with legal marginalization make her a more open-minded, emotionally available parent:

> We still live in a world where… the legal definition of our parentage… is and will continue to be attacked or redefined or adjusted or flat-out taken away at any time… Which makes us pay even more attention to our emotional connection to our children.

Like bisexual parents, the lesbian and gay parents I interviewed tend to feel prepared for children across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. For Tina, a 38-year-old White lesbian mother, this means helping her seven-year-old son "through his social transition" by taking him to a gender affirming clinic. Some lesbian and gay parents even mention talking to their children about bisexuality. Caroline, a 43-year-old Latina cisgender woman, talks about explaining bisexuality to her 9-year-old daughter:

> I told her that there are people who are bi or pan. And she was like, "What?" She never heard of bi, I guess. 'Cause it's all… everything is so binary, I guess… So, she heard, and her mind was kind of blown. She's like, "You mean, there are people attracted to women and men?" She was like, "Woah! That's amazing!"

When Caroline talks about explaining bisexuality to her daughter, she seems surprised that her daughter had not previously heard of bisexuality. So, although Caroline demonstrates openness toward bisexuality by teaching her daughter about it, it is also clear that she approached the conversation from a different perspective than the bisexual parents who tend to share their

awareness of how bisexuality is often talked about less. Similarly, Zoey, a 47-year-old Black cisgender woman, explained to her 10-year-old daughter that sexuality is a spectrum, but she did not use terms like "bisexual" or "pansexual." She says,

> It's more… You can like whoever you wanna like. You can marry whoever you wanna marry. You can have a relationship with whoever you want a relationship with… Some people like one thing. Some people like many things.

Zoey told her daughter that "some people like many things," but she chose not to use terminology beyond "straight" or "gay." Compared to bisexual parents, lesbian and gay parents are much less likely to talk specifically about bisexuality with their children. Though this does not necessarily communicate a lack of openness toward bisexuality, it does demonstrate a lack of awareness of the bisexual experience. Many of the bisexual parents in my sample mention that they want to talk about bisexuality with their children because they understand how children might not know it is okay to identify as bisexual unless it is explicitly stated. And, of course, they know this based on their own experiences grappling with their own bisexuality in a culture of bisexual erasure.

Furthermore, lesbian and gay parents are more likely to talk in explicitly negative terms about bisexuality. Often this negativity is directed toward people they date or are married to, but likely impacts how they speak about bisexuality with their children. For example, Sarah, a 38-year-old Latinx cisgender woman, says she has had "negative experiences with people who claim to be bisexual." When asked about this, she says,

> Most of the time, they're just… I don't think that they truly represent what it means. I think they're basically… people I've been with who have been the kind of people that… they were basically cheaters. Or you know, they were just with me because of the benefits versus out of an authentic love. So, it became… when we had problems or whatever, then they went back to guys.

Sarah expresses two common stereotypes about bisexuals: bisexuals are cheaters, and bisexuality is a phase. While people of all sexual orientations are capable of cheating on their partners, the sexuality of lesbian, gay, or straight cheaters is rarely used as an explanation for their cheating. Yet research suggests that bisexuals are commonly suspected to be more likely to cheat on their partners than non-bisexuals (Dyar and Feinstein 2018). Sarah's claim that her ex-partners were not actually bisexual because they dated men after dating her is also interesting. Given that bisexuals are capable of experiencing attraction to multiple genders, the fact that her ex-partners dated men does not actually imply they are any less bisexual than when they dated her. Research shows that bisexuals more commonly end up in different-gender relationships, likely because these types of relationships are more accessible (Brown 2019).

Interestingly, lesbian and gay interviewees reinforce bisexual stigma when discussing their bisexual spouses. For example, Anthony, a 31-year-old Asian cisgender man, dismisses his husband's bisexuality, saying, "He identified as bisexual for a while. But under my definition, I think he's gay." When asked to explain, he says, "the fact is, we're married, and we're not looking for new people, so…" Because they are in a monogamous relationship, Anthony feels his husband is no longer bisexual. This assumption relates to another common bisexual stereotype: bisexuals are non-monogamous. Bisexual parents report similar experiences with their spouses, naming that their lesbian or gay spouses feel they should no longer identify as bisexual. Even if bisexuals were more inclined toward non-monogamy, the majority of parents in my sample are in monogamous relationships and still feel strongly connected to their bisexuality. In general, lesbian and gay parents often seem misinformed about bisexuality and think about bisexuality in stereotypical ways. This affirms the sentiment expressed by bisexual parents that, due to their own experiences as bisexuals, they are more open-minded toward their children's

sexuality. Supplementing with my survey data, I find that lesbian/gay parents (n=421) are three times more likely than bisexual parents (n=1170) to say they would feel sad if their children identified as bisexual. In total, four percent of lesbian/gay parents and 1.3 percent of bisexual parents feel this way; straight parents (n=2179) are even less supportive of their children's bisexuality, with 31.8 percent stating they would be sad if their children identified as bisexual.

While bisexuals may be more open-minded toward their children's sexual fluidity, plenty of bisexual parents also feel their openness extends beyond support for their children's sexuality. My research supports this, given that lesbian and gay parents in my sample are also more likely to talk negatively about transgender identities. Similar to the stigma directed toward bisexuality, negativity toward transgender identities often is directed at adults rather than children. However, certain sentiments shared demonstrate a lack of understanding that likely translates to parent-child communication. For example, Charles, a 46-year-old White cisgender man, talks about his feelings toward his transgender brother-in-law. He says,

> [He] came out as transgender two years ago… So, my nine-year-old niece is seeing her birth mother transition… [Brother's spouse] has changed her gender pronouns from "her" to "him." I'm still having trouble with that… And you know, my brother is all for… I don't want to say shoving this down people's throats, but… you know, pushing people to accept things and change their pronouns and all that… I'm sort of in the middle, where I'm like… You gotta respect people… call them what they wish to be called as long as you don't police my own language.

Although Charles's brother seems happy to accept his partner's transition, Charles expresses resentment toward his brother-in-law's gender. Charles feels that his brother's spouse should have waited and considered his family's feelings before announcing his transition. Charles repeatedly uses the incorrect gender pronouns for his brother-in-law. He says he feels uncomfortable explaining the transition to his four-year-old daughter. And ultimately, he describes his brother's advocacy for his partner's gender as "shoving this down people's

throats." Charles does not reflect the majority of lesbian and gay parents in my sample, but he underscores a difference between bisexual parents and lesbian or gay parents. Bisexual parents often feel their unique experience being marginalized by both the straight and lesbian/gay communities leads them to have greater empathy toward people of various identities, and this empathy is often explicitly directed toward transgender people. Given that bisexual and transgender people report high rates of exclusion from lesbian and gay spaces (Bradford 2004; Parameter et al. 2021; Ulrich 2011), comradery exists between these two groups. Rose, a 34-year-old Hispanic and White bisexual mother, highlights this link. She explains that her open-mindedness toward transgender people feels linked to her bisexuality:

> I do not think it would be the same if I was a lesbian, although I do think that people in this community tend to be more open-minded… But it seems like sometimes lesbian and gay men lineup with straight people in the fact that their way is the only way, and that can make them kind of close-minded… Like, I've met a lot of lesbian women that don't think trans women are real women, you know… Stuff like that.

Rose explains that she has met a lot of lesbian women who do not include transgender women in their definition of women. Rose does consider transgender women to be women, and so she views herself as more open-minded than most lesbians and gay men. Research does suggest that LGBTQ+ spaces are generally less accepting of transgender and bisexual people than lesbians and gays (Parameter et al. 2021). And Worthen (2022) conducted an analysis of the 2018 LGBTQ+ and Hetero-cis Population Study and found that cisgender lesbians were significantly more likely to express negative sentiment toward transgender women compared to bisexual, pansexual, and asexual women. So, although lesbian and gay communities may be more inclusive of transgender people than they were in the past, research suggests that these spaces are still not as inclusive as bisexual spaces may be (Worthen 2022).

Often, research implies that lesbian mothers are good parents because their relationships tend to challenge traditional gender norms. Given that mothers tend to score higher on measures of parental involvement, research implies that children with two mothers may fair better than those with straight parents (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). However, attending to same-gender parents' diverse political perspectives complicates this viewpoint (Fulcher et al. 2007; Sutfin et al. 2007). Further, my data on bisexual parents in both same-gender and different-gender relationships suggests that parents' open-mindedness toward their children may be more closely related to parental sexual identity and experiences with marginalization rather than the gender-composition of parents' relationships. Both bisexual mothers and fathers talk extensively about their open-mindedness toward their children's LGBTQ+ identities. While the lesbian and gay parents in my sample generally seem open toward having lesbian or gay children, their open-mindedness is sometimes limited in its scope. Bisexual parents feel strongly that their bisexuality allows them to be more open-minded toward their children's gender and sexuality, and my data supports this sentiment.

Are bisexual parents more open-minded than straight parents? Bisexual parents also tend to assume they are more open-minded compared to straight parents. The straight parents I interviewed lean politically liberal and also describe themselves as open-minded. However, similarly to lesbian and gay parents, this group's open-mindedness includes a lack of awareness about various topics. Straight parents often talk about trying not to assume their children's sexuality and using gender-neutral language to refer to their children's future partners. However, straight parents also feel less of an obligation to talk about LGBTQ+ topics and sometimes express blatant discrimination and misinformation when asked about these concepts.

Several straight parents do express support for their children in case they identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. For example, Chase, a 38-year-old White straight father, explains,

> My middle child's favorite color is rainbow, and we live in a little bit of a "gayborhood," and so we kind of take the opportunity to… point out the rainbow flags, point out what pride stands for… explaining LGBT and what those different acronyms mean in general… I think they know someone of all those letters except for "B," so they know at least someone who's lesbian, someone who's gay, at least someone who's transgender… Part of it is just normalizing all the different relationships that can exist, and making sure that they're aware for their own future relationships… We'd say… "If you get married, your husband or wife might X or Y…" Right? And just bringing that language instead of just assuming a heterosexual relationship for them in the future.

Chase recognizes that his elementary-aged children might eventually be in a same-gender relationship, so he uses language to reflect that possibility when talking with them. Chase also talks about normalizing different labels within the LGBT acronym. Interestingly, Chase says his children know someone that is lesbian, gay, and transgender, but that they do not know anyone who is bisexual. Given that bisexuals make up the largest portion of the LGBTQ+ community (Gates 2011), it is possible that Chase's children do know someone who is bisexual but are not aware of that person's bisexuality. This may also reflect a lack of awareness about bisexuality, given that people often assume individuals in monogamous relationships are either straight or lesbian/gay.

Straight parents do sometimes attempt to explain sexual fluidity to their children. For example, Bridget, a 73-year-old White straight mother, says "I explained to her that [sexuality] came in different forms amongst different kinds of people, and that some people were with women, and some were with men, and that it could be very fluid." However, Bridget admits she "might've been a little disappointed" if her 43-year-old daughter were to identify as bisexual, but only "in the sense that [Bridget] really wanted grandchildren." In this case, it seems like Bridget is thinking more about the possibility of her daughter ending up in a same-gender relationship,

which suggests a lack of awareness around the possibility of being bisexual in a different-gender relationship.

This lack of awareness of the nuances of LGBTQ+ identities trends throughout my interviews with straight parents. In some instances, straight parents demonstrate stereotypical thinking about sexuality based on their children's gender. For example, Max, a 31-year-old White cisgender father, says he will respond differently depending on whether his son or daughter comes out to him. He explains,

> If [my two-year-old son] were to come and tell me that… you know, I might actually be more prone to believing that he might be gay for the rest of his life. And if [my 10-month-old daughter] in high school were to tell me that she has feelings for a female crush… I'd tell her, you know, "How fun! I remember… crushes are so fun!" … I would tell [my son] that means you're gay for life… I think in my head, I would almost be having more of the conversation and thinking with [my daughter] … For her, it's very likely to be a phase or first crush or whatever, you know…

Max is compelled to believe his son if he identifies as gay, but he feels hesitant to believe his daughter, claiming that her same-gender attraction would likely be a phase. Max's feelings reflect common stereotypes about sexual fluidity in men and women. Both bisexual men and bisexual women are assumed to be going through a phase of sexual discovery (Yoshino 2000). However, based on my interviews with bisexuals, men are typically expected to be secretly gay, whereas women are typically expected to be blatantly straight. Essentially, both groups are expected to be attracted only to men.

Esther, a 50-year-old White straight mother, similarly shares some interesting beliefs about gender and sexuality. She explains,

> Because I grew up with a brother like that [gay]… I can generally pick up if somebody's gay or not… I knew my brother was born gay. I mean, I could look back and tell that… But in my mind, women aren't born that way, because I cannot distinguish gay women like I can gay men.

I asked Esther if she felt there was a difference between gay men and gay women, and she goes on to say,

> Well, that is what I've always thought. But I have watched a documentary on… A lot of times lesbians, they have found out that if the mother has experienced trauma during pregnancy, the womb will be flood with a rush of like, adrenaline, and that those children will sometimes come out to be lesbian. And so, that would indicate they were born lesbian… That makes sense to me.

Both Max and Esther are more inclined to believe in men's same-gender attraction. Given that Esther grew up with a gay brother, she feels certain that men can be gay. However, she cannot conceptualize same-gender attraction in women and struggles to imagine how women could possibly identify this way. I was not able to find the documentary Esther references. Instead, I found an article by Ellis et al. (2010) which reported that there is no significant relationship between stress during pregnancy and female children's sexuality. Additionally, I had the opportunity to speak with Esther's 19-year-old daughter, Haley, who happens to be bisexual. Haley explains how her mom's invalidation toward women's sexuality impacts their relationship,

> My mom and I are super open with each other, and she's very accepting of who I am… But she definitely has a hard time with the fact that women can just be born not straight… She doesn't have any doubts in her mind that men are born gay… But when it comes to me not being straight, she's got other justifications for it… And I'm like… I could just not be straight, you know? … You wouldn't know if I would've been straight anyways 'cause I wasn't born that way, so what's the point? … A lot of people point to the fact that I had an abusive dad, so they assume, "Oh, you're uncomfortable with men." No, I'm fine with men. Women are just more attractive, you know… People are so hesitant to accept that.

Although Haley and her mom have an open relationship, Haley feels frustrated by her mother's inability to understand her same-gender attraction. In response to her mother's attempts to explain her bisexuality through pregnancy-related trauma, Haley exasperatedly explains that she "could just not be straight." Haley goes on to tell me that most of her education on lesbian and gay identities came from porn, and that she wishes her parents had talked more about these

identities so she could understand them apart from their fetishized portrayal in media. Esther sees herself as open-minded, and in some ways Haley agrees. However, Esther's open-mindedness is limited by her gaps in understanding of Haley's sexuality that rely on binary and biological constructions of sex and sexuality.

Though I was not able to talk to most of my interviewee's children given the majority were minors, I did talk to Brooklyn, the 25-year-old pansexual daughter of Nick, a White bisexual man. Growing up with a bisexual father, Brooklyn's experience disclosing her sexuality to her parents contrasts significantly to Haley's experience growing up with a straight mother. Whereas Haley must grapple with her mother's attempts to either dismiss or explain the origins of her bisexuality, Brooklyn says her parents have always validated her pansexuality. Brooklyn talks about her experience telling her father that she was dating a girl in high school:

> I just told my parents one day. I was like, "By the way… Me and [my girlfriend] are dating…" [My dad] was like "Oh yeah, I know." And I was like, "Oh?" And then he was like, "Do you want me to tell your mom?" And I'm like, "Sure," … And [my mom] texted me being like, "Oh, congratulations! We'll have her over for dinner…" And then afterwards… My dad came in and he was like, "So, is it just girls?" … I wasn't surprised they were accepting.

When Brooklyn told her father, Nick, that she was dating a girl, Nick responded with casual but full support. Whereas straight parents in my sample like Esther and Max speak of disbelieving their daughter's same-gender attraction, Nick, a bisexual father, not only believed Brooklyn but he also assumed she was in a same-gender relationship before Brooklyn decided to disclose her bisexuality to him. Nick did not attempt to explain why Brooklyn's sexuality was or was not valid. Instead, he recognized signs that she may be in a same-gender relationship, supported her by helping her tell her mom, and was aware enough about bisexuality to know that her same-gender relationship did not automatically mean she was a lesbian.

Research suggests that straight parents tend to assume their children will identify as straight (Martin 2009). Though parents may describe themselves as open-minded toward the idea of LGBTQ+ children, their misinformation about non-straight identities sometimes leads to frustrating situations like Haley's. Some straight parents in my sample speak of realizing they were misinformed on LGBTQ+ identities when their children eventually came out. For example, Marin, a 55-year-old White nonbinary parent, explains,

> I hadn't learned about the particulars about a physical relationship among gay people. That's something I just hadn't foreseen. I mean, it just didn't occur to me that my kids were going to be gay… That was not the community that we belonged to.

Marin eventually learned about same-gender sex and taught their now 24-year-old child about dental dams, a form of sex protection often recommended for sex between two people with vulvas. Unlike Esther, Marin did not resist their child's LGBTQ+ identity. Instead of doing research to try and find a cause for their child's sexuality, they accepted that their child was LGBTQ+ and instead focused their research on ways to support their child's same-gender relationships.

While the majority of straight parents I interviewed express a desire to support their children if they identify as LGBTQ+, most straight parents do not feel a need to talk about LGBTQ+ identities with their children unless their children come out to them. Straight parents assume their children will also identify as straight, and conversations about non-heterosexuality feel unnecessary. Vivian, a 41-year-old White straight mother, likens this to White parents talking less about race. She shares,

> I think we would probably talk less about [sexuality] 'cause we're straight… It's the same as being White, you know? Like… When you're in the majority, there's nothing to talk about unfortunately, because it just is what it is…

Vivian's belief that White people do not need to talk about race is common (e.g., Frankenberg 1993; Zucker 2019). White people often feel hesitant to talk about race because they are taught from a young age that they have no racial identity (DiAngelo 2018; Frankenberg 1993). Instead, race is categorized as a non-White descriptor, rendering White people uncertain where they fit into conversations about racial identity and racism. Vivian's belief that "when you're in the majority, there's nothing to talk about" stems from hegemonic ideals which characterize Whiteness, heterosexuality, cisgender identity, and masculinity as normal, and everything else as "other." As DiAngelo (2018) explained, White people must learn to talk about race because, put simply, White people keep racism in place when they do not acknowledge racial hierarchies. Similarly, by not talking about sexuality, straight parents risk replicating heterosexist hierarchies for their children. In contrast, the bisexual parents across race in my study express a passionate desire to talk about sexuality with their children, regardless of whether they themselves are in same- or different-gender relationships.

The Advantage of Being Better Prepared to Talk about Sexuality

In addition to being more open-minded, many of the bisexual parents in my sample feel that they are better prepared to talk with their children about sex and sexuality compared to lesbian, gay, or straight parents. Typically, parents refer to the fact that they experience attraction to multiple genders and can therefore relate to their children's sexuality no matter how they identify. Some parents explain they have had sexual experience with multiple genders, which they feel emboldens them to provide their children with better sex education. Piper, a 43-year-old Hispanic cisgender woman, describes this preparedness:

> I think [bisexuality] has some advantages. Because regardless of what sexuality your kid is… you can talk about it… I think if you're bisexual, you have a better preparation to handle that than you do if you're either gay or straight, for example, because you only know one way of how to be… Whereas bisexual people like people across the spectrum,

> and so… We can sit there and talk a little bit more about different experiences because we have experiences being in gay relationships, and we have experiences being in straight relationships.

For Piper, her experience dating and having sex with multiple genders feels beneficial when talking to her now adult-aged children about sexuality. Piper assumes that straight, lesbian, and gay parents only have experience with one type of sex, and therefore are less prepared to handle conversations about their children's diverse sexual preferences. Her 25-year-old daughter now identifies as bisexual, and Piper says talking about her own bisexuality was helpful for her daughter's self-exploration.

Similarly, Shauna, 39-year-old mixed-race cisgender woman, feels that her bisexuality will enable her to talk to her seven-month-old daughter about her sexuality regardless of who she is eventually attracted to:

> Regardless of her sexuality, we'll be prepared in some form through our own experiences to have that conversation… If she's having boy troubles… If she finds herself attracted to women… We can handle that conversation. If she's… bisexual, we can handle that conversation… I feel well prepared.

Piper and Shauna both suggest that being bisexual equips them with knowledge toward a wider range of sexual orientations. In contrast, bisexual parents tend to assume that lesbian or gay parents will not feel readily prepared for their children's different-gender attraction, and straight parents will not feel prepared for their children's same-gender attraction. Bisexual parents assume their personal experiences will be most helpful in navigating their children's identity.

Not only do bisexual parents view themselves as more open-minded toward their children's sexuality, but they also envision being able to talk about sex and sexuality more naturally than lesbian/gay or straight parents. Sharing in the assumption that it is better for children exploring their sexuality to have a bisexual parent, Millie, a 26-year-old multiracial cisgender woman, says,

> If they [her six- and four-year-old children] decide that they're bi or gay, then I already have a little bit of that personal knowledge and personal experience to help them through that. I mean, I look at it this way… If they end up straight, they have kids, one of their kids comes out as bi… Guess who they're going to send them to. They're going to send them to me.

When imagining the possibility of bisexual grandchildren, Millie assumes she will be better able to talk to them about sexuality compared to her straight children. In this hypothetical, Millie assumes her children will send their bisexual children to her to learn more about bisexuality. While many bisexual parents like Millie talk about their experiences dating multiple genders preparing them to talk to their children about sexuality, it is important to note that many bisexual people only have experience dating one gender. For these parents, they might be able to relate to their children's feelings of attraction toward multiple genders, but they will not necessarily be able to relate to physical sexual experiences with multiple genders.

Nevertheless, bisexual parents name more ways that being bisexual better prepares them for conversations about sexuality. For example, Zara, a 54-year-old Native American and White cisgender woman with a teenager and two middle-school-aged children, talks about being more aware of the need to talk about sexual attraction from an early age. She explains,

> I do think that [my bisexuality] made me very aware of having the conversation versus thinking that it's a conversation that can wait until they decide that they want to have some sort of relationship with whomever. I think the whole absence of conversation is what creates the situation where someone could say [my sexuality] was never validated, so I figured it was bad… because it was just never talked about. So, making sure that it's always part of an option. I mean, we do a whole lot of saying… 'whoever you fall in love with,' or 'whoever you're attracted to.'

Zara names a common struggle among bisexuals. Bisexuals may be raised not knowing that bisexuality is a valid sexual identity. Parents typically expect their children will be straight (Martin 2009), and if parents do acknowledge the possibility that their child may be LGBTQ+, they are likely only talking about lesbian or gay identities as valid options for their children.

Given her experience with this form of bisexual erasure, Zara explains she feels greater awareness around the importance of normalizing various sexual orientations for her children, and she is preparing for the possibility of a bisexual child. Similarly, Phoenix, a 28-year-old White genderqueer parent, talks about feeling better prepared to have conversations about identity with their eight-year-old daughter:

> I think just being queer in general makes me more aware of things that maybe could be talked about to her or with her… identity issues and stuff like that… We talk a lot about cultural stuff when it comes up… I think that if I was straight… I don't necessarily know if I would have all the same knowledge… Things wouldn't necessarily… be in my field of awareness as much as they are because I'm queer.

Phoenix identifies as pansexual, but they relate their preparedness for conversations about identity with their queer identity more broadly. They explain that being queer has given them access to knowledge about various cultural topics and issues related to identity. Some bisexual parents also speak about their membership in the queer/LGBTQ+ community providing them with resources for talking about various topics with their children. For example, Ricky, a 33-year-old mixed-race parent, talks about how they have a larger vocabulary for talking about gender and sexuality with their six- and four-year-old daughters. They explain,

> I think that for me, it is definitely a benefit that I have a lot of words to talk about gender and sexuality with my kids. I have a lot of conversations like that. Like I can say things… Like when my two-year-old talks about how boys have a penis, I can be like, 'Can girls have a penis?' … 'Yeah, they totally could.' You know?

Ricky feels prepared to talk about a wide range of topics with their children, including the difference between sex and gender. Ricky is both bisexual and genderqueer, and they relate to the LGBTQ+ community from both a sexuality and gender standpoint. Their preparedness to talk about gendered genitalia comes more generally from their participation in the larger LGBTQ+ community.

Are bisexual parents better prepared to talk about sexuality? Given that lesbian and gay parents report less open-minded outlooks toward bisexual and transgender identities than bisexual parents, it is reasonable to assume they may be less prepared to deal with certain parent-child conversations about sexuality. The bisexual parents in my sample report feeling better prepared to talk about sexuality specifically because they experience attraction to multiple genders. However, lesbian and gay parents do not report feelings of discomfort or lack of preparedness in talking to their children about different-gender attraction. While some parents joke that they will be sad if their children identify as straight, lesbian and gay parents do not say they feel misguided during conversations about their children's sexuality. Given that straight identities are so normalized in our society, it is likely that lesbian and gay parents acquire knowledge about heterosexuality through popular culture. For instance, lesbian moms in my sample mention teaching their children about condoms, despite most not using these in their own sex lives. In contrast, straight parents in my sample feel very underprepared to raise LGBTQ+ children.

Several straight parents say they never expected their children to identify as anything other than straight. Some of these parents talk about feeling underprepared to talk to their LGB children about sexuality. Because same-gender sex is underrepresented in popular culture, straight parents are not always sure what their children need to know. For example, Marin never expected two of their children to identify as gay. They say,

> I didn't know anything about gay relationships at the time [when my children came out], so I had to go and find information on that. I actually asked them [a gay Facebook group] … You know, what do I do if my daughter… is getting involved with another young woman? And what do I tell them? I had not prepared for that… I mean basically, they told me about dental dams, which I did not known was a thing for oral sex for women… So that was I think the biggest thing that I learned.

Feeling unprepared to talk about same-sex sexuality with their daughter, Marin consulted with people in a Facebook group for help. Marin says their main takeaway from this outsourcing of knowledge was that they should teach their daughter about dental dams. Dental dams are rectangular sheets of polyurethane or latex which are typically used as a barrier between the mouth and vagina or anus during oral sex. They can be bought or created by cutting a condom down the seam. Dental dams are often recommended in the lesbian community as a safe-sex practice, though most lesbians do not use dental dams for STI prevention (Richters et al. 2010). When asked about dental dam use, lesbians typically argue that dental dams do not make sense when considering the fact that straight couples are not expected to use them for oral sex (Power, Mcnair, and Carr 2009). Sara MacBride-Stewart (2004) describes dental dams as "a parody of straight expectations in the promotion of 'safer' lesbian sex" (368). Marin felt underprepared to talk to their children about lesbian sex, and then they sought out resources from a Facebook group. However, through this attempt to prepare themself, Marin did not learn the nuances of how dental dams are typically looked down upon in the lesbian community. Marin illustrates that straight parents may still be underprepared to talk about same-gender sex even when they try to acquire knowledge on the subject. This reflects the unfortunate lack of educational resources available on same-gender sex.

In addition to being ill-informed about safe-sex practices for same-sex couples, straight parents talk about feeling underprepared due to an inability to relate to their LGBTQ+ children. For example, Chase explains,

> I'm missing experience, life experience, that I could share with my child if they turned out to be LGBT… Like if a child ended up being bisexual, you know I could support them, but I would not be able to empathize and sympathize with their troubles in the same way.

Whereas bisexual parents speak passionately about their empathy toward bisexual children, Chase names that he will not be able to empathize or relate to his child if they identify as bisexual. Similarly, Rachel, a 39-year-old Asian cisgender woman, explains,

> I think if anything, it [being a straight parent] might be a slight disadvantage, because I will never be able to know from her [my 12-year-old daughter's] lens… like her personal experiences, or how she is affected depending on who she comes out to… So, her sense of safety and fear would be her personal experiences, whereas my sense of safety and fear for her would be like… my outside view of what could potentially happen from what I've seen. But I mean, she's the one who will be experiencing it. She will be the one who will be going through it personally. And so, you know, that's where I would say one of my disadvantages is.

Both Chase and Rachel recognize that being a member of the LGBTQ+ community comes with various challenges, but neither knows how it feels to be discriminated against for their sexual preferences. This inability to truly empathize with their children's struggles with sexual identity makes some straight parents feel helpless in supporting their LGBTQ+ children. Rachel talks about looking at her daughter's lesbian identity from an outsider's perspective, explaining she will never be able to fully understand her daughter's lesbian experience. Similarly, Chase says that if any of his children identify as bisexual, he will feel unable to relate to their troubles.

Certainly, straight parents are at an advantage in many ways. Most notably, straight parents in my sample talk about feeling protected from sexuality-related discrimination. All of the parents I interviewed live in the United States, and they recognize that US law and culture tends to protect and favor heterosexuality. For instance, unlike my lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants, straight parents do not worry about their heterosexuality being used against them in child-custody cases. Nevertheless, straight parents in my sample recognize their heterosexuality as a limitation when thinking about raising LGBTQ+ children. Whereas lesbian and gay parents feel equipped to talk to their children about straight sex given their access to a myriad of resources on heterosexuality, straight parents feel lost when navigating their children's LGBTQ+

identities. Thus, bisexual parents are partially correct in their assumption that they are better prepared to discuss sexuality with their children compared to non-bisexual parents.

DISCUSSION

Plenty of researchers have explored the advantages associated with lesbian and gay parenting. Core findings of existent research suggest that lesbian and gay parents work harder to obtain their parental status, devote more time to parenting tasks, reproduce less gendered hierarchies at home, and raise more open-minded children (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Goldberg 2007). In general, the advantages associated with lesbian and gay parenting tend to be attributed to parents' same-gender relationships. The assumption is that same-gender parents operate in less traditionally gendered ways, leading to more equitable distributions of childcare and less rigid gender socialization for children (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Goldberg's (2007) study suggested that children of gay, lesbian, and bisexual parents tend to view themselves as open-minded regardless of whether they are raised in a same-gender parenting household. However, typical discussions about the advantages of lesbian and gay parents still tend to foreground same gender-ness.

Bisexual parents are rarely discussed separately from lesbian and gay parents in conversations about parenting outcomes and advantages. In general, bisexual parents in same-gender relationships are assumed to operate similarly to lesbians and gays, whereas bisexuals in different-gender relationships are rarely mentioned in this research (Ross and Dobinson 2013). Yet the bisexual parents in my study, regardless of whether they are in same-gender or different-gender relationships and regardless of their own gender identity, insist that they are more open-minded and better prepared to discuss sexuality and gender fluidity with their children compared to straight, gay, or lesbian parents. Parents attribute the Bisexual Parent Advantage to their

experiences with marginalization from both straight and lesbian/gay communities, explaining that this exclusion from two separate groups leads them to experience a unique form of discrimination that enables them to better empathize with their children across a variety of issues. Similar to experiences discussed by feminist standpoint theorists and intersectional feminists (Hartsock 1983; Lorde 2007; Smith 1974), bisexual parents feel they have a privileged vantagepoint to talk about sexuality and other forms of marginalization because of their experiences with bisexual stigmatization. Bisexual parents describe themselves both as more open-minded and as better prepared to handle conversations about sexuality.

When discussing their open-mindedness, bisexual parents explain that they are more open-minded toward their children's sexuality and gender. Bisexual parents talk about their openness toward whatever sexuality their children may identify as, typically assuming that straight parents would prefer straight children, and gay parents would prefer gay children. Although lesbian and gay parents do not typically name a preference for gay children, they are less likely than bisexual parents to consider the possibility of bisexual children. Some lesbian and gay parents even speak in explicitly negative terms about bisexuality, corroborating my interviewees' belief that bisexual parents are more open-minded toward bisexual children in particular. In comparison, straight parents typically express acceptance of lesbian, gay, or bisexual children in theory, but articulate discomfort or uncertainty about the reality of these identities.

Regarding open-mindedness toward gender, bisexual parents speak more often about the possibility that their children may be transgender compared to lesbian, gay, and straight parents. These parents tend to attribute their acceptance of their children's gender exploration to their bisexuality. Some parents even explain how they understand bisexual and transgender identities

to be treated with similar stigmatization by lesbians and gays, leading them to be intentionally more open toward transgender topics. While some lesbian and gay parents are similarly supportive of their children's gender exploration, they are much less likely to mention the topic of transgender youth and are more likely to volunteer negative feelings about transgender people in their lives. Additional research supports these findings, naming that lesbians tend to feel more negatively toward transgender people compared to bisexual, pansexual, and asexual people (Worthen 2022).

Bisexual parents also feel they are better prepared to handle conversations about sexuality with their children. Parents typically attribute this preparation to their physical or romantic experiences with multiple genders. Bisexual parents explain that they feel able to handle conversations regardless of who their children are attracted to. Straight parents do explicitly talk about their lack of preparedness in raising lesbian, gay, and bisexual children, saying that they are not sure how to educate their children on same-gender sex. However, lesbian and gay parents do not express feeling underprepared to raise straight children, suggesting that bisexual parents may at times overestimate the advantages of their bisexuality. Whereas lesbian and gay parents are likely able to obtain preparation for raising straight children by virtue of living in a heteronormative society, straight parents feel significantly less prepared than bisexual parents when it comes to raising LGBTQ+ children.

This chapter is in no way an attempt to delegitimize existing work on the advantages of lesbian and gay parents. The lesbian and gay parents in my sample are undoubtedly more open-minded and better prepared to talk about sexuality compared to the straight parents in my sample. However, this chapter is intended to complicate the assumption that lesbian and gay parents may be better parents because of their same-gender relationships. When asked why they

felt at an advantage, lesbian and gay parents also attribute their open-mindedness to their experiences with discrimination. Rather than naming that they are better equipped to raise LGBTQ+ children because they are raising children in a two-gender household, lesbian and gay parents similarly talk about their experiences with oppression enabling them to better empathize with their children. Yet in the case of bisexual parents, this empathy feels stronger because they experience marginalization from both straight and lesbian/gay communities.

Chapter Three. Sex Without Love, Love Without Sex: How Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity Shape Bisexual Parents' Conversations About Sexuality with Their Children

The majority of research on lesbian, gay, and bisexual parenting focuses on mothers. Gay or bisexual men, while left out of most conversations on parenting, are typically assumed to parent similarly to lesbian women and "more feminine" than straight men (Biblarz and Stacey 2010: 12). Bisexual fathers in particular are underrepresented in research, with most research on bisexual parents focusing exclusively on bisexual mothers (Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie 2022; Tasker and Delvoye 2015). In the previous chapters of my dissertation, I identified several ways that bisexual mothers and fathers do parent similarly. In particular, the majority of bisexual parents in my sample, regardless of gender, have already discussed or made plans to discuss bisexuality with their children. Bisexual parents, regardless of gender, emphasize the importance of being honest and conveying solidarity with their children who might also be lesbian, gay, or bisexual. And bisexual parents, regardless of gender, feel they are more open-minded and better prepared to talk about sexuality with their children. However, in the present chapter, I find that gender does significantly impact the ways that bisexual parents define and talk about their bisexuality with their children. Although bisexual parents of all genders express comfort in accepting and talking openly about their children's sexual identities, bisexual men are less comfortable than bisexual women when it comes to talking to their children about their own sexual identities. I explore these gender differences in this chapter.

In particular, I find that bisexual women tend to define their bisexuality as a romantic attraction which they feel comfortable talking about openly with their children. Bisexual men, in contrast, typically define their bisexuality as a sexual attraction which they often feel

inappropriate talking about with their children. I attribute these differences in part to the fact that bisexual men feel they have more to lose than bisexual women by identifying with and discussing their bisexuality. I engage with Connell's (1987; 2005) concepts of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity to understand these significant gender differences in bisexual parents' approaches to defining and discussing sexuality with their children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hegemonic Masculinity and Heterosexuality

The term *hegemonic masculinity* reflects a hierarchical system in which certain forms of masculinity are associated with greater privilege and power (Connell 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Though most men do not achieve this idealized form of masculinity, all men are evaluated in relation to this standard. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explained that in the original definition of the term,

> It [hegemonic masculinity] embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (832).

Hegemonic masculinity provides a framework for understanding how masculinity is used to perpetuate patriarchal inequalities and oppress women *and* men who do not conform to societal standards. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explained that the term originated directly from an analysis of gay men's experiences of discrimination from straight men, and the concept builds on prior research which examined the ways that straight men enact homophobia, and the ways that gay men often attempt to separate themselves from traditional forms of masculinity (Broker 1976; Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Morin and Garfinkle 1978; Plummer 1981).

Although attributes of hegemonic masculinity differ geographically and temporally, researchers continue to find this link between hegemonic masculinity, heterosexuality, and homophobia (e.g., Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Eguchi 2009; Ward 2008).

In recent years, social scientists have debated whether heterosexuality and homophobia are still central parts of hegemonic masculinity. Demetriou (2001) introduced the term "hybrid masculinities" to compensate for the reality that many privileged men now adopt aspects of subordinated masculinities and femininities. And in his research on college athletes, Anderson (2005, 2008) suggested that masculinity had become inclusive of gay identities. However, broader analyses of the hybrid masculinities literature suggest that effeminate attributes and inclusivity toward gay men are only allowed in already-privileged groups of men (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Grindstaff and West 2011). For example, Grindstaff and West (2011) found that men of color experienced more pressure to reject cheerleading because of its association with homosexuality. And Bridges and Pascoe (2014) explained that White, straight men often reinforce their privilege through adopting hybrid masculinities. Case in point, Arxer (2011) found that straight men who adopt more effeminate behaviors often justify doing so in order to have sex with women, therein highlighting patriarchal motives for their gender-transgressive behavior. Similarly, Bridges (2014) found that straight men often refer to aspects of their identity as gay while simultaneously affirming their heterosexuality in order to distance themselves from damaging stereotypes about masculinity. Though White, straight men are able to express acceptance toward gay men without compromising their privilege, research suggests that men are still inclined to police one another's expressions of femininity. For instance, Pascoe (2007) found that "fag discourse" was commonly used to monitor young men's expressions of femininity, demonstrating a tight link between men's understandings of gay identity and unacceptable

enactments of femininity. As Bridges and Pascoe (2007) explained, "While seemingly non-homophobic masculinities are proliferating, a closer look at the gendered meanings of homophobia complicates these claims" (254).

By virtue of being in a same-gender relationship, gay men tend to be considered less masculine than straight men (Chesebro 2001). Often times, gay men embrace this disassociation with masculinity and occupy what Connell (1987; 2005) terms a "subordinated masculinity" (832). However, Connell (1992) found that some gay men identify with aspects of "straight" masculinity, both because they want to be deemed as "masculine," and because they recognize that effeminate gay men are often the victims of homophobic violence. Similarly, Eguchi (2009) observed that many gay men feel pressured to enact hegemonic masculinity in other ways in order to cope with the loss of power associated with their sexuality. Eguchi (2009) explained, "society pressures gay men to negotiate who they are according to hegemonic masculinity in order to compensate for their same-sexual preferences" (194). In negotiating this loss of power associated with their gay identity, some gay men embrace a culture of "straight-acting," or embodying forms of masculinity most commonly associated with straight men (Connell 1992; Eguchi 2009). I recognize "straight-acting" as an extension of homonormativity, Duggan's (2002) theory which established that there is a culturally acceptable way to be gay, and that those who do not conform to White, middle-class, gender-normative expressions of gay identity are more often the victims of prejudice. Straight-acting gay men tend to decentralize their sexuality from their overall personality and emphasize the naturalness of their masculinity (Eguchi 2009). Additionally, Eguchi (2009) found that straight-acting gay men tend to express negative attitudes toward gay men with more feminine gender expressions, thereby distancing themselves from the men who are most likely to be victims of violent anti-gay prejudice. Bergling (2001) termed this

tendency of certain gay men to feel negatively toward more effeminate gay men as "sissyphobia." Although straight-acting gay men typically do refer to themselves as gay, they make clear efforts to separate their gayness from stereotypical assumptions about their masculinity (e.g., effeminacy).

Similarly, some men identify as straight despite engaging in sexual acts with men. Ward (2008) analyzed "Casual Encounters" ads on *Craigslist* and found that, in many of the ads, straight men were soliciting sex from other straight men. In these ads, men often talked about their preference for having sex with women, but their inability to do so for whatever reason. Men proposed watching porn, talking about women, and masturbating next to each other, with the possibility of a blowjob or another form of direct sexual contact. The men often explicitly stated their disinterest in gay men and their preference for masculine straight men. Ward (2008) explained that the homophobia in these ads is less a symptom of the repression of a "true self" than an attempt to express a "true self" – or one's strong sense of identification with heteropatriarchal White masculinity – in the context of having sex with men (416). In essence, when these men refer to themselves as straight, they are not incorrect because they are deeply aligned with "straight culture." Ward's (2008) analysis contributed to the discussion of whether queerness is about sexual practices or a "way of life" (417). Ward (2008) amplified Halberstam's (2005) theoretical conception of queerness which decentralized queer identity and sexual practice from queerness, in favor of viewing the terms "queer" and "straight" as "cultural spheres that people choose to inhabit in large part because they experience a cultural and political fit" (431). Rather than categorizing everyone who has same-gender sex as queer, or categorizing everyone who has different-gender sex as straight, Ward (2008) defined straight people as people who are not willing "to be part of this thing we call 'queer'" (431). In contrast, Ward explained

that queer people are people who defy "the rules of normative, respectable adult citizenship," (417), though what she considered respectable was not clearly defined. She provided the examples of "gender freaks" and "kids in gay-straight alliances" as people who were not invested in hegemonic straight culture and may be considered queer. Although the men Ward (2008) studied engaged in sexual practices with men, they aligned themselves with straight culture through labeling themselves as straight and talking about their attraction to women, and so she said it felt inappropriate to conceptualize them as "closeted" or "secretly gay."

Research analyzing the ways that gay men and straight men attempt to align themselves with heterosexual masculinity nevertheless largely ignores bisexual men. While several of the Craigslist ads discussed by Ward (2008) specified straight men's interest in meeting up with straight *or* bisexual men, Ward did not theorize bisexuality's place in the data. Bisexual men were somehow understood as less threatening to straight men's heterosexuality than gay men, implying that bisexuality was (mis)understood as a type of straightness. Perhaps, the assumption was that because bisexual men are also sexually attracted to women, they are inherently more masculine than gay men. In particular, bisexual men are able to bond with straight men over the objectification of women, which seemed to be an essential part of the men's experience in Ward's research.

In this chapter of my dissertation, I contribute to scholarship on hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality by examining bisexual men's definitions and understandings of their bisexuality, and then I analyze how these gendered definitions of bisexuality impact the ways that bisexual fathers talk to their children about sexuality. Although the bisexual men in my sample do not identify as straight, they often do align themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinity and distance themselves from subordinated masculinity by explaining their attraction

to men as only sexual rather than romantic. Unlike the straight men studied by Ward (2008), bisexual men in my sample believe their sexual practices are enough to align them with a bisexual identity. However, like the gay men studied by Eguchi (2009), the bisexual men in my sample often do not view their bisexuality as largely impacting their lives beyond who they have sex with. The bisexual men in my sample seldom embrace a queer/LGBTQ+ "way of life," to use Ward's (2008) phrasing. Instead, I view these men as subscribing to a version of "binormativity" in which they attempt to align themselves closely to hegemonic masculinity through their rejection of romance toward men, which might be considered feminine, in order to make their bisexuality more palatable for others and to avoid the discrimination often directed toward more effeminate gay and bisexual men.

Emphasized Femininity, Romance, and Mothering

Connell (1987) introduced *emphasized femininity* in tandem with hegemonic masculinity. Emphasized femininity refers to the ways in which women often act in compliance with patriarchal expectations. Connell (1987) explained that expectations of femininity are "organized around themes of sexual receptivity in relation to younger women and motherhood in relation to older women" (187). Connell (1987) wrote that hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity work in tandem to protect men's power in a patriarchal society. Whereas men are expected to compete with one another through their pursuit of hegemonic masculine ideals, women are expected to support men's societal power through adherence to emphasized femininity. Connell (1987) argued that the main attributes associated with emphasized femininity are "compliance, nurturance, and empathy." Attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity are often created out of opposition, meaning hegemonically masculine men are men who are unlike feminine women or gay men.

Dominant gendered narratives of heterosexual relationships position women as passive and emotional and men as active or instrumental. For instance, in Talcott Parson's (1955) functionalist theory of the nuclear family, he suggested that women contribute to the family through their expressivity at home whereas men specialize in instrumental action in the workforce. As extension, women have historically been considered more "romantic" and less "sexual" than men (Allen 2003; Cancian 1986). Some theorists suggest that romantic masculinity may even be a form of subordinate masculinity because "it implies the possession of attributes associated with femininity such as emotional attachment, care, and sensitivity" (Allen 2007: 137). Thus, boys and men who express romantic love must balance this with "an appropriately hard masculinity" (Allen 2007: 145). Redman (2001) explained that boys and men often situate their romantic identity within hegemonic masculinity by asserting themselves as powerful and their girlfriends or wives as pure and passive. In their work on emphasized femininity in college hookup culture, Kincaid, Sennott, and Kelly (2002) found that young women tended to categorize emotional detachment in relationships with masculinity, and they felt pressure to balance the "casual" nature of hookup culture with the emotional expectations of emphasized femininity. Although emphasized femininity positions women as sexual objects, it certainly does not position women as sexual actors with their own sexual drives or desires. In order to conform to emphasized femininity then, women are expected to desexualize their desires and emphasize the romantic or emotional nature of their experiences.

Expectations on women's emotionality extends to parenting. Mothers are expected to take on much of the work involved in raising children. Intensive mothering (Hays 1996) is a product of a culture which values motherhood as a key attribute of emphasized femininity. Hays (1996) defined the ideology of intensive motherhood as "a gendered model that advises mothers

to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money raising their children" (x). Hays (1996) established one of the core tenants of intensive motherhood as the belief that mothers are naturally better at caring for children. This belief leads many mothers to willingly take on extra childcare, for fear that their spouses will be less capable than they at various parenting tasks. In doing so, mothers participate in emphasized femininity and uphold hegemonic masculinity by devoting their time to carework and often encouraging men to instead focus on "instrumental action" such as breadwinning. Research finds that intensive mothering leads to numerous mental health consequences for mothers, yet it remains common practice in Western culture (Rizzo, Schiffrin, and Liss 2013).

Among a variety of parenting tasks, research suggests that mothers take on the primary role of sexual education for their children (Baldwin and Barnoski 1990; El-Shaieb and Wurtele 2009; Nolin and Petersen 1992; Trudell 1993; Wyckoff et al. 2008). In their research on gendered parent-child communication, Nolin and Petersen (1992) found that mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to talk to their children about sexual topics. Mothers talk more about sexual topics with their daughters than with their sons; however, mother's still take on the majority of sexual education in the household regardless of their children's gender. Fathers tend to express discomfort talking about sex, and children agree that fathers are harder to talk to about these topics (Nolin and Petersen 1992). Bennett, Harden, and Antsey (2017) found that fathers experience a disconnect between their goals and their actions when it comes to educating their children about sex. Although fathers desire emotional closeness with their children and aspire to have conversations about a variety of topics with their children, including conversations about sex, fathers tend not to do the work of initiating these conversations (Bennett, Harden, and Antsey 2017). In addition to a culture of intensive mothering which

expects women to take on the brunt of childcare, this gender difference may also be explained by women's ability to desexualize their own desire and mitigate the "inappropriateness" that men often feel when talking about sexuality, a topic which hegemonic masculinity frames as more charged and active for men.

The aforementioned research reflects gendered dynamics within straight couples. Research suggests that lesbian and gay parents talk about a wider range of sexuality-related topics with their children compared to straight parents (Gabb 2004). In particular, lesbian and gay parents often talk to their children about LGBTQ+ topics such as same-gender attraction and alternative forms of reproduction (Gabb 2004; Mitchell 1998). Most of this research centers lesbian parents, and less is known about how gay men navigate conversations about sex and sexuality with their children. Biblarz and Stacey (2010) suggested that gay men tend to parent more similarly to lesbians than to straight parents. Similar to lesbian parents, Bowling et al. (2016) found that bisexual parents tend to view educating their children on LGBTQ+ topics in tandem with various types of sexual education, such as education on pregnancy and STDs. However, the authors noted that bisexual men carry more shame about their bisexuality and are less inclined to talk about sexuality-related topics with their children (Bowling et al. 2016).

My own data confirms that bisexual mothers are much more likely than bisexual fathers to talk about LGBTQ+ topics with their children. Moreover, although bisexual mothers do not consider LGBTQ+ topics to be inherently sex-related, bisexual fathers do. Bisexual fathers define their bisexuality quite literally as who they are interested in having sex with, and they categorize conversations about bisexuality similarly to other conversations about sex. Given that most bisexual men are in relationships with women (Brown 2019), I find that bisexual men tend to defer to their children's mothers when it comes to discussing any topics related to sexuality,

including LGBTQ+ topics. In contrast, bisexual women often talk to their children about LGBTQ+ topics from a young age; however, these conversations tend to focus on romance rather than sex. In this chapter, I theorize that bisexual mothers adhere to expectations of emphasized femininity by deromanticizing their sexuality and taking on the childcare task of educating their children on LGBTQ+ topics. In contrast, bisexual fathers uphold hegemonic masculinity by de-romanticizing their bisexuality and neglecting to engage in childcare related to sex education, both of which are characteristics associated with subordinated masculinities. Like bisexual fathers, I suggest that bisexual mothers ascribe to a form of "binormativity." This involves mothers distancing themselves from the stereotype that bisexuals are hypersexual in favor of categorizing their bisexuality as a mostly romantic identity which aligns them with the emotionality of emphasized femininity.

SEX WITHOUT LOVE, LOVE WITHOUT SEX

Gendered Definitions of Bisexuality

In/exclusion of romantic attraction. Bisexuality is widely defined as an attraction to more than one gender (e.g., Ross and Dobinson 2013). Though the term has "sex" in the name, it is often used to encompass a person's sexual *and* romantic desires. While this is sometimes the case for bisexual parents in my sample, such as Millie, 26-year-old mixed race cisgender woman who says she is "romantically and sexually interested in both men and women," more often I find that bisexual men define their bisexuality as a sexual identity, and bisexual women define their bisexuality as a romantic identity. Bisexual mothers rarely talk to me about sex when I ask them about their bisexual identity. Their attraction to women is instead explained through an ability to connect romantically. For example, Tara, a 26-year-old Black cisgender woman, explains, "romantically, I don't discriminate genders," and Carrie, a 45-year-old Black and

White cisgender woman, describes bisexuality as "a framework for analyzing and deconstructing the centrality of gender to the experience of love." Bisexual mothers in my sample are also more likely to be in same-gender romantic relationships than bisexual fathers. Of the bisexual women I interviewed (n=41), 37 percent are in same-gender romantic relationships, compared to only 12 percent of the bisexual men I interviewed (n=17). Moreover, several of the women I interviewed in relationships with men either have a history of romantic relationships with women or articulate a desire to connect with women romantically. Yet bisexual men in my sample rarely describe their interest in men as anything other than sexual.

Most bisexual men I interviewed specify that their attraction to men and women differs. Typically, men describe themselves as romantically and sexually interested in women, but only sexually interested in men. Often, men express uncertainty about whether they might be romantically compatible with men. For example, Juan, a 50-year-old Chicano cisgender man, explains,

> How do I define it [bisexuality]? I think it would just be an attraction… For me, I would just say maybe a physical attraction… towards males and females. Possibly emotionally, but I'm not sure… I lean more towards one than the other, as far as that is concerned… For me, mostly it's the physical thing.

Juan goes on to clarify that he is emotionally interested in women, whereas his interest toward men is only physical. While he expresses some uncertainty about this conclusion, he does not convey an interest in exploring whether he might be romantically compatible with men. Many men, however, feel certain about their aromantic feelings toward men. For example, Matt, a 63-year-old White cisgender man, jokingly explains, "I have absolutely no romantic interest in men. It's purely a sexual attraction. As I like to say, I'm not interested in the whole package… I'm just interested in *the* package." Matt explains he has no interest in romantically connecting with men. Instead, his bisexual label communicates a sexual interest in multiple genders.

Though some bisexual men do experience romantic interest in their own gender, as evidenced by the two bisexual men I interviewed who are married to men, this clarification regarding their sexual attraction toward men is quite common among my male participants. Like Juan and Matt, Dusty, a 39-year-old White cisgender man, describes this distinction. He says,

> Romantically, I would say I'm more inclined towards women… As far as building a relationship, that would be more difficult for me with men. It's more of a trust issue kind of thing. But when it comes to physical attraction and sexual experiences, it's really just who the person is, how they seem to me.

Whereas Juan and Matt struggle to articulate a reason for their lack of romantic interest in men, Dusty explains that he feels he would not be able to build trust in a romantic relationship with a man. More men in my sample echo this sentiment, explaining they feel men would be worse to be in relationships with than women. In contrast, bisexual women tend to express that their sexual attraction is aligned with their romantic attraction. In some cases, bisexual women even express that a romantic connection is necessary in order to experience any sexual attraction. For example, Tara says that in addition to being bisexual, she is also demisexual, "or whatever the hell it's called when you need an emotional connection to have sexual relations." And Windy, a 44-year-old Native Hawaiian cisgender woman, says that she is asexual and that she is "not really interested in sex in general… [she is] not necessarily driven by that." Research suggests that women are significantly more likely than men to be asexual or to express that a romantic connection is necessary in order to experience sexual attraction (Copulsky and Hammack 2021). In my own sample, none of the bisexual men report identifying with demisexuality or asexuality like Tara and Windy.

De/hyper-sexualization. In addition to removing romantic attraction from their definitions of bisexuality, bisexual men in my sample are much more likely than women to talk about the physicality of their sex lives. My male interviewees regularly (and without my asking) share with

me the number of people they have had sex with, the types of sex they are having, and their sexual fetishes. In contrast, women sometimes talk about having sex, but seldom share with me the particulars of their sex lives. When I use the terms "bisexuality," "sexuality," or "sexual orientation," bisexual men tend to interpret this as an invitation to talk about their sexual experiences, whereas women are more inclined to talk about their relationships and social identities. Juan demonstrates this toward the end of our conversation:

> **Juan**: Is there anything you wanted to ask me that you didn't? If you were hesitant to ask?
>
> **Rowan**: No, I don't think so…
>
> **Juan**: Okay… [When you said] "We're going to talk about your sexuality…" I'm like… Oh my god, what would they ask me? Like what position? You know.

Juan explains that he was surprised that the questions I asked him were more focused on his identity and experiences, because he anticipated I would want to ask him about the types of sexual positions he enjoyed.

Men often seem thrown off by my use of the term "sexuality" to describe their identity. For instance, when Jacob, a 37-year-old White cisgender man, told me that his sexuality made his wife uncomfortable, I asked what his conversations about his sexuality with his wife looked like. He responds,

> Most often, it's my number one fetish… wanting your partner to feel the greatest thing they can ever feel… There's a little bit of like voyeurism going on about it. There's a little bit of like, demeaning… But that's definitely our biggest talk… She feels very limited in what I call vanilla…

When I asked the question, I expected Jacob to talk to me about how aspects of his bisexuality or his attraction to men made his wife uncomfortable. However, based on his understanding of the term "sexuality," he speaks with me about how he and his wife have different sexual fetishes.

Similarly, when I asked Edgar, a 38-year-old White cisgender man, if he and his wife often talk about their shared identity as bisexual, he responds,

> I think we talk about mine more than we do hers. I'm a much more sexual person than she is… [I have] always been… borderline obsessed with sex… And while she's expressed interest here and there, it's not really something that weighs on her mind.

Bringing my own biases into the conversation, I anticipated Edgar and his wife might talk about their shared experiences identifying as bisexual. However, I was surprised when Edgar linked his bisexuality to his sex drive more broadly. In contrast, when I asked Olivia, a 44-year-old White transgender woman, how her and her wife's mutual bisexual identity impacts their relationship, she explains that sharing a sexual identity "allows us to be a lot more open and honest," and she says that their relationship feels "very, very secure… [because] I just love [her] completely and trust [her] to the ends of the earth." For Olivia, my question about how bisexuality impacts her relationship prompted discussions of their communication style and trust, rather than a conversation about how sex is enacted between her and her wife.

Repeatedly, bisexual men explain their bisexuality as a very literal intervention in their sex lives. When I asked Matt how being bisexual influences his life, he explains,

> I would say it probably influences it in perhaps a bad respect in the sense that… I'll do a random hookup with another man to perform oral sex on them, and that's probably not necessarily a safe thing to do.

Over the course of his marriage to his wife, Matt has met up with dozens of men at road stops or adult stores to perform oral sex. He worries about the possibility of contracting an STD or STI, and views this as the biggest way that his bisexuality influences his life. Bisexual women, on the other hand, are much more likely to answer the question about how bisexuality influences their lives by talking about their political leanings, inclinations toward activism, and sometimes their experiences with marginalization. Carrie explains,

> I don't want to sound like a bi supremacist here, but it's pretty awesome… I think that bisexuality has the capacity to change the world and liberate people globally… I think that gender… as a construct, [can] be very destructive and violent and traumatic. And I think that separating love and attraction and community and family building from it has the potential for changing the world. I think that bisexual people are, in many instances, at the forefront of a movement that we… haven't even fully wrapped our minds around. And I think that bisexuality has big plans in store for all of us. So, I love it. I'm all about it.

For Carrie, being bisexual is all about separating gender, which she views as a destructive construct, from sexuality. She describes bisexuality's influence on her life with a level of etherealness. Women often speak about their bisexuality in this way, describing it as a framework or philosophical outlook on life, seemingly disconnected from the act of sex itself. Though Carrie views bisexuality as a radical, liberatory concept, she also seems to uphold gendered conventions of sexuality be focusing her definition of bisexuality on love rather than sex. Bisexual women in my sample often distance themselves from sex, even when talking about their physical attraction to women. For example, Georgia, a 28-year-old Latinx and White cisgender woman, describes women as "soft and wonderful." She also positions herself as sexually passive, describing her experience with "a guy that I was just in love with, like he was my first love, like real love," who eventually broke up with her because she was not interested in having sex with him yet. And when framing their understanding of their bisexuality, bisexual women often return to language of "falling" or being "in love." For instance, Luna, a 50-year-old White transgender woman explains, "I'm liable to fall in love with a guy. I'm liable to fall in love with a girl. I'm liable to fall in love with somebody who doesn't identify as either or both." The idea of sexual attraction rarely feels central to women's understanding of their bisexuality. Yet for men, bisexuality is interpreted and understood quite literally to be about sex.

Gendered Parent-Child Communications about Bisexuality

Bisexual fathers avoid discussing sexuality. Gendered differences are also apparent in the ways that bisexual parents talk to their children about bisexuality. For bisexual fathers who describe their bisexuality as being strictly about sexual attraction, talking about bisexuality with their children often feels inappropriate or embarrassing. In general, when I ask bisexual fathers if they ever discuss bisexuality with their children, they think I am asking whether they have talked to their children about sex, a topic which typically feels inappropriate. For example, when I ask Jacob if his seven-year-old children know that he is attracted to multiple genders, he responds,

> I definitely never said that I'm not, but… I've heard a lot of kids like myself who… don't wanna think about their parents' sexuality in any way at all. And I am still grossed out by all the sexual things I know about my parents… Few people are like, "Yeah, I'm glad I walked in on my parents…" I wanna let them know that I'm open and accepting to all kinds of ideas, but I don't want to in no way to tell them my fetish, [or say] "My fetish is okay, therefore you can have whatever fetish you want." Like, I don't want them to think about anything exactly sexual.

For Jacob, talking about his multigender attraction feels equivalent to having his children walk in on him during sex, an experience that he says would be highly uncomfortable for them. Similarly, when I ask Juan if he has talked to his 8-year-old daughter about any LGBTQ+ topics, he says no. He explains,

> I try to shield her away from a lot of violence… And from the sexuality. Because you know, even if she doesn't… fully understand it, I'm afraid… they're [children her age] starting to mimic what has been said at home or watched on TV… The other day, she watched this show… They have learned the word porn. And my daughter being inquisitive, she goes, "What's porn?" And I'm like, "Never mind! Nothing!" And I had to turn that off because it was inappropriate.

In following up, I ask him whether his daughter knows that men can marry men, or that there are different variations of relationships. He says no. When I ask if he might ever initiate conversations about same-gender marriage or LGBTQ+ topics with his daughter when she is older, he says,

> When she is able to understand… coming to terms with her own sexuality, and questioning that stuff… Probably by then, she'll probably know a lot more than what I think she would… But yeah, I would not feel comfortable at that point to talk to her about it. No.

Juan expects his daughter will receive sex education from someone else, and he explains that he has no intentions of ever talking to her about anything related to his bisexuality or other LGBTQ+ topics. In contrast to the numerous examples of fathers equating talking to their children about bisexuality to talking to their children about their sex lives, only one mother I interviewed expresses a similar sentiment. She says,

> I don't think that it [disclosing my bisexuality to my son] would be appropriate. Because like I could tell him, "Hey… I'm going to have dinner with my friend." I don't say, "I'm going to have dinner and have sex with my friend…" Nobody wants to know those things about their parents.

This interviewee is in the minority for bisexual mothers, though her feelings match the ways that bisexual fathers think about discussing bisexuality with their children.

Fathers repeatedly tell me that they have no plans to ever discuss bisexuality or LGBTQ+ topics related to sexuality with their children, providing various reasons for this decision. Some fathers believe that these conversations are inappropriate due to generational differences, whereas other fathers feel that their gender prohibits them from talking about sexuality with their daughters in particular. Ultimately, many men explain that their wives are responsible for talking to their children about sexuality. Regarding generational differences, Nick, a 52-year-old White cisgender man, says,

> For the most part, I just keep it [my bisexuality] to myself, and… occasionally engage in some online exploration… but you know, not really naming. I don't really talk to her [my bisexual daughter] about it… I don't think I would. And it's kind of the same reason I probably wouldn't talk about sex that way with her just generally… The cross-generational sexual discussions, for my generation at least, it's still not something you do a whole lot. For me… I guess I can't really say my generation.

For Nick, the age gap between him and his 25-year-old daughter feels like the biggest barrier to discussing bisexuality with her. Although he knows his daughter also identifies as bisexual, he prefers to keep his own sexual preferences to himself.

In terms of gendered barriers to discussing bisexuality, some fathers articulate not wanting to talk about bisexuality with their daughters in particular. For example, Leo, a 60-year-old White genderqueer parent, says,

> [My daughter] and I are different genders and sexes and so forth, and for the dads to have that kind of conversation [about sexuality] with his daughter… That would not be comfortable for her. On the other hand, I strongly believe that kids ought to know or be told firmly that there's all sorts of possibilities. There's not just one way to be sexual.

In Leo's case, he feels it is important that his 45-year-old daughter know about bisexuality as an orientation, but he prefers not to share his own bisexuality with her. Leo's resistance to talk to his daughter about sexuality aligns with research on straight parents, which suggests that fathers are more comfortable talking to their sons about sexuality than their daughters (Nolin and Petersen 1992). Additionally, some fathers prefer not to share their bisexuality with their straight children, but they are open to sharing it with their bisexual children. Matt explains,

> My son is bisexual, and he admits that he is bisexual. So, it's like we belong to the same club kind of thing. Whereas my daughter… I'm not aware of her having any kind of lesbian relationships. That doesn't mean she hasn't had any. I'm just not aware of them. So… with my son… it's just different. We are the same.

Matt has talked very openly about his bisexuality with his 36-year-old son, even sharing details about the number of times he has had sex with men. However, until his 37-year-old daughter expresses her own same-gender attraction, he feels less inclined to talk to her about his bisexuality.

Bisexual men also tend to explain that their wives are responsible for educating their children about sex and sexuality, meaning it rarely feels natural to bring up their own bisexuality

in conversation. This finding reflects existing research on straight parents, which suggests that mothers tend to take on the bulk of responsibility for discussing sexuality with children (Baldwin and Barnoski 1990; El-Shaieb and Wurtele 2009; Nolin and Petersen 1992; Trudell 1993; Wyckoff et al. 2008). James, a 56-year-old White cisgender father in my sample, recalls this gendered division of labor. He says,

> I was never very good with having conversations like that [about sex or sexuality] … I felt quite awkward about it. My wife… she brings that up as a sore point frequently. She had to have those discussions with the kids. We did have conversations while I was driving my sons to college about consent and protection. And… stuff like "no means no…" It was a short conversation… I never really had those intimate conversations with them to talk about sexuality or stuff like that.

James explains that talking about sexuality with his four adult children makes him feel awkward and uncomfortable, so he tends to avoid these conversations. Ultimately, many of the men I interviewed share similar narratives, explaining how their wives take on most parent-child conversations about sexuality. Bisexual men feel unsure about what topics are appropriate for children and avoid conversations about bisexuality or sex more broadly.

Bisexual mothers embrace conversations about romance. In contrast to bisexual fathers, bisexual women speak eagerly about their desire to discuss bisexuality with their children. Typically, mothers frame conversations about bisexuality around romantic attraction and family dynamics. Mothers decenter sex from conversations about sexuality and view conversations about bisexuality as separate from conversations about sex. For example, Millie says she has already explained her bisexuality to her six-year-old daughter. She says,

> I've already had a conversation of, you know, you can love whoever you want… I told her, "Mommy likes boys and girls. But you can love whoever you want."

Millie explains her bisexuality to her daughter by saying that she has the capacity to "like" or love boys and girls. By first grade, many parents are already talking to their children about

romantic crushes (e.g., Martin 2009), and so bisexual mothers often use this language that children are already familiar with to talk about their bisexuality. Bisexual mothers often express a desire to share their bisexuality with their children in an effort to deepen their children's understanding of love and romance. Whereas fathers express a belief that their children do not want to know about their father's bisexuality, mothers often assume the opposite, that their children might be deeply interested in their mother's identity. Aspen, a 33-year-old mixed race genderfluid mother, explains,

> Once she [our daughter] starts to understand the idea of love and… romantic attraction. Once she starts to show it in her own little imagination… I think then [I'll] just kind of talk about my history and how I feel about people. And you know, even showing a picture of like… I mean she loves to look at pictures of us from our past, you know, as kids. When I was a kid, I can show her pictures of like, "This is the first person mommy was really in love with, and this was the second person mommy was really in love with." I think the concept of pansexuality has sort of been really hard for her for a long time, but to actually show her that the people who are still in love with someone in my life, so that she can actually see it for her own eyes and start to build the construct of love, and the label can come later on.

Aspen imagines not only explaining her pansexuality to her three-year-old daughter, but also showing her daughter pictures of her past romantic partners so that her daughter can better visualize her multigender attraction. Like Millie, Aspen phrases pansexuality as a capacity to love multiple genders, and she considers talking about romantic love to be appropriate for young children.

In addition to talking about bisexuality as a romantic identity, mothers embrace discussions of bisexuality when explaining different family structures to their children. This is true regardless of whether mothers are in same-gender or different-gender relationships. For example, Hope, a 35-year-old White cisgender bisexual woman married to a lesbian, says,

> In general, we talk about it [bisexuality] more in terms of like a family structure, cause that's just where her head is. She has friends at school. They have different kinds of families. What kinds of families are there? … I don't know if it would make sense for her

> if I said, "I used to be attracted to men…" So, for right now, it's more a family structure conversation than about sexuality… But yeah absolutely, later that will be part of the discussion… If she's seven and she asks about it, sure, I'll talk to her about it then.

Hope explains that her five-year-old daughter does not currently show interest in her personal life, so she frames the conversation about bisexuality in relation to her friends' different types of families. She tells her daughter that while she has two moms, some children have a mom and a dad, for example. She also plans to talk to her daughter about bisexuality as an attraction to multiple genders, but she intends to wait to have this conversation until her daughter shows more interest in her personal life. Similarly, Dana, a 43-year-old Latina cisgender bisexual woman in a different-gender relationship, explains,

> She [our five-year-old daughter] goes out into the world being the child of a very… heterosexual-presenting parent… I just want her to know that families can make up any kind of combination… All families can look very different. They can look like hers, they can look like [my ex-girlfriend's] and her wife's… Kids can live with their grandparents. I just want her to know that families can be a huge mix of people and identities, and that's okay.

Dana and Hope both use the strategy of explaining how all families are different, a common mechanism for talking to young children about same-gender relationships (as discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation).

Overall, bisexual fathers in my sample are quite hesitant to talk about their bisexuality with their children, typically equating talking about their bisexuality to sharing intimate details about their sex lives. Yet bisexual mothers tend to conceptualize their bisexuality as both a romantic identity and a family identity which is non-sexual, and they feel eager to talk to their children about multi-gender romantic attraction and different types of family structures.

Gendered Stigma of Bisexuality

Bisexual mothers and fathers in my sample share the belief that bisexual stigma tends to be worse for bisexual men. While both groups experience gender-specific bisexual

discrimination, my interviewees are outspoken about their belief that bisexual women are more widely accepted in Western culture. Bisexual women complain about sexual fetishization of their identities, but ultimately feel their bisexuality is accepted by the people in their lives. In contrast, bisexual men speak about their bisexuality being interpreted as a sign of femininity and equated to weakness. These gendered stereotypes of bisexuality likely also play into the way parents speak about their bisexuality with their children.

Bisexual men talk about how they are assumed to be gay when they disclose their bisexuality. This assumption often feels harmful, given that the majority of bisexual men in my sample are in relationships with women. Ash, a 30-year-old Black and White genderfluid man, explains,

> I actually came out recently to more people… there was a lot of, "Well, it's just gay…" I think people have a hard time understanding bisexuality… I think a lot of times they just really think I'm messing around, or they don't just believe it initially because I definitely appear to be just in a straight relationship.

Ash finds that even when disclosing his bisexuality to friends, he is confronted with the belief that he must secretly be gay. Scott, a 32-year-old White transgender bisexual father, also speaks to this assumption, saying, "Bisexual men are, from what I think, sometimes accused of bringing diseases into the straight community, and being… secretly gay." In the same vein, Bette, a 39-year-old White cisgender bisexual woman, felt a similar fear when her husband told her he was bisexual. Although she prides herself on being a bisexual advocate, she initially felt fear and disbelief when her husband disclosed his bisexuality. She says,

> Being perfectly, like, non-politically correct honest? It [my husband telling me he was bisexual] made me worried and paranoid… Like, who was he talking to? What was he going to do? I'm such a jealous person… A boy I dated in high school, he ended up breaking up with me and coming out of the closet.

Eventually, Bette came to understand and accept her husband's bisexuality. Yet it felt less believable for her that her husband might be bisexual like her, rather than gay like her ex-partner. Bisexual men know that their bisexuality may not be accepted or validated by bisexual women. Juan articulates this, saying "I mean even bisexual women, from what I understand… won't like the idea of their man being bisexual…" Juan explains how in his experience, women interpret his bisexuality as a sign of weakness. He chooses not to tell his wife that he is bisexual because he worries that she will assume he is gay and view him as less masculine. He says,

> I think others would see that [bisexuality] as a form of, from a male perspective, a form of weakness… It's not to say that I was less of a man… But it puts you in that situation… I remember in my own culture, which is Latino… I think a man is not gay if he is like a top. Like, you're more masculine than if you're a bottom…

Juan explains that in his own Latino culture, he believes that men are allowed to have sex with other men as long as they are the "top" or the penetrative partner. Yet being on the receiving end of penetration is interpreted as gay and emasculating. I ask Juan if he worries that identifying as bisexual will lead people to automatically assume that he is a "bottom."

> **Juan**: I think in general. Because I mean yeah, they just see you as being weak… I think heterosexual women want men to be… someone who resembles strength… Even my wife said that to me.
>
> **Rowan**: If you were to come out as bisexual, she might see you as less of a strong male figure?
>
> **Juan**: Yeah, exactly. I think that's probably my biggest fear.

Juan fears that admitting his attraction to men will cause his wife to view him as less of a man, so he chooses not to disclose his identity to her or to his children.

For bisexual fathers, gendered stigma plays a role in shaping how and with whom they discuss bisexuality. Bisexual fathers in my sample repeatedly name their fears of being perceived

as gay or less masculine when discussing their bisexuality. For some, this leads to withholding their bisexual identity from their spouses or children.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I find that bisexual men and women define their bisexuality in fundamentally different ways, with men typically focusing on sexual attraction and women typically focusing on romantic attraction. Bisexual men tend to align themselves with hegemonic masculinity and separate themselves from subordinated masculinities by deromanticizing their attraction to men. Although some bisexual men do experience romantic attraction to men, bisexual men in the present study tend to experience more romantic attraction to women. In contrast, bisexual women in my sample experience romantic and sexual attraction toward multiple genders, and they often are romantically involved with their own gender. Additionally, bisexual women tend to desexualize their bisexuality or at least deprioritize their sexual attraction when discussing their identity, aligning themselves with expectations of emphasized femininity. Concurrently, I find that these gendered definitions of bisexuality impact bisexual parents' conversations about sexuality with their children. Because bisexual fathers view their bisexuality as purely sexual, they are disinclined to talk to their children about it. Instead, bisexual fathers expect that their children will learn about sexuality from alternative sources, such as their mothers, school, or popular media. In contrast, bisexual mothers view their bisexuality mostly as a romantic orientation, and they tend to feel comfortable talking to children about it from a young age. Additionally, bisexual mothers often already perform the gendered labor of giving their children the sex talk, so talking about multigendered sexual attraction can be folded into preexisting conversations about sexuality. I theorize that these gendered distinctions

reflect bisexual parents' participation in hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity (Connell 1987).

Bisexual fathers in my study adhere to hegemonic masculinity by deromanticizing their bisexuality and distancing themselves from subordinated (effeminate) forms of masculinity. Similar to the gay men in Eguchi's (2009) research, bisexual men often downplay the impact of bisexuality on their daily life. By understanding their bisexuality as explicitly sexual, bisexual men are able to conceive of their bisexuality as just a small part of their lives. Connecting to Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity, I find that bisexual men tend to align themselves with masculinity by distancing themselves from romantic relationships with men, which might be considered feminine. Not only are bisexual men less likely to be in same-gender relationships than bisexual women, but they tend to explain that romantic relationships with men are impossible for them. While it is certainly possible for people to have differing sexual and romantic orientations (e.g., Li, Sham, and Wong 2022), I find that bisexual men typically find comfort in the security that their heteroromantic orientation provides them within a culture of hegemonic masculinity, and so bisexual men may be less likely to explore the possibility of same-gender love. This rings particularly true in a culture which equates gayness to femininity, and femininity to weakness. Research suggests that men are able to incorporate their romantic feelings toward women into expectations of hegemonic masculinity by ascribing gender roles to their relationships. In particular, men characterize themselves as sexual and active and their female partners as pure and passive (Allen 2007; Redman 2001). However, traditional gender roles are less common in gay relationships (e.g., Mareck, Finn, and Cardell 1982), which makes it harder to incorporate romantic attraction toward men into a narrative consistent with hegemonic masculinity. Similar to Duggan's (2002) theory of homonormativity, which suggests

that there is a culturally acceptable way to be gay, I find that bisexual men engage in a form of binormativity by aligning themselves closely to gender-normative expectations of masculinity. Given that romance and emotionality are associated with femininity, and effeminate men are often subject to violence, bisexual men balance their already stigmatized sexuality by fitting themselves into gendered expectations and portraying their attraction as carnal rather than emotional. In doing so, they mirror the gay men in Connell (1992) and Eguchi's (2009) samples who identify with aspects of straight masculinity in order to be recognized as masculine men, and in order to hopefully experience less discrimination.

In addition to deromanticizing their bisexuality, bisexual men adhere to fathering expectations of hegemonic masculinity by engaging in less emotional, open conversations with their children about sexuality. Bisexual fathers explain that they often expect their female partners to educate their children about sexuality, and that they feel uncomfortable having these types of conversations with their children. Some bisexual men even explain that this gendered division of labor has led to resentment in their relationships. Bisexual mothers, in contrast, take on the task of teaching their children about sexuality, often through a feminine lens of romance. I view this as an extension of bisexual mothers' adherence to emphasized femininity, both because these conversations are considered an important part of a mother's carework and because these conversations tend to centralize messages of romance rather than sex. Intensive motherhood, argued as a natural extension of emphasized femininity, suggests that mothers must be emotionally absorbed in all aspects of caring for their children (Hays 1996). And given the lack of comprehensive sex education in the United States school systems (Stidham Hall, McDermott Sales, Komro, and Santelli 2016), alongside many current laws which prohibit some teachers from talking to children about LGBTQ+ identities (e.g., Florida's 2022 HB 1557), bisexual

mothers tend to view it as their responsibility to educate their children on sexuality. However, when explaining how these conversations about sexuality unfold, bisexual mothers often report explaining bisexuality and other sexual orientations to their children in romantic rather than sexual terms. Bisexual fathers have difficulty conceptualizing their bisexuality in romantic terms, and so this way of explaining LGBTQ+ identities to children feels inaccessible for them. Yet bisexual mothers are constantly doing the work to distance themselves from stereotypes that fetishize them as hypersexual, and so framing bisexuality as a romantic identity feels like a natural extension of their adherence to binormativity.

In order to achieve gender equity in the ways that bisexual fathers and mothers talk to their children about sexuality, I argue that more work needs to be done to destigmatize LGBTQ+ men and dismantle the patriarchy. Bisexual men in particular feel threatened by bisexual erasure, or the popular assumption that everyone is either lesbian/gay or straight (Yoshino 2000). Disclosing one's bisexuality often feels destabilizing for bisexual men in relationships with women because these men fear that their bisexuality will not be believed, and instead they will be assumed to be gay. Bisexual men express a desire not to be perceived as gay both because this assumption leads to destabilization in their romantic relationships with women, and because they understand gay identities to be emasculating. I identify two central needs to increase bisexual father's openness about sexuality with their children. First, more work needs to be done to eradicate bisexual erasure so that people's identities are not questioned when they disclose themselves as bisexual. And second, we must continue disentangling heterosexuality and homophobia from dominant constructions of masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Grindstaff and West 2011). Furthermore, my data on bisexual women and emphasized femininity highlights a continued need to destigmatize women's sexuality. Even as sexual norms change and casual

sex is expected of girls and young women, women continue to struggle with balancing their sexual desires with the required passivity and emotionality of emphasized femininity (Kincaid, Sennott, and Kelly 2022). The struggle to fit into a culture that expects women to be sexual within a hierarchical system which rewards women's passivity is even more challenging for bisexual women who are highly stigmatized as hypersexual for their attraction to multiple genders. If the goal is for parents to be able to talk dialectically with their children about LGB identities as both sexual and romantic, then we must continue to work to destigmatize men's expressions of love and women's expressions of sex.

Conclusion

> *"Our systemic literature review has identified a striking lack of research on the experiences of bisexual parents. Further, our review of the broader literature suggests a number of potential issues and concerns that may be unique to or differentially experienced by bisexual parents. Research specifically attending to the experiences of bisexual parents is therefore warranted."*
> – Lori E. Ross and Cheryl Dobinson, "Where is the 'B' in LGBT Parenting? A Call for Research on Bisexual Parenting," 2013

How does the bisexuality of parents matter? Existing research on sexuality and parenting seems to suggest that bisexuality matters very little. Instead, social scientists find that gender plays a crucial role in parenting (e.g., Biblarz and Stacey 2010), and so bisexuals in same-gender relationships are expected to parent similarly to lesbians and gays, and bisexuals in different-gender relationships are expected to parent similarly to heterosexuals. Ross and Dobinson (2013) explained that "this omission [of bisexual parents from literature on LGB parenting] could be because the presumed 'danger' to children is implicitly understood to be associated with same-sex sexual behavior, rather than sexual minority identity, thus rendering the parents' specific identity irrelevant" (96). Researchers have focused on understanding the experiences of lesbian and gay parents because anti-LGB rhetoric tends to specifically stigmatize same-gender relationships (Ross and Dobinson 2013; Stacey and Biblarz 2001). Certainly, social scientists doing work in this area have proven that the gender of parents does matter (Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011; Fulcher et al. 2007; Sutfin et al. 2007); I even confirm this in Chapter Three. And no doubt, more work needs to be done to destigmatize same-gender parents, given that only 28 states in the United States currently prohibit discrimination in foster care or adoption based on sexuality ("Foster and Adoption Laws" 2023). However, Ross and Dobinson (2013) also found that some social workers are warned explicitly not to allow bisexuals to adopt, not because they may be in same-gender relationships, but because of a specific stereotype that

portrays bisexuals as unstable. Clearly, stigma against LGB parents extends beyond lesbians and gays, and sociology is long overdue for research which highlights the unique experiences of bisexual parents. This dissertation is a response to Ross and Dobinson's (2013) call for research focusing on bisexual parents. Using data from 4,674 survey respondents and 103 interviewees, I explore the unique challenges and advantages of bisexual parents, while attending to important gender differences among this diverse group. In this final chapter, I work to connect each of my three substantive chapters to the larger theoretical framework of bisexual erasure. Then, I explore the methodological limitations of this project, followed by a reflexive discussion of my own positionality. Finally, I detail the academic and policy implications of this work.

BISEXUAL ERASURE AND PARENTING

Throughout this dissertation, I build on Yoshino's (2000) concept of bisexual erasure. Yoshino (2000) defined bisexual erasure as an agreement between straights and lesbians/gays to deny and stigmatize bisexuality. He explained that "both straights and gays, for different reasons, want bisexuals to be invisible" (395). This erasure is enacted through (1) class erasure (i.e., a total denial of bisexuality), (2) individual erasure (i.e., recognition that bisexuality exists, but denial that people who claim the identity actually are bisexual), and (3) delegitimation (i.e., acknowledging bisexuality's existence but attaching stigma to the identity) (Yoshino 2000). In this conclusion to my dissertation, I argue that bisexual erasure is the very reason that the bisexuality of parents does matter. It is this experience with erasure that separates bisexuals from lesbian, gay, or straight parents and creates several unique challenges and advantages for the bisexual parents in my study. In Chapter One, I identify the ways in which bisexual erasure renders bisexual parents without cultural scripts for navigating conversations about bisexuality with their children. In Chapter Two, I find that bisexual parents often attribute their

advantageous open-mindedness and preparedness for LGBTQ+ children to their empathy with marginalization, which they say they develop through experiences with bisexual erasure. And finally, in Chapter Three, I find that bisexual erasure is largely responsible for the gendered differences between bisexual men and women in my sample— whereas bisexual men are targeted by the individual erasure of their bisexuality, bisexual women are targets of delegitimation through stereotypes that bisexuals are hypersexual. These gendered experiences of bisexual erasure impact the ways that parents navigate conversations about sexuality with their children. In this section, I demonstrate how each chapter of my dissertation is connected to this broader concept of bisexual erasure. Evidence of bisexual erasure throughout this research provides ample support for greater bisexual representation in research, media, and policy.

Bisexual Erasure and Cultural Scripts

In Chapter One, I define cultural scripts as narratives that are familiar to and resonate with an audience. The "each family is special" script is widely used by parents to explain lesbian and gay relationships to their children. In this script, parents compare families with two moms or two dads to families with single parents, blended families, and extended families to demonstrate that there are many types of families. As the teacher explained in *Heather Has Two Mommies* (1989), it does not matter how many people are in your family or what the gender of those people are… instead, "the most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love each other." By focusing on family structure, the "each family is special" script neglects to teach children about parents' specific sexualities. In particular, the script has no room for bisexuality, an identity which foretells very little about family structure. For lesbian and gay parents in my sample, the "each family is special" script is the primary tool used to discuss parents' sexualities with young children. As their children age, these parents say that their children understand their

sexuality; there is no need to "come out." But due to the bisexual erasure in this and other cultural scripts, bisexual parents struggle with whether to disclose their bisexuality to their children at all, often wondering whether their bisexuality is "age-appropriate" or relevant to their children's lives. Although the majority of bisexual parents in my sample do discuss or plan to discuss their bisexuality with their children, parents are divided on why, when, and how to have these conversations.

Of particular note, lesbian and gay parents in my sample rarely grapple with whether their sexuality is age-appropriate—both because their sexuality is made obvious to their children through their relationship, and because they have accessible scripts for talking to their young children about lesbian and gay identities in ways that feels appropriate. As I explore in the chapter, it is increasingly common for mainstream children's media like *Arthur* and *Rugrats* to portray lesbian or gay identities, providing parents with several examples of palatable lesbian/gay characters (Maxouris 2019; Serrao 2021). Yet bisexual parents struggle with stereotypes that their identities are hypersexual, alongside an absolute lack of bisexual representation in children's media (Epstein 2014). So, parents navigate identity disclosure with trepidation, often expressing insecurity and uncertainty toward their conversational approaches. The consequence to this lack of bisexual representation is that many parents likely choose not to disclose their identity, thus reproducing bisexual erasure for their children. Although the majority of parents in my sample do discuss their bisexuality with their children, research shows that bisexuals are significantly less likely than lesbians and gays to disclose their sexuality to the "important people in their lives" (Brown 2019). A nationally representative sample of bisexual parents would likely highlight this disparity further. Children are learning about lesbian and gay identities from an increasingly young age, but knowledge of bisexuality falls far behind. In order

to decrease bisexual erasure (a goal which is no doubt necessary when looking at the consequences of bisexual stigma as observed in my own and others' research), I argue that we need to develop cultural scripts for discussing bisexuality with young children.

Bisexual Erasure and Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory suggests that experiences with oppression and marginalization lead to greater awareness of oppressive structures; as a result, marginalized people are often better equipped to understand social inequity (Hartsock 1983; Smith 1974). In Chapter Two, I find that bisexual parents view themselves through this lens, explaining that their experiences with marginalization (i.e., bisexual stigma and erasure) help them to understand and empathize with their children's diverse sexual and gender identities. While bisexual parents recognize the measurable discrimination facing lesbian and gay parents in same-gender relationships, they articulate that their experiences with bisexual erasure often cause them to be more open-minded than either straight *or* lesbian/gay parents. As Yoshino (2000) explained, both straight and lesbian/gay individuals are invested in upholding bisexual erasure, which means that bisexuals often feel rejected from these groups. And holding a marginal sexual identity but feeling unwanted or excluded from lesbian/gay people and spaces leads many bisexuals to process their sexualities alone and unsupported. As a result, bisexual parents explain they feel very protective of their children's identities, explaining that they often go to great lengths to make sure their children feel supported no matter how they identify. I find support for this in my data. Bisexual parents are particularly outspoken in their support of bisexual and transgender children, whereas lesbian and gay parents are more likely to talk negatively about these identities, and straight parents appear overwhelmingly misinformed about LGBTQ+ identities overall. Because of their experiences with bisexual erasure, parents recognize an explicit need for openness toward sexual

and gender fluidity that is often missing from monosexual parents whose identities have been confirmed by the sexual binary.

My argument here of course is not that bisexual erasure is good, but that bisexual erasure has a measurable impact on the way parents relate to their children. The purpose of standpoint theory is to suggest that marginalized groups better understand oppression, and thus their knowledge should be prioritized when thinking about how to deconstruct systems of inequality. In the same way, I find that bisexual parents are particularly knowledgeable about the consequences of bisexual erasure, and this perspective influences them to deconstruct bisexual stigma for their children by talking about it explicitly. I suggest that straight, lesbian, and gay parents should look to bisexual parents as a model for talking to children about sexual fluidity, precisely because bisexual erasure equips bisexuals with perspective and experiences that monosexuals do not have.

Bisexual Erasure and Gendered Stigma

In Chapter Three, I find that bisexual men and women define and discuss their bisexuality in gendered ways. Bisexual men tend to describe their bisexuality as a purely sexual attraction, whereas bisexual women often talk about their bisexuality using romantic language. In the chapter, I link these gendered behaviors to hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity (Connell 1987). Here, I argue that this gendered behavior is also influenced by bisexual erasure. Yoshino (2000) said that bisexual stereotypes are one of the three main ways that bisexual erasure is enacted. He explained,

> Delegitimation occurs when straights acknowledge the existence of individual bisexuals but attach a stigma to bisexuality. It may seem odd to characterize delegitimation as a strategy of bisexual invisibility, given that it makes bisexuality more visible. But because

> it chills the expression of bisexuality by portraying it only in a negative way, I include it here. Common straight stereotypes of bisexuals portray them as promiscuous, as duplicitous, as closeted, and especially as bridges for HIV infection from the "high risk" gay population to the "low risk" straight population (396).

Yoshino (2000) suggested that negative bisexual stereotypes are a tactic of bisexual erasure because they render bisexuality as a deeply undesirable identity to proclaim. I find that bisexual men and women are both impacted by this form of erasure, often responding to fears of different bisexual stereotypes.

For bisexual men, the stereotype of bisexuals as closeted undermines their claims to hegemonic masculinity. Bisexual fathers tell me that they are afraid to disclose their bisexuality specifically because they do not want people to assume they are gay. Not only do bisexual fathers recognize and try to distance themselves from the link between effeminacy and gayness, but they also explain that being perceived as gay could actively harm their relationships with their wives or female partners. Bisexual men worry that their partners will not trust they are actually bisexual, because the stigma that bisexual men are secretly gay is so common. Bisexual women, in contrast, work to distance themselves from the stereotype of bisexuals as promiscuous or hypersexual by emphasizing the romantic nature of their identities and aligning themselves more closely to emphasized femininity. Neither group seems able to talk consistently about bisexuality as a dyadic identity with both sexual and romantic attraction. Here, I find that bisexual erasure is at work even in the limited representations of bisexuality that exist. These gendered stereotypes then impact the ways that bisexual parents navigate conversations about sexuality with their children – with bisexual men shying away and bisexual women desexualizing their conversations. I find that even as bisexual parents are invested in

destigmatizing bisexuality for their children, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, they also hold themselves to a binormative standard, relentlessly working to distance themselves from stereotypes commonly associated with bisexuality.

LIMITATIONS

I have produced the largest and most diverse sample of bisexual parents to date. However, due to my sampling frame, my research is not representative of the entire bisexual parenting community, and certain diverse perspectives are missing from my analysis. The use of social media as a sampling frame for underrepresented populations has increased in popularity in recent years. For example, Brickman-Bhutta (2012) recruited 4,000 baptized Roman Catholics to answer their survey by posting to several Facebook groups. They encouraged respondents to share the survey with others, producing a snowball sample similar to my own. A snowball sample is a cost-effective way to reach a large, diverse group of participants who are often underrepresented in random samples, or who are not asked important questions about their identities when they are represented in random samples. However, the main critique of snowball samples generated from social media is their non-randomness, meaning certain groups are more highly represented than in the general United States population (Schneider and Harknett 2016). Although I welcome some of this "non-randomness" (i.e., I desire a higher number of bisexual respondents than would be achieved in a random sample), my sample does not provide a perfectly representative sample of the bisexual community itself.

Compared to the 2021 United States census ("Population Estimates" 2022), my survey sample overrepresents White people (mine: 84 percent, census: 76 percent), cisgender women (mine: 79 percent, census: 51 percent), college-educated people (mine: 72 percent, census: 34 percent), and high-income earners (at least 49 percent of my sample earn more than the median

household income of $69,000 in 2021). While the census does not provide specific information on the demographics of bisexuals, multiple researchers have found that people of color are more likely to identify as bisexual and more likely to say that being LGBTQ+ is important to their identity (Newport 2018, Pew Research Center 2013). Additionally, research finds that bisexuals are more likely to experience poverty and homelessness than non-bisexuals (Mirza 2018, Siconolfi et al. 2020). The fact that my sample is so White and economically secure seems unreflective of the larger bisexual community.

During the first phase of survey distribution, I targeted 25 Facebook groups, and most of these groups were specifically formed by and for LGBTQ+ people. All of these groups were identity-affirming and existed to provide a sense of community for their members. I imagine that the likelihood of participating in one of these identity-affirming spaces greatly correlates with the likelihood that a person might be "out" as bisexual. In Chapter One, I explore this more, acknowledging that while the vast majority of my survey sample had either already told or planned to tell their children about their bisexuality, the Pew Research Center reports that 26 percent of bisexuals do not tell any of the important people in their lives about their sexuality (Brown 2019). During the second phase of survey distribution, I hoped to diversify my sample by using funding from the American Institute of Bisexuality to distribute paid Facebook advertisements to individuals who might not be in identity-affirming groups. During this second phase of distribution, my sample size increased dramatically (from 767 parents to 4,674 parents), but the proportionate gender and racial diversity stayed relatively the same. However, this new sampling approach did help to diversify my sample in terms of class (percent of my sample that earned more than the median household income of $69,000 decreased from 65 percent to 49

percent) and education (percent of my sample that was college educated decreased from 79 to 72 percent).

When recruiting participants for the interview stage of this project, I aimed for a sample with racial, gender, class, religious, and political diversity. Instead of randomly selecting participants from my large selection of interview volunteers, I organized possible interviewees by demographic and purposefully sampled groups who were underrepresented in my larger survey sample. As a result, my sample of interviewees is much more diverse, particularly in terms of gender (55 percent cisgender women) and race (55 percent White). However, even with purposeful sampling, my interviewees are disproportionately college-educated (73 percent) and high-income earners (at least 49 percent earn more than $69,000). Realistically, I recognize that taking my survey and being interviewed both take time that many poor parents do not have. My survey took participants an average of fifteen minutes, and my interviews lasted an average of 90 minutes. Many of the parents I interviewed either worked from home or had flexible work hours, a luxury rarely afforded to people experiencing economic insecurity.

Given the fact that bisexuals are more likely to be poor and experience homelessness, my sample is missing a key perspective from the bisexual community. Most of the parents in my sample are relatively privileged, and they are able to think through the theoretical advantages and consequences of discussing their bisexuality with their children without navigating total economic precarity. And research suggests that the disadvantages associated with bisexuality are deeper than underrepresentation or stereotypes—bisexuals are also more likely to experience depression and anxiety, to be sexually assaulted, to experience intimate partner violence, and to attempt suicide (Addington 2019; HRC Staff 2017; Martin, Fisher, Warner, Krebs, and Lindquist 2011; Taylor 2017). Toward the end of this chapter, I make suggestions for future research,

particularly highlighting a need for greater class diversity which I feel is often overshadowed and underdiscussed in LGB parenting research in general.

POSITIONALITY

This study emerged from my own fantasies of what it might be like to be raised in an environment that was open and accepting of LGBTQ+ identities. I grew up in a Southern evangelical community. When I was a teenager, one of my close friends came out as gay, and he was swiftly uninvited from singing in our church choir. He went to the slightly less conservative school across town, where he was one of only two students who were out as gay. In my own graduating class of 2014, I knew of one student who was out, but coming out had not been their choice. To further contextualize my upbringing, I did not even learn the word bisexual until I was in college, when I kissed a girl for the first time and then retreated to *Tumblr.com* to help me understand how I could possibly feel an attraction to multiple genders at once. It took me years to reckon with my attraction to multiple genders as I messily fumbled my way through shameful, drunken kisses with women before finally accepting that I was bisexual. Even then, several people told me I must just be a lesbian. I remember running into a girl I had kissed at a party while attending a concert with my ex-boyfriend. She pulled me aside and said, “I really think you need to consider the fact that you might just be a lesbian.” When that boyfriend eventually broke up with me, he said the same thing. Apparently, I kissed girls like I was starving, and I kissed boys like I was already full. But I remained confident that I was bisexual. I was only hungry for women’s affection because I felt I had been deprived of a queer adolescence… because I had no idea that bisexuality was even an option when I was going on first dates and kissing boys throughout middle and high school. And even if I had known it was possible, it would not have been safe for me to explore my attraction to girls in rural Georgia.

Eventually, I became so passionate about combatting bisexual erasure, that I started talking about bisexuality at any opportunity I could find. Soon enough, friends, acquaintances, and even people I hardly knew were confiding in me about their bisexuality. Some of my deepest friendships today started over whispered admissions of multigender attraction, followed by hugs and tears and the overwhelming relief that we are not alone. It is easy for me to be filled with rage when thinking about the ways that my bisexual friends and I were failed by our schools, parents, and the media we grew up consuming. Many of us grieve a queer adolescence, wishing we would have had the language and permission to explore our multigender attraction, instead of entering into our first romantic and sexual experiences with people of our own gender at what sometimes feels to be an embarrassingly old age. For others, acceptance of their bisexuality comes after settling into long-term "straight" relationships, which means not only mourning a queer adolescence, but also a hypothetical queer future full of "what ifs."

Coming to California for graduate school, bisexual erasure was at the forefront of my mind. And as I started teaching undergraduates, I realized that many of them knew much more about sexuality than I did at their age. It was 2016, and bisexual representation in the media was still extremely limited, so I wondered where my students were learning this stuff. Of course, geography and social media played their roles. But I also was curious if they were having conversations with their parents that I never had with my own. In particular, I started to think about bisexual parents. Was there a group of bisexual parents doing the work to make sure their children understood bisexuality? Was talking about bisexuality even worth the stigma for parents? I perused the sexuality and family literature and discovered that nobody had really explored this topic in the capacity that I was interested in. Soon after, I proposed this dissertation to my committee.

My bisexuality no doubt has influenced this project in numerous ways. Most researchers assume that bisexuals are similar enough to be analyzed as lesbian, gay, or straight depending on the gender of their relationship (Ross and Dobinson 2013), but I knew from my own experience and from the experiences of my bisexual friends that many things are markedly different for bisexuals. When designing my survey and interview guides, I knew to ask certain questions that had not been asked by researchers studying lesbian and gay parents. For instance, I understood that many people do not even believe that bisexuality exists, so in my survey I asked whether respondents believed multigender attraction was possible. Two percent of respondents who answered the question (n=7331) said they do not believe someone can experience multigender attraction, and an additional three percent said they are uncertain. When conducting my interviews, I was able to empathize and connect with participants about bisexuality as a community "insider" (Aguilar 1981). When people used terminology like "bisexual erasure" or referred to inside jokes in the bisexual community, such as "finger guns," "cuffed jeans," and "puns," I clearly understood what they were talking about. For example, here is a brief snippet of a conversation I had with Ricky, a 33-year-old mixed race genderfluid parent:

> **Ricky**: One of my really good friends bought me this pin that is a sword, but it's also a bisexual pride flag. It is rad AF (as fuck). And I wear it to work sometimes.
>
> **Rowan**: That's awesome.
>
> **Ricky**: And I had a coworker… One of my buddies at work… and he goes, "What are the colors for?" And I was like, "Oh, well, like, wink, wink, nudge nudge…" And I was like, [whispers] "It's a bisexual pride flag…" I probably did something super stereotypical and like, "finger-gunned" at him or something.
>
> **Rowan**: Oh my god, sure… [a few minutes later] Where is that (the finger gun stereotype) something that you learn?
>
> **Ricky**: Well, yeah. The finger gun… What was the other thing I learned that I do that's a bisexual stereotype? Is it sitting in chairs weird?

Rowan: Oh, yeah.

Ricky: It's apparently a bi thing. And I'm like, whaaaat? I'm like… here I am, with my knees up by my face in a dining room table chair, and I'm like "Shut up!"

Rowan: Yep, yep. You felt a little called out?

Ricky: Very, yep.

Ricky did not need to explain to me the relevance of swords, finger guns, or sitting "weird." I knew that each of these things were considered part of "bisexual culture" by the bisexual community. And I also knew the context which made these stereotypes possible. As Jen Winston explains in her 2021 memoir *Greedy: Notes from a Bisexual Who Wants Too Much*,

> Cuffed jeans are bi culture. But that's not all: Finger guns? Bi culture. Bob haircuts? Bi culture. Lemon bars? Bi culture. Sitting in chairs wrong? Some say it's gay culture, but according to Reddit (and my lower back), it's bi culture… Every piece of bi culture was born out of the same concept: If you say something is bi culture, it automatically becomes bi culture. In this case, participation isn't just part of the meme- it's the entirety of it: For an object or behavior to constitute "bi culture," all you need is someone willing to proclaim it as such. Bi culture is everything. Which means bi culture is nothing. As annoying as the logic loop might be, it reflects exactly what it's like to be bisexual: to be told simultaneously that you are asking for too much and that you don't exist (26-27).

I am regularly in spaces with bisexual people who are actively working to create bisexual culture, even if it is based on silly ideas that are difficult to measure. Whether bisexuals actually sit "weird" is irrelevant. Whereas lesbians and gays can organize around their shared experience of same-gender relationships, bisexuals often feel an absence of community, and these stereotypes have emerged as an attempt to connect and ground us in some sort of collective identity. When Ricky gleefully told me that they were sitting with their knees up by their face, I understood the joy they felt in having their bisexuality validated, because I too had delighted in my tendency to sit curled up in a ball at my desk as some strange sort of proof that I must really be bisexual, no matter how many people try to tell me otherwise. When I analyzed my interview data, I saw such evidence of bisexual erasure hidden between the lines of every conversation.

Yet, there are also ways in which I do not relate to my participants. Mainly, I am not a parent, and I do not plan to become a parent. My friends and I sometimes laugh about the irony of me studying parenthood, because I used to joke that I hated children. I would complain that children are loud, messy, sticky, and unpredictable, and I would rather sleep-in and spend my money traveling. But the truth is that while I do not really hate children, I do have complicated feelings about parenthood. I love my parents, but they hurt me in a number of ways, and I do not have a relationship with them. So, you might say that I am a bit sensitive when it comes to parenting. And as familiar as I am with the sociological literature on parenting, I simply do not know what it is like to be responsible for a tiny, growing human. While my bisexual identity helped me to connect and deepen my conversations with participants, it is of course possible that I missed opportunities to ask probing questions when people shared some of their experiences as parents. Sometimes, for example, parents would mention a children's television show or book that I was unfamiliar with, and it was difficult for me to contextualize their references. However, only two participants actually asked me whether or not I was a parent – once in the context of whether I knew of a children's show, and once at the very end of our conversation.

I cannot talk reflexively about my role as a researcher without talking about my physical embodiment in the research space. I am young, White, and "feminine-presenting." Each of these aspects of my appearance and identity likely shaped the way that participants engaged with me. Cultural norms around what constitutes acceptable parenting have shifted significantly over the past several decades. Whereas authoritative parenting and even corporal punishment used to be the norm among United States parents, today many (mostly young White) parents are gravitating toward "gentle parenting" (e.g., Taillieu, Afifi, Mota, Keyes, and Sareen 2014; Winter 2022). Although I never felt like older parents were withholding information from me about the ways

they raised their children, it is certainly possible that they would have been more forthright with me if I was their peer. That said, the bisexual parents I interviewed prided themselves as being open and honest, and I really sensed that in our conversations.

In regard to race, I had a harder time recruiting parent of color, and Black parents specifically. Black survey participants were less likely to volunteer for interviews, and those who did volunteer for interviews were also less likely to respond to my emails for scheduling. I imagine this is in large part due to the intersection of race and class, given that Black parents tend to be less economically secure and therefore have less control over their work schedules (McLoyd 1990). In contrast, many of the White parents I talked to worked from home or had jobs which allowed time in their schedules for a two-hour conversation with me. When it came to talking about race with my interviewees, White parents seemed more interested in talking to me about racism than parents of color. For instance, White interviewees sometimes volunteered their support of Black Lives Matter and talked about their White privilege, whereas I often had to probe to learn more about race from my interviewees of color. Interestingly though, many of my participants were in interracial relationships, which meant that White interviewees were often raising children of color, and interviewees of color were often raising White-passing children. In both scenarios, parents often shared with me how their own experiences with race diverged from their children's. For parents of color, talking to me about their children's race often seemed more comfortable than talking to me about their own race.

Finally, although I now identify as nonbinary and tend to gravitate more toward androgynous clothing, my participants know me by a different name and she/her rather than they/them pronouns. I have long hair, a relatively "feminine" voice, and most people assume I am a cisgender woman. Being nonbinary but presenting as feminine means that I am somewhat

of an "insider" with both my transgender and my cisgender participants. Similar to my knowledge of bisexual culture, I am well-versed in transgender-related topics, and I felt like I really understood the gendered nuance of my nonbinary and transgender participants. But operating in the research space as a "woman" likely helped my participants feel more comfortable sharing intimate details about their sexuality with me. Some interviewees joked that talking to me felt like talking to a therapist. Several participants shared traumatic memories of sexual and emotional abuse with me, and a handful of people even cried during our conversations. While I closely followed my interview guide, I sometimes felt like my interviewees wanted to delve deeper into emotional topics than I anticipated. Feminist researchers often talk about the practice and expectation of engaged emotionality in interview and ethnographic research (e.g., Blakely 2007). And as Grindstaff (2002) explained, feminine-presenting researchers are often impacted by "the notion that women are especially ethical and caring" (287). I feel strongly that the level of depth and vulnerability I received from participants was largely due to this expectation that I, as a feminine-presenting person, was prepared to nurture and hold space for traumatic memories and difficult emotions. And likely due my feminine socialization and training in feminist methodology, I did not discourage my participants from sharing these types of raw emotions and experiences with me, even when my interview guide had not intentionally prompted such conversations. As a side note, my gender transition has also sparked some logistical challenges for this research— Because I legally changed my name after conducting my survey and interviews, participants will find it difficult to track me down or contact me. And if I want to follow-up with my interviewees in any way, then I will need to disclose my transition. Clearly, my positionality remains relevant even after the initial collection of data.

ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has three major academic implications: (1) I demonstrate that bisexuals experience systemic erasure and stigma which separates them from gays or straights and incentivizes studying their unique experiences further; (2) I complicate the popular narrative in LGB parenting research that the gender of parents "matters," in favor of a more complex analysis aligned with feminist standpoint theory which considers not just gender, but also the impact of experiences with oppression or marginalization on parenting practices; and (3) By highlighting the diversity of opinions and experiences within a large group of bisexual parents, I showcase a need for conducting more intersectional research in the sociologies of sexuality, gender, and family.

Although bisexuals are steadily gaining attention in research, as demonstrated by the success of Routledge's quarterly publication of the multidisciplinary *Journal of Bisexuality*, sociological research is behind other social sciences and humanities in its inclusion of bisexuality. While there is growing research on bisexuals' mental health and bisexuals' representation in media, for example, very few scholars have conducted research on bisexuals' social relationships or experiences. As of April 2023, none of the top three general sociology journals (*American Journal of Sociology*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, and *American Sociological Review*) have published articles specifically on bisexuality. In fact, across all three journals, only one article has the word "bisexual" in the title – Mittleman's recent (2022) "Intersecting the Academic Gender Gap: The Education of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual America," in which the author regularly grouped bisexuals with lesbians and gays by using the phrases "gay/bisexual" and "lesbian/bisexual." *Journal of Marriage and Family* has published two articles on bisexuality (Pollitt, Muraco, Grossman, and Russell 2017; Scherrer, Kazyak, and

Schmitz 2015). And *Gender and Society* has one dated article which compares bisexuals to lesbians (Rust 1993). Bisexual representation increases in multidisciplinary journals like *Sexualities*, but even then, research focused on bisexuality is rare. The absence of bisexuality from sociological research seems to imply that sociologists do not understand the ways that bisexuality "matters" or differs from homosexuality. Yet in this dissertation, by comparing bisexuals to lesbians, gays, and straights, I showcase a number of experiences unique to bisexuals. These experiences are summarized above in the section "Bisexual Erasure and Parenting." My research focuses very narrowly on the experiences of bisexual parents as they navigate conversations about sexuality with their children; however, I believe this work justifies studying bisexuals in many areas of sociological research. In my own broader interview research, I have found that bisexual erasure and stigma often complicate adolescent identity development, create tension in romantic relationships, and provoke comparisons to biracial and disability imposter syndrome. With growing evidence that bisexuals are more likely to be people of color, to identify as transgender, to drop out of school, and to experience poverty or homelessness, it is hard to imagine a subdiscipline of sociology that would not benefit from the inclusion of bisexuality (Mirza 2018; Molborn and Everett 2015; Molloy 2014; Newport 2018; Pew Research Center 2013; Siconolfi et al 2020).

Within sociological family research specifically, I hope my findings encourage more nuanced discussions on LGB identity, gender, and parenting. In Chapter Two, I explore the ways that bisexual parents feel they are more open-minded and better prepared to raise LGBTQ+ children compared to lesbian, gay, or straight parents. This analysis has surprising implications for prior work on the advantages of lesbian and gay parents, which tends to attribute advantages of those families to gender dynamics. In particular, lesbians are assumed to parent "better" than

straights specifically because women are expected to be more invested in sharing the responsibility of carework (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Yet both bisexual and lesbian/gay parents in my sample attribute their open-mindedness as parents (which they consider to be advantageous) to their experiences with marginalization, aligning themselves closely to feminist standpoint theory (Hartsock 1983; Lorde 2007; Smith 1974). Given that my research is on parents' perceptions rather than children's outcomes, I cannot claim whether children of bisexuals have different or better outcomes than children of lesbian, gay, or straight parents. And to be clear, that is not my point. Research on LGB parenting tends to be monolithic—and I find that this work often fails to attend to the diversity of identities and experiences with marginalization or privilege within the LGB community. In addition to encouraging sociologists to retreat from the assumption that bisexuals parent similarly to straight, lesbian, or gay people depending on the gender of their relationships, I hope my dissertation pushes for research on intracommunity diversity specifically attuned to experiences of privilege and marginalization. There is a need not only for LGB parenting research to include bisexuality, but also to examine the intersections of race, gender, class, disability, and so on. I am not the first person to point out this lack of intersectional work within LGB parenting research; My findings add to an ongoing conversation and a broader call for intersectional work throughout sociology (e.g., Crenshaw 1991).

Even in my privileged sample of highly educated, middle/upper class, mostly White or White-passing parents, there is remarkable diversity in terms of gender. Prior work on bisexual parents focuses almost entirely on women (e.g., Davenport-Pleasance and Imrie 2022; Taker and Delvoye 2015), yet in Chapter Three I find that bisexual fathers and mothers define their bisexuality and navigate conversations about sexuality with their children in significantly

different ways. I view my research as an improvement on prior work which portrays bisexual parents as a monolith. Yet still more work needs to be done to complexly understand bisexuals. In particular, with the growing evidence that bisexuals are more likely than gays or straights to experience poverty or homelessness (Mirza 2018; Siconolfi et al. 2020), I feel there is an urgent need for intersectional sociological research which incorporates bisexuality into existing conversations of economic inequality. Conducting this type of research will likely require a different methodological approach than my own. While social media is a great sampling tool for achieving geographical diversity, I encourage future researchers to study within local communities, while being mindful of ethical dilemmas in public scholarship (Sam and Gupton 2018). For example, many large cities have centers which provide services for LGBTQ+ people experiencing homelessness and material hardship. Ethnographic work anchored in Black feminist methodology and public scholarship could potentially attend to this missing piece on bisexuality and poverty. Beyond a need for intersectional work within bisexual research, I hope to add my voice to the growing list of scholars advocating for intersectionality more broadly within the fields of sexuality, gender, and family.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled to legalize same-gender marriage across the United States. However, LGBTQ+ people continue to be targeted by discriminatory laws. As I write this, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is actively tracking 467 anti-LGBTQ+ bills in the United States ("Mapping Attacks" 2023). The ACLU identifies seven key goals of these anti-LGBTQ+ bills: (1) limit the ability for transgender and intersex people to update their IDs and records, (2) undermine and weaken nondiscrimination laws, (3) restrict how and when LGBTQ+ people can express themselves, (4) limit or ban gender-affirming medical care, (5) prohibit

transgender people from using public bathrooms and facilities that align with their gender, (6) censoring school discussions of LGBTQ+ topics and limiting transgender students' participation in school activities, and (7) other anti-LGBTQ+ bills that target LGBTQ+ rights. Transgender people in particular are targeted by many of these bills. For LGB individuals, a major concern is restrictions on adoption and foster care.

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) reports that currently 16 states have no protection for discrimination in foster care based on sexual orientation, and 12 states permit "state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ+ people and same-sex couples, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs" ("Foster and Adoption Laws" 2023). And as I mention at the beginning of this chapter, some adoption workers are specifically trained not to allow bisexual parents to foster or adopt (Ross and Dobinson 2013). In this dissertation, I add to the growing body of literature that suggests LGBTQ+ parents do not parent worse than straight parents; in fact, the data seems to suggest that LGBTQ+ parents often parent *better* (Cohen and Kuvalanka 2011; Fulcher et al. 2007; Stacey and Biblarz 2010; Sutfin et al. 2007). Therefore, I suggest state foster care and adoption agencies implement research-informed training on LGBTQ+ parents for their social workers. Trainings which suggest that bisexuals are unstable or that LGBTQ+ people are otherwise unfit to parent are clearly not backed by research. Instead, trainings should focus on both the similarities to straight parents, as well as the unique advantages offered by LGBTQ+ parents. Nevertheless, I recognize that my findings on bisexuals' acceptance of their children's LGBTQ+ identities may be antithetical to the concerns of religious freedom bills, given that many of the supporters of these bills want to restrict children's expression of LGBTQ+ identities ("Mapping Attacks" 2023). Therefore, I view my work as supporting a need for policies which

protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination in foster care and adoption at the federal level. With the legendary Obergefell v. Hodges, the Supreme Court was able to overturn religious freedom bills which restricted same-gender marriage in certain states; the next step to protect LGBTQ+ families then is to pass a similar bill oriented toward protecting LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in foster care and adoption.

By examining bisexual parents in this dissertation, I highlight that LGBTQ+ discrimination is not just an issue for individuals in same-gender couples. To borrow from the "each family is special" script in Chapter One, families can look many different ways— Perhaps some families have a straight mother and a straight father, and some families have two lesbian moms or two gay dads… but some families also have a straight mother and a bisexual father, or a gay mom and a bisexual mom! LGBTQ+ families are diverse and deserving of comprehensive legal protections from discrimination, including both marriage and parenting protections.

References

Abelson, Robert. 1976. "Script Processing in Attitude Formation and Decision Making." Pp. 33-45 in *Cognition and Social Behavior*, edited by J.S. Carroll and J.W. Payne. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Abrutyn, Seth, Anna Mueller, and Melissa Osborne. 2020. "Rekeying Cultural Scripts for Youth Suicide: How Social Networks Facilitate Suicide Diffusion and Suicide Clusters Following Exposure to Suicide." *Society and Mental Health* 10(2): 112-135.

Addington, Lynn. 2019. "Bisexual Women and Intimate Partner Violence." *The Gender Policy Report*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/bisexual-women-and-intimate-partner-violence/).

Aguilar, John. 1981. "Insider Research: An Ethnography of a Debate." Pp. 133-149 in *Anthropologists at Home in North America*, edited by D. A. Messerschmidt. London: Cambridge University Press.

Allen, Louisa. 2003. "Girls Want Sex, Boys Want Love: Resisting Dominant Discourses of (Hetero)sexuality." *Sexualities* 6(2): 215-236.

Allen, Louisa. 2007. "'Sensitive and Real Macho All at the Same Time': Young Heterosexual Men and Romance." *Men and Masculinities* 10(2): 137-152.

Ammaturo, Francesca Romana. 2018. "Raising Queer Children and Children of Queer Parents: Children's Political Agency, Human Rights and Hannah Arendt's Concept of 'Parental Responsibility." *Sexualities* 22(7-8): 1149-1163.

Anderson, Eric. 2005. "Orthodox and Inclusive Masculinity: Competing Masculinities among Heterosexual Men in a Feminized Terrain." *Sociological Perspectives* 48: 337-355.

Anderson, Eric. 2008. “Inclusive Masculinity in Fraternal Setting.” *Men and Masculinities* 10(5): 604-620.

Arxer, Steven. 2011. “Hybrid Masculine Power.” *Humanity and Society* 35(4): 390-422.

Baldwin, Elizabeth and Madelon Visintainer Baranoski. 1990. “Family Interactions and Sex Education in the Home.” *Adolescence* 25(99): 573-582.

Bennett, Clare, Jane Harden, and Sally Antsey. 2018. “Fathers as Sexuality Educators: Aspirations and Realities. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.” *Sex Education* (18)1: 74-89.

Bergling, Tim. 2001. *Sissyphobia: Gay Men and Effeminate Behavior*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Bernstein, Mary. 2015. “Same-Sex Marriage and the Future of the LGBT Movement: SWS Presidential Address.” *Gender and Society* 29(3): 321-337.

Biblarz, Timothy and Evren Savci. 2010. “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72: 480-497.

Biblarz, Timothy and Judith Stacey. 2010. “How Does the Gender of Parents Matter?” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72(1): 3-22.

Bigner, Jerry. 1999. “Raising Our Sons: Gay Men as Fathers.” *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services* 10(1): 61-77.

Blakely, Kristin. 2007. “Reflections on the Role of Emotion in Feminist Research.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 6(2): 59-68.

Bowling, Jessamyn, Brian Dodge, and Elizabeth Bartelt. 2016. “Sexuality-Related Communication within the Family Context: Experiences of Bisexual Parents with their Children in the United States of America.” *Sex Education* 17(1): 86-102.

Bradford, Mary. 2004. “The Bisexual Experience: Living in a Dichotomous Culture.” *Journal of Bisexuality* 4(1-2): 7-23.

Brickman-Bhutta, Christine. 2012. “Not by the Book: Facebook as Sampling Frame.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 41(1): 57-88.

Bridges, Tristan and C.J. Pascoe. 2014. “Hybrid Masculinities: New Directions in the Sociology of Men and Masculinities.” *Sociology Compass* 8(3): 246-258.

Bridges, Tristan. 2014. “A Very ‘Gay’ Straight? Hybrid Masculinities, Sexual Aesthetics, and the Changing Relationship between Masculinity and Homophobia.” *Gender and Society* 28(1): 58-82.

Broker, M. 1976. “I may be Queer, but at Least I am a Man: Male Hegemony and Ascribed Versus Achieved Gender” In *Sexual Division and Society,* edited by D. Leonard Barker and S. Allen. London: Tavistock.

Brown, Anna. 2019. “Bisexual Adults are Far Less Likely than Gay Men and Lesbians to be ‘Out’ to the People in their Lives.” *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved June 29, 2022. (https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/18/bisexual-adults-are-far-less-likely-than-gay-men-and-lesbians-to-be-out-to-the-people-in-their-lives/).

Bucher, Jacob. 2014. “‘But He Can’t Be Gay’: The Relationship between Masculinity and Homophobia in Father-Son Relationships.” *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 22(3): 222-237.

Butler, Judith. 1999. [1990] *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Cancian, Francesca. 1986. “The Feminization of Love.” *Signs* 11(4): 692-709.

Carrigan, Tim, Bob Connell, and John Lee. 1985. “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity.” *Theory and Society* 14: 551-604.

Cass, Vivienne. 1979. “Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 4(3): 219-235.

Chan, Randolph, Don Operario, and Winnie Mak. 2020. “Bisexual Individuals are at Greater Risk of Poor Mental Health than Lesbians and Gay Men: The Mediating Role of Sexual Identity Stress at Multiple Levels.” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 260: 292-301.

Chanel, Sunny. 2015. “The 10 Most Out Gay Parents on TV and in Film.” *Mom*. Retrieved June 29, 2022. (https://mom.com/momlife/21224-new-normal-10-most-out-gay-parents-tv-and-film).

Chesebro, J. W. 2001. “Gender, Masculinities, Identities, and Interpersonal Relationship Systems: Men in General and Gay Men in Particular.” Pp 33-64 in *Women and Men Communicating: Challenges and Changes*, edited by L.P. Arliss and D.J. Borisoff. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Chivers, Meredith. 2017. “The Specificity of Women’s Sexual Response and Its Relationship with Sexual Orientations: A Review and Ten Hypotheses.” *Archival Sex Behavior* 46: 1161-1179.

Cohen, Rachael and Katherine A. Kuvalanka. 2011. “Sexual Socialization in Lesbian-Parent Families: An Exploratory Analysis.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81(2): 293-305.

Coleman, Eli. 1982. “Developmental Stages of the Coming-Out Process.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 25(4): 469-482.

Connell, R. W. 1987. *Gender and Power*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Connell, R. W. 1992. “A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender." *American Sociological Review* 57(6): 735-751.

Connell, R. W. and James Messerschmidt. 2005. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept.” *Gender and Society* 19(6): 829-859.

Copulsky, Daniel and Phillip Hammack. 2021. “Asexuality, Graysexuality, and Demisexuality: Distinctions in Desire, Behavior, and Identity.” *The Journal of Sex Research* 60(2): 221-230.

Cossu, Andrea. 2022. “Performing Social Distancing: Culture, Scripts, and Meaningful Order in the Italian Lockdown.” *Poetics* 93: 1-10.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241-1299.

Crouch, Simon, Elizabeth Waters, Ruth McNair, Jennifer Power, and Elise Davis. 2014. “Parent-Reported Measures of Child Health and Wellbeing in Same-Sex Parent Families: A Cross-Sectional Survey.” *BMC Public Health* 14(635): 1-12.

Crowl, Alicia, Soyeon Ahn, and Jean Baker. 2008. “A Meta-Analysis of Developmental Outcomes for Children of Same-Sex and Heterosexual Parents.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 4(3): 385-407.

Davenport-Pleasance, Ellen and Susan Imrie. 2022. “How Do Bi+ Mothers’ Talk with Their Children about (Their) Bisexuality+?” *LGBTQ+ Family: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 18(4): 319-338.

De Monteflores C and SJ Schultz. 1978. “Coming Out: Similarities and Differences for Lesbians and Gay Men.” *Journal of Social Issues* 34(3): 59-72.

Delvoye, Marie and Fiona Tasker. 2016. “Narrating Self-Identity in Bisexual Motherhood.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 12(1): 1-20.

Demetriou, Demetrakis. 2001. “Connell’s Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique.” *Theory and Society* 30(3): 337-361.

DiAngelo, Robin. 2018. *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism.* Beacon Press: Boston.

Duggan, Lisa. 2002. “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism.” Pp. 175-194. In *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, edited by R. Castronovo and D. Nelson. Durham: Duke University Press.

Dyar, Christina and Brian A. Feinstein. 2018. “Binegativity: Attitudes Toward and Stereotypes About Bisexual Individuals.” pp 95-112 in *Bisexuality: Theories, Research, and Recommendations for the Invisible Sexuality*, edited by D. J. Swan and S. Habibi. Springer: Cham, Switzerland.

Eguchi, Shinsuke. 2009. “Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity: The Rhetorical Strategy of ‘Straight-Acting’ among Gay Men.” *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 38(3): 193-209.

El-Shaieb Muna and Sandy K. Wurtele. 2009. “Parents Plans to Discuss Sexuality with Their Young Children.” *American Journal of Sexuality Education* 4(2): 103-115.

Eliason, Michele. 1997. “The Prevalence and Nature of Biphobia in Heterosexual Undergraduate Students.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 26(3): 317-326.

Ellis, Lee, William Peckham, Ashley Ames, and Donald Burke. 2010. “Sexual Orientation of Human Offspring May be Altered by Severe Maternal Stress During Pregnancy.” *The Journal of Sex Research* 25(1): 152-157.

Epstein, B.J. 2014. “‘The Case of the Missing Bisexuals’: Bisexuality in Books for Young Readers.” *Journal of Bisexuality* 14(1): 110-125.

Erickson-Schroth, Laura and Jennifer Mitchell. 2009. "Queering Queer Theory, or Why Bisexuality Matters." *Journal of Bisexuality* 9(3-4):297-315.

Florida Legislative House Bill 1557: Parental Rights in Education. 2022.

"Foster and Adoption Laws." 2023. *Movement Advancement Project*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/foster_and_adoption_laws)

Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*. Minneapolis, MN: Routledge.

Friedman, M. Reul, Brian Dodge, Vanessa Schick, Debby Herbenick, Randolph Hubach, Jessamyn Bowling, Gabriel Goncalves, Sarah Krier, and Michael Reece. 2014. "From Bias to Bisexual Health Disparities: Attitudes Toward Bisexual Men and Women in the United States." *LGBT Health* 1(4): 309-318.

Fulcher, Megan, Erin Sutfin, and Charlotte Patterson. 2007. "Individual Differences in Gender Development: Associations with Parental Sexual Orientation, Attitudes, and Division of Labor." *Sex Roles* 58: 330-341.

Gabb, Jacqui. 2004. "Sexuality Education: How Children of Lesbian Mothers 'Learn' about Sex/uality." *Sex Education* 4(1): 19-34.

Gamson, Joshua. 2001. "Talking Freaks: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Families on Daytime Talk TV." Pp. 68-86 in *Queer Families, Queer Politics,* edited by M. Bernstein and R. Reisman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Garbagnoli, Sara. 2016. "Against the Heresy of Immanence: Vatican's 'Gender' as a New Rhetorical Device Against the Denaturalization of the Sexual Order." *Religion and Gender* 6(2): 187-204.

Gartrell, Nanette and Henry Bos. 2010. "US National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study: Psychological Adjustment of 17-Year-Old Adolescents." *Pediatrics* 126(1): 28-36.

Gates, Gary, Jennifer Macomber, M. V. Badgett, and Kate Chambers. 2007. "Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States." Report, *The Williams Institute* and *Urban Institute,* March.

Gates, Gary. 2011. "How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender?" *The Williams Institute.* https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/how-many-people-lgbt/

Gays With Kids. 2019. "17 T.V. Shows Featuring Gay Dad Characters." Retrieved June 29, 2022 (https://www.gayswithkids.com/life-plus/entertainment/17-t-v-shows-featuring-gay-dad-characters).

Gieseler, Carly. 2016. "Gender-Reveal Parties: Performing Community Identity in Pink and Blue." *Journal of Gender Studies* 27(6): 661-671.

Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Goddard, Cliff and Anna Wierzbicka. 2004. "Cultural Scripts: What are They and What are They Good For?" *Intercultural Pragmatics* 1(2): 153-166.

Goffman, Erving. 1977. "The Arrangement Between the Sexes." *Theory and Society* 4(3): 301-331.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Touchstone.

Goldberg, Abbie E. 2007. "(How) Does it Make a Difference? Perspectives of Adults with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Parents." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 77(4); 550-

562.

Grindstaff, Laura. 2002. *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of TV Talk Shows*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Grindstaff, Laura and Emily West. 2011. "Hegemonic Masculinity on the Sidelines of Sport." *Sociology Compass* 5(10): 859-881.

Halberstam, Judith. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.

Hanssen, Jorid. 2012. "'My Rainbow Family' – Discomfort and the Heteronormative Logics." *Young* 20(3): 237-256.

Hartsock, Nancy, 1983. "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism." pp. 283-310 in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and the Philosophy of Science,* edited by S. Harding and M Hintikka. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

Haus, Rowan. 2021. "Making Visible the Invisible: Bisexual Parents Ponder Coming Out to Their Kids." *Sexualities* 24(3): 341-369.

Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

HRC Staff. 2017. "Bisexual Health Awareness Month: Mental Health in the Bisexual Community." Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.hrc.org/news/bisexual-health-awareness-month-mental-health-in-the-bisexual-community)

Joyner, Jaz. 2016. "Is the Term 'Bisexual' Transphobic? A Fact Check." *Pride*. Retrieved March 29, 2023 (https://www.pride.com/bisexual/2016/9/23/term-bisexual-transphobic-fact-check)

Kanazawa, Satoshi. 2017. “Possible Evolutionary Origins of Human Female Sexual Fluidity.” *Biological Reviews* 92(3): 1251-1274.

Kane, Emily. 2006. “No Way My Boys are Going to be Like That!” *Gender & Society* 20(2): 149-176.

Kincaid, Reilly, Christie Sennott, and Brian Kelly. 2002. “Doing and Redoing Emphasized Femininity: How Women Use Emotion Work to Manage Competing Expectations in College Hookup Culture.” *Sex Roles* 86: 305-319.

Laird, J. 2003. “Lesbian and Gay Families.” Pp. 176-209 in *Normal Family Processes: Growing Diversity and Complexity*, edited by F. Walsh. The Guilford Press.

Lamb, Sharon, Kara Lustig, and Kelly Graling. 2013. “The Use and Misuse of Pleasure in Sex Education Curricula.” *Sexuality, Society and Learning* 13(3): 305-318.

Lambert, Serena. 2005. “Gay and Lesbian Families: What We Know and Where to Go from Here.” *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families* 13(1): 43-51.

Leddy, Anna, Nanette Gartrell, and Henry Bos. 2012. “Growing Up in a Lesbian Family: The Life Experiences of the Adult Daughters and Sons of Lesbian Mothers.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 8(3): 243-257.

Li, Gu, Will Sham, and Wang Wong. 2022. “Are Romantic Orientation and Sexual Orientation Different? Comparisons Using Explicit and Implicit Measurements.” *Current Psychology.*

Lorde, Audre. 2007. *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press: Berkeley.

MacBride-Stewart, Sara. 2004. “Dental Dams: A Parody of Straight Expectations in the Promotion of Safer Lesbian Sex.” In *Out in the Antipodes: Australian and New Zealand*

Perspectives on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology, edited by D. Riggs and G. Walker. Bentley, WA: Brightfire Press.

"Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislature." 2023. *American Civil Liberties Union*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights?impact=)

Mareck, Jeanne, Stephen Finn, and Mona Cardell. 1982. "Gender Roles in the Relationships of Lesbians and Gay Men." *Journal of Homosexuality* 8(2): 45-49.

Martin, Karin A. 2009. "Normalizing Heterosexuality: Mothers' Assumptions, Talk, and Strategies with Young Children." *American Sociological Review* 74(2): 190-207.

Martin, Sandra, Bonnie Fisher, Tara Warner, Christopher Krebs, and Christine Lindquist. 2011. "Women's Sexual Orientations and Their Experiences of Sexual Assault Before and During University." *Women's Health Issues* 21(3): 199-205.

Maxouris, Christina. 2019. "'Arthur' Character Mr. Ratburn Came Out as Gay and Got Married in the Season Premiere and Twitter Loved It." *CNN.* Retrieved June 29, 2022. (https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/14/us/mr-ratburn-gay-arthur-trnd/index.html).

McLoyd, Vonnie. 1990. "The Impact of Economic Hardship on Black Families and Children: Psychological Distress, Parenting, and Socioemotional Development." *Child Development* 61(2): 311-346.

Mirza, Shabab Ahmed. 2018. "Disaggregating the Data for Bisexual People." *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.americanprogress.org/article/disaggregating-data-bisexual-people/).

Mitchell, Valory. 1998. “The Birds, the Bees… and the Sperm Bank: How Lesbian Mothers Talk with Their Children about Sex and Reproduction.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 68: 400-409.

Mittleman, Joel. 2022. “Intersecting the Academic Gender Gap: The Education of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual America.” *American Sociological Review* 87(2): 303-335.

Molborn, Stefanie and Bethany Everett. 2015. “Understanding the Emotional Attainment of Sexual Minority Women and Men.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 41: 40-55.

Molloy, Parker. 2014. “There’s More Overlap Within the LGBTQ Community Than You Might Think.” *Slate*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/09/how-much-overlap-is-there-in-the-lgbtq-community.html).

Morandini, James, Alexander Blaszczynski, and Ilan Dar-Nimrod. 2017. “Who Adopts Queer and Pansexual Identities?” *Journal of Sex Research* 54(7): 911-922.

Morin, Stephen and Ellen Garfinkle. 1978. “Male Homophobia.” *Journal of Social Issues* 34(1): 29-47.

Neilson, Emily. 2022. *The Rainbow Parade*. New York: Penguin Young Readers Group.

Newman, Lesléa. 1989. *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Newport, Frank. 2018. “In U.S., Estimate of LGBT Population Rises to 4.5%.” *Gallup*. Retrieved June 29, 2022. (https://news.gallup.com/poll/234863/estimate-lgbt-population-rises.aspx%20Frank%20Newport%202018).

Nolin, Mary Jo and Karen Kay Petersen. 1992. “Gender Differences in Parent-Child Communication about Sexuality: An Exploratory Study.” *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7(1): 59-79.

Orne, Jason. 2011. "'You Will Always Have to 'Out' Yourself': Reconsidering Coming out through Strategic Outness." *Sexualities* 14(6):681-703.

Parameter, Joshua, RV Galiher, and ADA Maughan. 2021. "LGBTQ+ Emerging Adults Perceptions of Discrimination and Exclusion within the LGBTQ+ Community." *Psychology & Sexuality* 12(4): 289-304.

Parson, Talcott and Roberet Bales. 1955. *Family, Socialization, and Interaction*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press.

Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude, You're a Fag*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pew Research Center. 2013. "A survey of LGBT Americans." Retrieved June 29, 2022 (https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/).

Plummer, Kenneth. 1981. *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*. London: Hutchinson.

"Population Estimates." 2022. *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045222).

Pollitt, Amanda, Joel Muraco, Arnold Grossman, and Stephen Russell. 2017. "Disclosure Stress, Social Support, and Depressive Symptoms Among Cisgender Bisexual Youth." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79(5): 1278-1294.

Power, Jennifer, Ruth Mcnair, and Susan Carr. 2009. "Absent Sexual Scripts: Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Knowledge, Attitudes, and Action Regarding Safer Sex and Sexual Health Information." *Culture, Health, & Society* 11(1): 67-81.

Raymond, Janice. 1979. *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Redman, Peter. 2001. “The Discipline of Love: Negotiation and Regulation in Boys’ Performance of a Romance-Based Heterosexual Masculinity.” *Men and Masculinities* 4(2): 186-200.

Regnerus, Mark. 2012. “How Different are the Adult Children of Parents who have Same-Sex Relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study.” *Social Science Research* 41: 752-770.

Reiger, Gerulf, Meredith Chivers, and J. Michael Bailey. 2005. “Sexual Arousal Patterns of Bisexual Men.” *Psychological Science* 16(8): 579-584.

Rhoads, RA. 1995. “Learning from the Coming-Out Experiences of College Males.” *Journal of College Student Development* 36(1): 67-74.

Riddell, Carol. 1980. *Divided Sisterhood: A Critical Review of Janice Raymond’s “The Transsexual Empire.”* Liverpool: News from Nowhere.

Rizzo, Kathryn, Holly Schiffrin, and Miriam Liss. 2013. “Insight into the Parenthood Paradox: Mental Health Outcomes of Intensive Mothering.” *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 22: 614-620.

Rosenthal, A. M., David Sylva, Adam Safron, and J. Michael Bailey. 2012. “The Male Bisexuality Debate Revisited: Some Bisexual Men Have Bisexual Arousal Patterns.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 41: 135-147.

Ross, Lori and Cheryl Dobinson. 2013. “Where is the ‘B’ in LGBT Parenting? A Call for Research on Bisexual Parenting.” Pp. 87-103 in *LGBT-Parent Families: Innovations in Research and Implications for Practice,* edited by A. Goldberg and K. Allen. New York: Springer.

Rust, Paula. 1993. "'Coming Out' in the Age of Social Constructionism: Sexual Identity Formation among Lesbian and Bisexual Women." *Gender & Society* 7(1): 50-77.

Sam, Cecile H., and Jarrett T. Gupton. 2018. "Cultivating Ethical Mindfulness: Using an Activity Theory Framework to Address Ethical Dilemmas in Public Scholarship." Pp. 38–50 in *Envisioning Public Scholarship for Our Time: Models for Higher Education Researchers*, edited by A. Kezar, Y. Drivalas, and J. A. Kitchen. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Sausa, L. A., J. Sevelius, J. Keatley, J. R. Iñiguez, and M. Reyes. "Policy Recommendations for Inclusive Data Collection of Trans People in HIV Prevention, Care, and Services." Center of Excellence for Transgender HIV Prevention: University of California, San Francisco.

Scherrer, Kristin, Emily Kazyak, and Rachel Schmitz. 2015. "Getting 'Bi' in the Family: Bisexual People's Disclosure Experiences." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77(3): 680-696.

Schlenker, Barry. 1980. *Impression Management: The Self-Concept, Social Identity, and Interpersonal Relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Schneider, Daniel and Kristen Harknett. 2016. "Schedule instability and unpredictability and worker and family health and wellbeing." *Washington Center for Equitable Growth.*

Seale, Clive. 1998. *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Serrao, Nivea. 2021. "Rugrats Parent Betty is Now 'Openly Gay' in the New Paramount+ Reboot of the Nickelodeon Hit." *Syfy*. Retrieved June 29, 2022. (https://www.syfy.com/syfy-wire/rugrats-revival-betty-gay).

Siconolfi, Daniel, Joan Tucker, William Shadel, Rachana Seelam, and Daniela Golinelli. 2020. "Health, Homelessness Severity, and Substance Use among Sexual Minority Youth Experiencing Homelessness: A Comparison of Bisexual Versus Gay and Lesbian Youth." *Journal of Sex Research* 57(7): 933-942.

Smith, Dorothy, 1974. "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology." *Sociological Inquiry* 44: 7–13.

Stacey, Judith and Timothy J. Biblarz. 2001. "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" *American Sociological Review* 66(2): 159-183.

Stidham Hall, Kelli, Jessica McDermott Sales, Kelli Komro, and John Santelli. 2016. "The State of Sex Education in the United States." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 58(6): 595-597.

Stryker, Susan and Talia Betcher. 2016. "Introduction: *Trans/Feminisms*." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3(1-2): 5-14.

Sutfin, Erin, Megan Fulcher, Ryan Bowles, and Charlotte Patterson. 2007. "How Lesbian and Heterosexual Parents Convey Attitudes about Gender to their Children: The Role of Gendered Environments." *Sex Roles* 58: 501-513.

Sweet, Elizabeth. 2014. "Toys are More Divided by Gender Now than They Were 50 Years Ago." *The Atlantic*. Retrieved April 20, 2023 (https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/toys-are-more-divided-by-gender-now-than-they-were-50-years-ago/383556/)

Taillieu, Tamara, Tracie Afifi, Natalie Mota, Katherine Keyes, and Jitender Sareen. 2014. "Age, Sex, and Racial Differences in Harsh Physical Punishment: Results from a Nationally Representative United States Sample." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 38(12): 1885-1894.

Tasker, Fiona and Marie Delvoye. 2015. “Moving Out of the Shadows: Accomplishing Bisexual Motherhood.” *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 73(3-4): 125-140.

Tasker, Fiona. 2005. “Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, and Their Children: A Review.” *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 26(3): 224-240.

Taylor, Julia. 2017. “Bisexual Mental Health: A Call to Action.” *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 39(1): 83-92.

Troiden, RR. 1989. “The Formation of Homosexual Identities.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 17(1): 43-47.

Trudell, B. N. 1993. *Doing Sex Education: Gender Politics and Schooling*. New York: Routledge.

Ulrich, Lindasusan. 2011. “Bisexual Invisibility: Impacts and Recommendations.” *San Francisco Human Rights Commission: LGBT Advisory Committee* pp. 1-41.

Vanclay, Frank and Gareth Enticott. 2011. “The Role and Functioning of Cultural Scripts in Farming and Agriculture.” *Sociologia Ruralis* 51(3): 256-271.

Ward, Jane. 2008. “Dude-Sex: White Masculinities and ‘Authentic’ Heterosexuality Among Dudes Who Have Sex with Dudes.” *Sexualities* 11(4): 414-434.

Watson, Laurel, Raquel Craney, Sydney Greenwalt, Marcella Beaumont, Cassandra Whitney, and Mirella Flores. 2021. “‘I Was a Game or a Fetish Object’: Diverse Bisexual Women’s Sexual Assault Experiences and Effects on Bisexual Identity.” *Journal of Bisexuality* 21(2): 225-261.

Winston, Jen. 2021. *Greedy: Notes from a Bisexual Who Wants Too Much*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Winter, Jessica. 2022. “The Harsh Realm of ‘Gentle Parenting.’” *The New Yorker*. Retrieved April 19, 2023 (https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-harsh-realm-of-gentle-parenting).

Worthen, Meredith. 2013. “An Argument for Separate Analyses of Attitudes Toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Men, Bisexual Women, MtF and FtM Transgender Individuals.” *Sex Roles* 68: 703-723.

Worthen, Meredith. 2022. “This is my TERF! Lesbian Feminists and the Stigmatization of Trans Women.” *Sexuality & Culture* 26: 1782-1803.

Wyckoff, Sarah, Kim Miller, Rex Forehand, J. J. Bau, Amy Fasula, Nicholas Long, and Lisa Armistead. 2008. “Patterns of Sexuality Communication Between Preadolescents and Their Mothers and Fathers.” *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 17: 649-662.

Yoshino, Kenji. 2000. "The Epistemic Contract of Bisexual Erasure." *Stanford Law Review* 52(2):353-461.

Zucker, Jenna. 2019. “Observing Racial Socialization: How do White Parent-Child Dyads Talk about Race?” Retrieved May 20, 2023 (https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/31521)

Appendix A. Interviewee Pseudonyms and Select Demographics

Pseudonym	Sexuality	Gender	Relationship	Children	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Class	Politics	Religion
Shay	Bisexual	Bigender (Woman and Agender)	Same Gender	1-Year-Old Girl	19	White	Lower	Very Liberal	None
Juan	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	8-Year-Old Girl	50	Chicano	Lower Middle	Progressive	Agnostic
Frank	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	10-Year-Old Boy 8-Year-Old Girl 4-Year-Old Boy	32	White	Lower	Leftist	Unitarian Universalist
Edgar	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	6-Year-Old Boy 5-Year-Old Boy 3-Year-Old Boy 1-Year-Old Boy	38	White	Lower Middle	Far Left	None
Dusty	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	9-Year-Old Girl	39	White	Middle	Liberal	Atheist
Jacob	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	7-Year-Old Boy 7-Year-Old Girl	37	White	Middle	Liberal	None
Zane	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	5.5-Year-Old Boy 4-Month-Old Boy	34	White	Middle	Libertarian and Democrat	Christian
Patrick	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	2-Year-Old Boy	32	White	Middle	Progressive Democrat	Christian
Otis	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	4-Year-Old Girl	34	White	Middle	Very Liberal	Methodist
Sully	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	30-Year-Old Man 22-Year-Old Woman 22-Year-Old Woman	57	White	Upper	Independent Centrist	Spiritual
James	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	26-Year-Old Man 24-Year-Old Woman 23-Year-Old Man 18-Year-Old Woman	56	White	Upper	Moderate	None
Bobby	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	20-Year-Old Woman 12-Year-Old Girl	46	White	Upper Middle	Liberal	Unitarian Universalist
Matt	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	37-Year-Old Woman 36-Year-Old Man	63	White	Upper Middle	Moderate Democrat	None
Nick (Brooklyn's Dad)	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	25-Year-Old Woman 17-Year-Old Girl	52	White	Upper Middle	Moderate Liberal	Agnostic Christian
Brooklyn (Nick's Child)	Pansexual	Cis Woman	N/A	N/A	25	White	Lower	Liberal	Agnostic
Joe	Bisexual	Cis Man	Different Gender	17-Year-Old Girl	48	White and Jewish	Upper Middle	Progressive Liberal	None
Kit	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	4-Year-Old Girl 3-Year-Old Girl	28	Black and White	Middle	Moderate	Agnostic
Anna	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	4-Year-Old Boy	33	Chicana and White	Middle	Socialist	Atheist
Tesha	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	6-Year-Old Girl 5-Year-Old Boy 1-Year-Old Girl	36	Chinese	Middle	Libertarian	Christian
Rose	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	20-Year-Old Man 17-Year-Old Girl	34	Hispanic and White	Lower	Independent and Very Liberal	None
Katrina	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	13-Year-Old Boy	50	Latina	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	Spiritual
Catherine	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	4-Year-Old Girl	30	Latinx and White-Passing	Lower	Very Liberal	None
Iris	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	32-Year-Old Man 30-Year-Old Woman 28-Year-Old Man 24-Year-Old Man	50	Native American	Middle	Leftist and Trotskyist	Buddhist
Florence	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	9-Year-Old Girl 4-Year-Old Boy	28	Native American, Creole, African American, and White	Lower Middle	Humanitarian	Spiritual
Millie	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	6-Year-Old Girl 4-Year-Old Girl	26	Puerto Rican, Black, and White	Lower	Independent and Moderate	Catholic

Martha (Tony's Spouse)	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	32-Year-Old Woman 27-Year-Old Man 23-Year-Old Man 22-Year-Old Man	50	White	Lower	Progressive	Heathen
Bette	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	11-Year-Old Boy 8-Year-Old Girl	39	White	Middle	Democratic Socialist	Atheist
Jacy	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender (Nonbinary)	5-Year-Old Boy 1.5-Year-Old Boy 1.5-Year-Old Boy	38	White	Middle	Left and Progressive	Atheist
Lisa	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Polyamorous	25-Year-Old Trans Man 23-Year-Old Man 22-Year-Old Woman 20-Year-Old Man	46	Cherokee and White	Lower Middle	Anti-Trump	Christian
Una	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Polyamorous	19-Year-Old Trans Man 11-Year-Old Boy	38	Native American and White	Middle	Very Liberal	None
Shauna	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	7-Month-Old Girl	39	Mixed (White, Native American, and African American)	Upper Middle	Moderate Centrist	None
Zara	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	15-Year-Old Boy 12-Year-Old Boy 10-Year-Old Girl	54	Native American and White	Middle	Progressive	Atheist
Harper	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	11-Year-Old Girl	46	White	Lower Middle	Very Liberal	Questioning
Hannah	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	15-Year-Old Girl	45	White	Middle	Liberal	None
Charlotte	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	15-Year-Old Boy 1-Year-Old Boy	31	White	Middle	Moderate	None
Whitney	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	34-Year-Old Man	59	White	Middle	Moderate Liberal	Spriitual
Emma	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	4-Year-Old Girl	44	White	Upper Middle	Democratic Socialist	Agnostic
Hope	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	5-Year-Old Girl	35	White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	None
Natalie	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	2.5-Year-Old Girl	40	White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	Spiritual and Agnostic
Tara	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Single	2-Year-Old Boy	26	Black	Lower Middle	Liberal	Spiritual
Carrie	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Single	7-Year-Old Boy 4-Year-Old Girl	45	Black and White	Upper Middle	Democrat	Jewish
Marg	Bisexual	Cis Woman	Single	18-Year-Old Woman 15-Year-Old Boy	54	Italian and White	Middle	Very Liberal	Spiritual
Hilary	Bisexual	Gender Non-Conforming Cis Woman	Polyamorous	3-Year-Old Boy 4-Year-Old Boy	39	White	Middle	Progressive and Libertarian	In transition and Unitarian Universalist
Ricky	Bisexual	Genderfluid	Different Gender	6.5-Year-Old Girl 4.5-Year-Old Girl	33	Mixed (Middle Eastern, North African, and White)	Upper Middle	Progressive	Jewish
Ash	Bisexual	Genderfluid (Cis Man and Genderqueer)	Different Gender	3-Year-Old Boy 1-Year-Old Boy	30	Black and White	Lower	Very Left	Atheist
Finley	Bisexual	Nonbinary	Different Gender	5-Year-Old Girl 4-Month-Old Boy	25	Black and White	Lower Middle	Radical Leftist	Agnostic
Cameron	Bisexual	Nonbinary	Different Gender	26-Year-Old Nonbinary 24-Year-Old Man 22-Year-Old Woman 18-Year-Old Man 16-Year-Old Girl 13-Year-Old Girl	50	Hispanic and White	Middle	Independent and Liberal	Spiritual
Xavier	Bisexual	Nonbinary	Different Gender	6-Year-Old Girl	32	Native American and White-Passing	Middle	Anarchist	Atheist
Dylan	Bisexual	Nonbinary	Polyamorous	25-Year-Old Man 12-Year-Old Girl 10-Year-Old Boy	49	Jewish	Lower	Very Liberal	None

Puck	Bisexual	Trans Man	Same Gender	13-Year-Old Boy	38	White	Lower	Progressive Democrat	Spiritual
Olivia	Bisexual	Trans Woman	Same Gender	18-Year-Old Man	34	White	Lower	Socialist and Liberal	Christian
Serenity	Bisexual	Trans Woman	Same Gender	9-Year-Old Boy 7-Year-Old Girl	37	White	Middle	Very Liberal	Christian
Isla	Bisexual and Hetero-Romantic	Cis Woman	Different Gender	13-Year-Old Boy	53	Armenian	Middle	Democratic Socialist	Atheist
Windy	Bisexual and Asexual	Cis Woman	Single	23-Year-Old Woman 10-Year-Old Boy	44	Native Hawaiian	Lower	Independent	None
Piper	Bisexual and Pansexual	Cis Woman	Polyamorous	25-Year-Old Woman 20s-Year-Old Man 20s-Year-Old Woman 5 Foster Children of Various Ages and Genders	43	Hispanic	Lower Middle	Democratic Socialist	None
Maple	Bisexual, Pansexual, and Queer	Nonbinary	Polyamorous	11-Year-Old Nonbinary 9-Year-Old Girl	42	East Asian	Lower	None	None
William	Gay	Cis Man	Different Gender	39-Year-Old Woman 34-Year-Old Woman 29-Year-Old Woman	70	White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	None
Zack	Gay	Cis Man	Divorced	24-Year-Old Woman 22-Year-Old Woman 17-Year-Old Boy	52	Hispanic	Upper Middle	Libertarian	Agnostic
Anthony	Gay	Cis Man	Same Gender	2-Year-Old Girl	31	Asian	Upper	Moderate	Agnostic
Charles	Gay	Cis Man	Same Gender	4.5-Year-Old Girl	46	White	Middle	Conservative	Believes in God
Parker	Gay	Cis Man	Same Gender	3.5-Year-Old Boy	44	White	Middle	Democrat	None
Upton	Gay	Cis Man	Same Gender	21-Year-Old Woman 19-Year-Old Man 11-Year-Old Girl 9-Year-Old Girl 20+ Foster Children of Various Ages and Genders	64	White	Upper Middle	Democrat	Methodist
Kenny	Gay	Cis Man	Same Gender	21-Year-Old Man 18-Year-Old Woman	44	White	Upper Middle	Liberal	Episcopalian
Theresa	Gay	Cis Woman	Different Gender	11-Year-Old Girl 5-Year-Old Boy	38	White	Middle	Liberal	Atheist
Ethan	Gay	Trans Man	Same Gender	16-Year-Old Boy 13-Year-Old Boy 13-Year-Old Boy	45	White	Lower	Leftist	Atheist
Quinn	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Different Gender	9.5-Year-Old Girl	42	White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	Christian and Agnostic
Caroline	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Different Gender (Nonbinary)	9-Year-Old Girl 3-Year-Old Girl	43	Latina and White-Passing	Upper Middle	Liberal	None
Rana	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	2.5-Year-Old Boy	32	Asian	Middle	Very Liberal	None
Zoey	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	10-Year-Old Girl 2-Year-Old Girl	47	Black	Middle	Independent and Socialist	Christian
Gina	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	5-Year-Old Girl	43	Black	Middle	Liberal Democrat	Christian
Cece	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	31-Year-Old Man 26-Year-Old Woman	61	Jewish	Middle	Left	Jewish
Vicky	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	2.5-Year-Old Girl 7-Month-Old Boy	30	White	Middle	Moderate	Questioning Christian
Ofelia	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	4-Year-Old Boy 2-Year-Old Boy	34	White	Middle	Very Liberal	Atheist
Tina	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	7-Year-Old Girl 7-Year-Old Trans Boy	38	White	Middle	Very Liberal	None

Lila	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Same Gender	18-Year-Old Woman 2.5-Year-Old Girl	33	White	Upper Middle	Mostly Republican	Christian
Kira	Lesbian	Cis Woman	Single	15-Year-Old Girl	42	White	Middle	Democrat	None
Ike	Pansexual	Cis Man Questioning Nonbinary	Different Gender	2.5-Year-Old Boy	28	White	Lower Middle	Leftist	Atheist
Valentina	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	3-Year-Old Girl	26	Hispanic	Lower	Democratic Socialist	None
Georgia	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Different Gender	9-Year-Old Boy 6-Year-Old Boy 4-Year-Old Boy	28	Latinx and White-Passing	Upper Middle	Independent	Agnostic
Henny	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Polyamorous	4-Year-Old Girl	33	Mestiza Indigenous and White	Middle	Radical Leftist	None
Willow	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	21-Year-Old Man	55	White	Lower	Liberal and Socialist	Christian
Daisy	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Same Gender	1.5-Year-Old Boy	32	White	Middle	Leftist	Christian
Marie	Pansexual	Cis Woman	Single	6-Year-Old Boy	34	Latinx	Lower Middle	Democrat and Independent	None
Nora	Pansexual	Cis Woman and Gender-fluid	Same Gender	9-Year-Old Girl	37	Black and White	Middle	Liberal Democrat	New Thought
Phoenix	Pansexual	Cis Woman and Gender-queer	Different Gender	8-Year-Old Girl	28	White	Lower Middle	Democratic Socialist	Wiccan and Spiritual
Aspen	Pansexual	Genderfluid	Different Gender	3.5-Year-Old Girl 4-Month-Old Girl	33	Asian, Latinx, and White	Middle	Democrat	None
Leo	Pansexual	Genderqueer	Different Gender	45-Year-Old Woman	60	White	Middle	Socialist	No Deity
Andy	Pansexual	Genderqueer Tumtum	Different Gender	Third-Trimester Pregnancy (Gender Neutral)	26	Asian, White, and Jewish	Middle	Very Liberal	Pagan
Geoff	Pansexual	Trans Man	Different Gender	3-Year-Old Boy Third-Trimester Pregnancy (Boy)	38	White	Middle	Democratic Socialist	Unitarian Universalist
Luna	Pansexual	Trans Woman	Different Gender	23-Year-Old Woman 22-Year-Old Man	50	White	Middle	Moderate Democrat	Christian
Dana	Pansexual and Queer	Cis Woman	Different Gender	5.5-Year-Old Girl	43	Latina	Middle	Democrat	None
Scott	Pansexual and Queer	Trans Man	Same Gender	6-Month-Old Girl	32	White	Lower Middle	Liberal	Atheist and Unitarian Universalist
Sarah	Queer and Lesbian	Cis Woman	Divorced	8-Year-Old Girl 8-Year-Old Boy	38	Latinx	Upper Middle	Leftist and Progressive	None
Tony (Martha's Spouse)	Straight	Cis Man	Different Gender	32-Year-Old Woman 27-Year-Old Man 23-Year-Old Man 22-Year-Old Man	50	White	Lower	None	Heathen
Max	Straight	Cis Man	Different Gender	2.5-Year-Old Boy 10-Month-Old Girl	31	White	Lower Middle	Socially Libertarian	Atheist
Chase	Straight	Cis Man	Different Gender	10-Year-Old Girl 8-Year-Old Girl 5.5-Year-OldBoy	38	White	Upper	Very Liberal	Mormon
Rachel	Straight	Cis Woman	Different Gender	12-Year-Old Genderfluid Girl 4-Year-Old Girl 2-Year-Old Boy	39	Asian	Lower Middle	Democrat and Libertarian	Unitarian Universalist
Paloma	Straight	Cis Woman	Different Gender	17-Year-Old Boy 13-Year-Old Girl 12-Year-Old Girl	46	Mexican and White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	None
Vivian	Straight	Cis Woman	Different Gender	6-Year-Old Boy	41	White	Middle	Liberal	Culturally Jewish

Esther (Haley's Mom)	Straight	Cis Woman	Divorced	31-Year-Old Man 26-Year-Old Woman 25-Year-Old Woman 19-Year-Old Woman 16-Year-Old Girl	50	White	Lower Middle	Moderate	Spiritual
Haley (Esther's Child)	Bisexual	Cis Woman	N/A	N/A	19	White	Lower	Counsel Communist	Questioning
Bridget	Straight	Cis Woman	Single	43-Year-Old Woman	73	White	Lower	Very Liberal	Spiritual
Marin	Straight	Nonbinary	Divorced	24-Year-Old Trans Man 20-Year-Old Nonbinary 20-Year-Old Nonbinary Teen Girl	55	White	Upper Middle	Very Liberal	None

Appendix B. Survey Demographics

	Frequency	Percent
Sexuality		
Straight	2,179	46.62
Gay and/or Lesbian	421	9.01
Bisexual and/or Pansexual	1170	25.03
Queer	142	3.04
Asexual	33	0.71
Questioning	15	0.32
Something Else	79	1.69
Multiple Sexualities	629	13.46
Missing	6	0.13
Gender		
Cisgender Woman	3711	79.40
Cisgender Man	612	13.09
Transgender Woman	10	0.21
Transgender Man	38	0.81
Genderqueer/Nonbinary	108	2.31
Something Else	77	1.65
Multiple Genders	114	2.44
Missing	4	0.09
Age		
18-29	797	17.05
30-39	2288	48.95
40-49	1107	23.68
50-59	293	6.27
60-69	135	2.89
70+	49	1.05
Missing	5	0.11
Race/Ethnicity		
White	3933	84.15
Black or African American	62	1.33
Hispanic, Latina/o/x, Chicana/o/x, or Spanish	95	2.03
Asian	36	0.77
American Indian or Alaskan Native	20	0.43

Middle Eastern or North African	12	0.26
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	0.11
Something Else	62	1.33
Multiple Races	394	8.43
Missing	55	1.18
Education		
Some High School	22	0.47
High School Diploma	140	3.00
Some College	621	13.29
Trade/Technical/Vocational Degree	134	2.87
Associate	313	6.70
Bachelor's	1183	25.31
Some Graduate School	324	6.93
Professional Degree	184	3.94
Master's Degree	1153	24.67
Doctoral Degree	523	11.19
Missing	77	1.65
Income		
$0-24,999	414	8.86
$25,000-49,999	892	19.08
$50,000-74,999	964	20.62
$75,000-99,999	780	16.69
$100,000-124,999	580	12.41
$125,000-149,999	313	6.70
$150,000-174,999	224	4.79
$175,000-199,999	127	2.72
$200,000+	246	5.26
Missing	134	2.87
Politics		
Very Conservative	113	2.42
Conservative	256	5.48
Moderate	829	17.74
Liberal	1295	27.71
Very Liberal	1812	38.77
Something Else	318	6.80
Missing	51	1.09

Geographic Location		
US - West	1335	28.56
US - South	1294	27.69
US - Midwest	1063	22.74
US - Northeast	704	15.06
US - Territories	2	0.04
Outside of US	123	2.63
Missing	153	3.27
Total (N)	4674	100.00

Appendix C. Interview Guides for Bisexual, Gay, and Straight Parents

BISEXUAL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender and Sexuality

- What is your gender?
- How would you describe your gender presentation? E.g., feminine, masculine?
- [If GQ] What pronouns should I use when referring to you?
- How do you label your sexuality?
- How do you define that/those label(s)?
- When did you realize that you were X? Can you describe the time in your life when you realized that you were X?
- How does being X influence your life? The decisions you make?
- Do you think being bisexual influences the way you understand and treat other people?
    - Do you think being bisexual makes you a more open-minded person?
- Is it important to you that other people know your sexual orientation? (e.g., parents, friends, strangers)
    - Who knows?
    - [If yes] How do you signal to people that you are bisexual? (Nonverbal? Verbal?)
    - [If no] If you wanted people to know your sexuality, how would you signal it?
- Do you know the term "bisexual erasure?"
    - What does it mean to you? Do you think this is something that you experience?
    - Where did you learn this term?
- Do you consider yourself to be a part of the queer community? [If yes] how involved are you? E.g., Do you go to pride? Protests? Do you engage with queer people online?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your gender or sexuality?

Relationship Status

- Are you in a relationship?
- How long have you and your partner been together?
- Tell me about your partner.
- What identities do they use to describe themselves? [Probe for gender, sexual identity, race, age, religion/political identity].
- What are their interests?
- Do you think your sexual identity is an important part of your relationship? Does it often come up in conversation? What types of things do you and your partner talk about regarding [bisexuality]?
- When people see you and your partner together, what do you imagine they think about you? Do you think they perceive you as queer? As bisexual? As straight?
- Are you monogamous?
    - [If yes] How does this relate to your sexuality? Do you view monogamy and your sexuality as compatible? Incompatible? Do you ever feel like being monogamous limits your ability to express your sexuality?
    - [If no] How long have you been non-monogamous? How do you think being non-monogamous relates to your sexuality?

- What do you think your partner would say if I asked them about how your sexual orientation influences your relationship?
- Is there anything else you think I should know about your partner, or about your relationship?

Parenting

- Can you describe your family for me? Tell me about your child(ren) [Probe for age, gender, sexuality if known].
- How would you describe your parenting style? E.g., authoritative, strict, open, loose…
- How does this compare to the way you were raised?
- Have you had any difficult/serious conversations with them lately? [Probe for politics, social issues] What did that discussion look like?
- Are there any "big" conversations that you anticipate having with them as they get older? [Probe for politics, social issues, identity, familial history]
- Are there any important topics you've discussed with them recently? What did those discussions look like?
- Have you or your partner discussed sexuality with your children? [Probe for same-sex marriage, same-sex relationships, specific identities] (IF NO): Have you and your partner talked about what these conversations might look like?
    - [If not yet stated] Have you talked to your child[ren] about [bisexuality]?
    - [If yes] What did that/those conversation(s) look like? Did you initiate the conversation, or did they? How did you feel during/after that conversation? Has bisexuality come up in conversation since that initial discussion?
    - [If no] Do you want to talk to your children about bisexuality? Why or why not?
- Have you ever told your children that you identify as [bisexual]?
    - [If yes] Can you tell me about that conversation? [Probe for: Was it planned or spontaneous? Did you talk to them with or without your partner? How old were they? How did you describe your sexuality? Do you think they understood? Did they ask you follow-up questions?]
    - [If yes] Why did you feel it was important to come out to your children? [Probe for: what was the expected outcome?]
- How did the reality of coming out compare to your expectations?
    - [If no] Do you plan to tell your child[ren] about your sexuality in the future?
    - [If yes] When do you think this will happen? [If not an age concern] What is holding you back from having this conversation? Why do you feel it is important to come out to your children?
    - [If says the interview makes them think they should have this convo, ask if they would be willing to record the conversation and send the audio to me]
    - [If no] Why not?
- How do you suspect your kids will identify?
- How would you feel if they identified as X, Y, Z?
- To what extent do you involve your children with the LGBTQ community? [Probe: Do you bring them to pride? Do you read them queer books / show them queer media? Do you introduce them to queer people?]
    - [If yes] What does it mean for you to involve them in the community?

    - [If no] Have you ever considered involving them? Do you think you may involve them in the future?
- How does being bisexual influence the way you parent? The decisions you make?
- Are there other aspects of your identity that influence the way you parent? E.g., race, class, etc.
- How do you think being a bisexual parent might compare to being a straight or gay parent?
- Do you think there are any challenges to being a bisexual parent? Disadvantages?
- Do you think there are any benefits to being a bisexual parent?
- [If young kids] In your ideal world, what will your relationship look like with your kids 10 to 15 years from now?

Demographics

- How old are you?
- What is your race or ethnicity?
- What race do you think others perceive you as being?
- Are you employed?
- What is your job?
- What level of education have you received? If college+, what major?
- How would you describe your socioeconomic class?
- Do you live in a rural, urban, or suburban area? Are your religious? How do you identify politically? Any others I should know?
- Do you feel like any of these identities influence how you navigate your sexual identity? [E.g., if in a rural area]

Etc.

- What do you think is the most important thing I should know about the topic we've been talking about?
- Do you have any questions for me?

GAY PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender and Sexuality

- What is your gender?
- How would you describe your gender presentation? E.g., feminine, masculine?
- [If GQ] What pronouns should I use when referring to you?
- How do you label your sexuality?
- How do you define that/those label(s)?
- When did you realize that you were X? Can you describe the time in your life when you realized that you were X?
- How does being X influence your life? The decisions you make?
- Do you think being LGBTQ influences the way you understand and treat other people?
- Do you think being LGBTQ makes you a more open-minded person?

- Is it important to you that other people know your sexual orientation? (e.g., parents, friends, strangers)
    - Who knows?
    - [If yes] How do you signal to people that you are LGBTQ? (Nonverbal? Verbal?)
    - [If no] If you wanted people to know your sexuality, how would you signal it?
- Do people ever question or challenge you when you say that you identify as LGBTQ?
- Does anyone say that they don't believe you?
- How would you describe the way that gayness is portrayed in the media?
- How do you feel about the representation?
- Do you consider yourself to be a part of the queer community?
    - [If yes] how involved are you? E.g., Do you go to pride? Protests? Do you engage with queer people online?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your gender or sexuality?

Relationship Status

- Are you in a relationship?
- How long have you and your partner been together?
- Tell me about your partner.
- What identities do they use to describe themselves? [Probe for gender, sexual identity, race, age, religion/political identity].
- What are their interests?
- Do you think your sexual identity is an important part of your relationship? Does it often come up in conversation? What types of things do you and your partner talk about regarding your sexuality?
- When people see you and your partner together, what do you imagine they think about you? Do you think they perceive you as queer? As bisexual? As straight?
- Are you monogamous?
    - [If yes] How does this relate to your sexuality? Do you view monogamy and your sexuality as compatible? Incompatible? Do you ever feel like being monogamous limits your ability to express your sexuality?
    - [If no] How long have you been non-monogamous? How do you think being non-monogamous relates to your sexuality?
- What do you think your partner would say if I asked them about how your sexual orientation influences your relationship?
- Is there anything else you think I should know about your partner, or about your relationship?

Parenting

- Can you describe your family for me? Tell me about your child(ren) [Probe for age, gender, sexuality if known].
- How would you describe your parenting style? E.g., authoritative, strict, open, loose…
- How does this compare to the way you were raised?
- Have you had any difficult/serious conversations with them lately? [Probe for politics, social issues] What did that discussion look like?

- Are there any "big" conversations that you anticipate having with them as they get older? [Probe for politics, social issues, identity, familial history]
- Are there any important topics you've discussed with them recently? What did those discussions look like?
- Have you or your partner discussed sexuality with your children? [Probe for same-sex marriage, same-sex relationships, specific identities] (IF NO): Have you and your partner talked about what these conversations might look like?
    - [If not yet stated] Have you talked to your child[ren] about LGBTQ identities?
    - [If yes] Which identities have you talked to them about (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual)?
- What did that/those conversation(s) look like? Did you initiate the conversation, or did they? How did you feel during/after that conversation?
    - [If no] Do you want to talk to your children about sexuality? Why or why not?
- Have you ever told your children that you identify as LGBTQ?
    - [If yes] Can you tell me about that conversation? [Probe for: Was it planned or spontaneous? Did you talk to them with or without your partner? How old were they? How did you describe your sexuality? Do you think they understood? Did they ask you follow-up questions?]
    - [If yes] Why did you feel it was important to come out to your children? [Probe for: what was the expected outcome?]
- How did the reality of coming out compare to your expectations?
    - [If no] Do you plan to tell your child[ren] about your sexuality in the future?
    - [If yes] When do you think this will happen? [If not an age concern] What is holding you back from having this conversation? Why do you feel it is important to come out to your children?
    - [If says the interview makes them think they should have this convo, ask if they would be willing to record the conversation and send the audio to me]
    - [If no] Why not?
- How do you suspect your kids will identify?
- How would you feel if they identified as gay? Straight? Bisexual? Asexual?
- To what extent do you involve your children with the LGBTQ community? [Probe: Do you bring them to pride? Do you read them queer books / show them queer media? Do you introduce them to queer people?]
    - [If yes] What does it mean for you to involve them in the community?
    - [If no] Have you ever considered involving them? Do you think you may involve them in the future?
- How does being gay/lesbian influence the way you parent? The decisions you make?
- Are there other aspects of your identity that influence the way you parent? E.g., race, class, etc.
- How do you think being a gay parent might compare to being a straight or bisexual parent?
- Do you think there are any challenges to being a gay parent? Disadvantages?
- Do you think there are any benefits to being a gay parent?
- [If young kids] In your ideal world, what will your relationship look like with your kids 10 to 15 years from now?

Demographics

- How old are you?
- What is your race or ethnicity?
- What race do you think others perceive you as being?
- Are you employed?
- What is your job?
- What level of education have you received? If college+, what major?
- How would you describe your socioeconomic class?
- Do you live in a rural, urban, or suburban area? Are your religious? How do you identify politically? Any others I should know?
- Do you feel like any of these identities influence how you navigate your sexual identity? [E.g., if in a rural area]

Etc.

- What do you think is the most important thing I should know about the topic we've been talking about?
- Do you have any questions for me?

STRAIGHT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender and Sexuality

- What is your gender?
- How would you describe your gender presentation? E.g., feminine, masculine?
- [If GQ] What pronouns should I use when referring to you?
- How do you label your sexuality?
- How do you define that/those label(s)?
- Has there ever been a time in your life where you questioned your sexuality?
    - [If yes]: When did you determine that you were straight? Can you describe the time in your life when you realized that you were straight?
- Looking back, can you recall a time in your life where you first realized that not everyone identified as straight? What was that like for you?
- Is it important to you that other people know that you're heterosexual? (e.g., parents, friends, strangers)
    - [If yes] How do you signal to people that you are heterosexual? (Nonverbal? Verbal?)
- Do people ever question or challenge you when you say that you identify as straight?
- Does anyone say that they don't believe you?
- In general, how do you feel about the LGBTQ community?
- Do you have any gay/lesbian or non-straight friends?
- Do you believe that same-sex attraction is a moral issue?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your gender or sexuality?

Relationship Status

- Are you in a relationship?

- How long have you and your partner been together?
- Tell me about your partner.
- What identities do they use to describe themselves? [Probe for gender, sexual identity, race, age, religion/political identity].
- What are their interests?
- Are you monogamous?
    - [If yes] How does this relate to your sexuality? Do you view monogamy and your sexuality as compatible? Incompatible? Do you ever feel like being monogamous limits your ability to express your sexuality?
    - [If no] How long have you been non-monogamous? How do you think being non-monogamous relates to your sexuality?
- How do you and your partner divide responsibilities like housework and childcare?
- Is there anything else you think I should know about your partner, or about your relationship?

Parenting

- Can you describe your family for me? Tell me about your child(ren) [Probe for age, gender, sexuality if known].
- How would you describe your parenting style? E.g., authoritative, strict, open, loose…
- How does this compare to the way you were raised?
- Have you had any difficult/serious conversations with them lately? [Probe for politics, social issues] What did that discussion look like?
- Are there any "big" conversations that you anticipate having with them as they get older? [Probe for politics, social issues, identity, familial history]
- Are there any important topics you've discussed with them recently? What did those discussions look like?
- Have you or your partner discussed sex or sexuality with your children? [Probe for same-sex marriage, same-sex relationships, specific identities] (IF NO): Have you and your partner talked about what these conversations might look like?
    - [If yes] Did you have "the talk" or was it more like a series of conversations?
    - How do you feel when thinking about talking to your kids about sex and sexuality? E.g., is it comfortable, awkward, weird?
    - [If not yet stated] Have you talked to your child[ren] about LGBTQ identities?
    - [If yes] Which identities have you talked to them about (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual)?
- What did that/those conversation(s) look like? Did you initiate the conversation, or did they? How did you feel during/after that conversation?
- How did your kids respond?
    - [If no] Do you want to talk to your children about sexuality? Why or why not?
- Do your children know that you identify as heterosexual, as opposed to gay or bisexual?
    - [If yes] Can you tell me about that conversation? [Probe for: Was it planned or spontaneous? Did you talk to them with or without your partner? How old were they? How did you describe your sexuality? Do you think they understood? Did they ask you follow-up questions?]

    - [If yes] Why did you feel it was important that your children know how you identify? [Probe for: what was the expected outcome?]
    - [If no] Do you plan to tell your child[ren] about your sexuality in the future?
    - [If yes] When do you think this will happen? [If not an age concern] What is holding you back from having this conversation? Why do you feel it is important to come out to your children?
    - [If says the interview makes them think they should have this convo, ask if they would be willing to record the conversation and send the audio to me]
    - [If no] Why not?
- How do you suspect your kids will identify?
- How would you feel if they identified as gay? Straight? Bisexual? Asexual?
- If your child told you that they were gay or bisexual, how do you think you would respond?
- To what extent do you involve your children with the LGBTQ community? [Probe: Do you bring them to pride? Do you read them queer books / show them queer media? Do you introduce them to queer people?]
    - [If yes] What does it mean for you to involve them in the community?
    - [If no] Have you ever considered involving them? Do you think you may involve them in the future?
- How does being heterosexual influence the way you parent? The decisions you make?
- Are there other aspects of your identity that influence the way you parent? E.g., race, class, etc.
- How do you think being a straight parent might compare to being an LGBTQ parent?
- Do you think there are any challenges to being a straight parent? Disadvantages?
- Do you think there are any benefits to being a straight parent?
- [If young kids] In your ideal world, what will your relationship look like with your kids 10 to 15 years from now?

Demographics

- How old are you?
- What is your race or ethnicity?
- What race do you think others perceive you as being?
- Are you employed?
- What is your job?
- What level of education have you received? If college+, what major?
- How would you describe your socioeconomic class?
- Do you live in a rural, urban, or suburban area? Are your religious? How do you identify politically? Any others I should know?
- Do you feel like any of these identities influence how you navigate your sexual identity? [E.g., if in a rural area]

Etc.

- What do you think is the most important thing I should know about the topic we've been talking about?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D. Survey Questionnaire

Q2
Please indicate if you agree to the terms of consent in the attached PDF.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Demographics

Q3 **Demographics**

Q4 Is the United States your primary residence?

- ○ Yes (If yes, how long have you lived in the US?) _____
- ○ No (If no, where is your primary residence?) _____

Q5 If a US resident, in which state or territory do you live?

▼ Alabama ... Wyoming

Q6 How old are you?

- 18-23
- 24-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70 or older

Q7 What is your sex or current gender? (Select all that apply)
*Note: This question was designed based on the guidelines established by The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California, San Francisco. Using these categories allows me to make comparisons across data sets. However, I recognize this is a flawed

categorization, and I strongly encourage individuals to write their own gender if not listed below.

- ☐ Male/Cis Man
- ☐ Female/Cis Woman
- ☐ Trans Male/Trans Man
- ☐ Trans Female/Trans Woman
- ☐ Genderqueer
- ☐ Additional Category, please specify _____

Q8 How did you learn about this survey? (e.g., Facebook group, listserv, friend)

_____

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Sexuality

Q9 **Sexual Attraction and Sexual History**

Q10 Do you believe it is possible to be sexually attracted to more than one gender?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Uncertain

Q11 What percentage of the US population is attracted to more than one gender, do you think?

_____

Q12 At this point in your life, to which of the following genders are you generally attracted? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Cis Men
- [ ] Cis Women
- [ ] Trans Men
- [ ] Trans Women
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Additional Category, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q13 Which of the following genders have you engaged with in consensual sexual activity? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Cis Men
- [ ] Cis Women
- [ ] Trans Men
- [ ] Trans Women
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Additional Category, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q14 Which of the following genders have you dated romantically? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Cis Men
- [ ] Cis Women
- [ ] Trans Men
- [ ] Trans Women
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Additional Category, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q15 Have you ever engaged in consensual sexual activity with a person whose gender identity does not align with your typical preference?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Q16 **Sexual Orientation**

Q17 Do you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q18 How do you label your sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Other, please specify

_____

Q19 In your own words, please define or explain the sexual orientation(s) you listed in the previous question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

X→ X→

Q20 With which of the following people do you feel comfortable discussing your sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Parent/Guardian(s)
- [ ] Spouse/Partner
- [ ] Sibling(s)
- [ ] Children
- [ ] Friends
- [ ] Coworkers
- [ ] Boss/Employer
- [ ] Acquaintances
- [ ] Strangers
- [ ] Other, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q21 For each of the following people, is it important to you that they know your sexual orientation?

	Yes	No	N/A
Parent/Guardian(s)	○	○	○
Spouse/Partner	○	○	○
Sibling(s)	○	○	○
Children	○	○	○
Friends	○	○	○
Coworkers	○	○	○
Boss/Employer	○	○	○
Acquaintances	○	○	○
Strangers	○	○	○

End of Block: Sexuality

Start of Block: Family History

Q22 **Family History**

Q23 Which of the following best describes your parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) when you were growing up?

- [ ] Single mother
- [ ] Single father
- [ ] Mother and father, together
- [ ] Mother and father, separated or divorced
- [ ] Mother and mother, together
- [ ] Mother and mother, separated or divorced
- [ ] Father and father, together
- [ ] Father and father, separated or divorced
- [ ] Other, please specify

_____

Q24 Please select one of the following to represent "Parent/Guardian One"

- ○ Father
- ○ Mother
- ○ Other Guardian or Caretaker, please specify

_____

Q25 To the best of your knowledge, what is Parent/Guardian One's sex or current gender identity? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Male/Cis Man
- [ ] Female/Cis Woman
- [ ] Trans Male/Trans Man
- [ ] Trans Female/Trans Woman
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Additional Category, please specify

_____

Q26 To the best of your knowledge, what is Parent/Guardian One's sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Queer
- [ ] Questioning
- [ ] Other, please specify _____

Q27 Growing up, if you were to come out to Parent/Guardian One as any of the following, how would they have likely responded?

	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove
Straight	○	○	○	○
Gay/Lesbian	○	○	○	○
Bisexual/Pansexual	○	○	○	○
Asexual	○	○	○	○

Q28 If applicable, please select one of the following to represent "Parent/Guardian Two"

- ○ Father
- ○ Mother
- ○ Other Guardian or Caretaker, please specify _____
- ○ N/A

Skip To: Q32 If applicable, please select one of the following to represent "Parent/Guardian Two" = N/A

Q29 To the best of your knowledge, what is Parent/Guardian Two's sex or current gender identity? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Male/Cis Man
- [ ] Female/Cis Woman
- [ ] Trans Male/Trans Man
- [ ] Trans Female/Trans Woman
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Additional Category, Please specify

_____

Q30 To the best of your knowledge, what is Parent/Guardian Two's sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Queer
- [ ] Questioning
- [ ] Other, please specify _____

Q31 Growing up, if you were to come out to Parent/Guardian Two as any of the following, how would they likely have responded?

	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove
Straight	○	○	○	○
Gay/Lesbian	○	○	○	○
Bisexual/Pansexual	○	○	○	○
Asexual	○	○	○	○

Q32 Before the age of 18, which of the following topics did you talk about with at least one of your parent/guardian(s)? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Dating
- [ ] Birth control (e.g., condoms, the pill)
- [ ] Abstinence
- [ ] Sexual Consent
- [ ] Masturbation
- [ ] LGBTQ+ topics, in general
- [ ] Your sexual orientation
- [ ] Their sexual orientation
- [ ] None of the above

Q33 Before the age of 18, which of the following sexual identities were you aware of? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Other, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q34 Before the age of 18, which of the following sexual identities were considered acceptable in your household? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Other, please specify _____
- ☐ Uncertain

End of Block: Family History

Start of Block: Relationship Status

Q35 **Relationship**

Q36 What is your current relationship status? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Single
- [ ] Dating Casually
- [ ] Dating Seriously
- [ ] Long-Term or Domestic Partnership
- [ ] Married
- [ ] Divorced
- [ ] Separated
- [ ] Widowed
- [ ] Polyamorous Relationship
- [ ] Other, please specify

_____

Q37 (If applicable) How long have you been with your current/primary partner?

- ○ Less than 1 year
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ 3-5 years
- ○ 6-10 years
- ○ 11-15 years
- ○ 16-20 years
- ○ 21-25 years
- ○ 26 years or more
- ○ N/A

Skip To: End of Block If (If applicable) How long have you been with your current/primary partner? = N/A

Q38 What is your partner's sex or current gender identity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Male/Cis Man
- ☐ Female/Cis Woman
- ☐ Trans Male/Trans Man
- ☐ Trans Female/Trans Woman
- ☐ Genderqueer
- ☐ Additional Category, please specify _____

Q39 To the best of your knowledge, what is your partner's sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Queer
- [ ] Questioning
- [ ] Other, please specify _____

Q40 Is your partner aware of your own sexual orientation?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Uncertain

Q41 Do you feel your partner is supportive of your sexual orientation?

- Strongly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Strongly unsupportive
- Uncertain

Q42 As best you can, predict your partner's level of support for each of the following:

	Strongly supportive	Somewhat supportive	Somewhat unsupportive	Strongly unsupportive	N/A
You attending a pride festival	○	○	○	○	○
You wearing paraphernalia which allude to your sexual orientation (e.g., t-shirts or buttons)	○	○	○	○	○
You joining a local LGBTQ+ community group	○	○	○	○	○
You disclosing your sexual orientation to their friends	○	○	○	○	○
You disclosing your sexual orientation to their family	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Relationship Status

Start of Block: Family Planning

Q43 **Parenting**

Q44 Do you currently have children?

- ○ Yes (If yes, how many?) _____
- ○ No

Skip To: Q46 If Do you currently have children? = Yes (If yes, how many?)

Q45 Do you think you would like to have children in the future?

- ○ Yes
- ○ Maybe
- ○ No

Skip To: Q50 If Do you think you would like to have children in the future? = Yes
Skip To: End of Block If Do you think you would like to have children in the future? = No
Skip To: Q50 If Do you think you would like to have children in the future? = Maybe

Q46 In what age range do your child(ren) currently fall? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] 0-1 years old
- [ ] 2-4 years old
- [ ] 5-7 years old
- [ ] 8-11 years old
- [ ] 12-14 years old
- [ ] 15-17 years old
- [ ] 18 years or older

Skip To: Q50 If In what age range do your child(ren) currently fall? (Select all that apply) =

Q47 From oldest to youngest, select the gender identity for your current child(ren)

⊗Child 1	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 2	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 3	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 4	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 5	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 6	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category
⊗Child 7	▼ Cis Boy/Man ... Another Category

Q48 Of the following **topics**, which have you already spoken about to your child(ren)? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Dating
- [ ] Birth Control (e.g., the pill, condoms)
- [ ] Abstinence
- [ ] Sexual Consent
- [ ] Masturbation
- [ ] LGBTQ+ topics, in general
- [ ] Their sexual orientation
- [ ] Your own sexual orientation
- [ ] None of the above

Q49 Of the following **identities**, which have you already spoken about to your child(ren)? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Queer
- [ ] Transgender
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Other, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q50 What do you feel is the ideal age for children to begin learning about gender and sexual diversity?

- ○ 0-1 years old
- ○ 2-4 years old
- ○ 5-7 years old
- ○ 8-11 years old
- ○ 12-14 years old
- ○ 15-17 years old
- ○ 18 years or older

X→ X→

Q51 Do you plan to tell your current or future children about your sexual orientation? Please indicate your main reason(s) for disclosing or not disclosing your sexual orientation.

- ☐ Yes _____
- ☐ No _____

Q52 How might you feel if your current or future child(ren) identified as any of the following?

	Very Happy	Somewhat Happy	Somewhat Sad	Very Sad
Straight	○	○	○	○
Gay/Lesbian	○	○	○	○
Bisexual/Pansexual	○	○	○	○
Asexual	○	○	○	○

Q53 Of the following **topics**, which do you plan to speak to your current or future child(ren) about prior to their turning 18? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Dating
- ☐ Birth Control (e.g., the pill, condoms)
- ☐ Abstinence
- ☐ Sexual Consent
- ☐ Masturbation
- ☐ LGBTQ+ topics, in general
- ☐ Their sexual orientation
- ☐ None of the above

Q54 Of the following **identities**, which do you plan to speak to your current or future child(ren) about prior to their turning 18? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Gay
- [ ] Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual
- [ ] Asexual
- [ ] Queer
- [ ] Transgender
- [ ] Genderqueer
- [ ] Other, please specify _____
- [ ] None of the above

Q55 Which of the following strategies would you use to educate your current or future child(ren) about the identities you selected in the previous question? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Storybooks featuring LGBTQ+ characters
- ☐ TV shows featuring LGBTQ+ characters
- ☐ LGBTQ+ pride festivals and parades
- ☐ Events targeted specifically towards LGBTQ+ families
- ☐ Introducing them to LGBTQ+ identifying friends
- ☐ Other, please specify _____
- ☐ N/A

Q56 If applicable, what are some challenges you face as a queer parent?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Family Planning

Start of Block: Additional Demographics

Q57 **Additional Demographics**

Q58 What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] Hispanic, Latina/o/x, Chicana/o/x, or Spanish
- [ ] Middle Eastern or North African
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- [ ] White
- [ ] Other, please specify

_____

Q59 What is your religious identity?

- [ ] Agnostic
- [ ] Atheist
- [ ] Buddhist
- [ ] Christian
- [ ] Hindu
- [ ] Jewish
- [ ] Muslim
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other, please specify _____

Q60 How would you describe your political views?

- ○ Very Conservative
- ○ Conservative
- ○ Moderate
- ○ Liberal
- ○ Very Liberal
- ○ Other, please specify _____

Q61 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

▼ Some high school, no diploma ... Doctorate degree

Q62 What is the highest level of education for each of your parent(s) or guardian(s)?

Parent/Guardian One	▼ Some high school, no diploma ... Doctorate degree
Parent/Guardian Two	▼ Some high school, no diploma ... Doctorate degree

Q63 What is your occupation?

_____

Q64 What main occupation did your parent/guardian(s) have when you were a child?

	Occupation
Parent/Guardian One	
Parent/Guardian Two	

Q65 What was your annual household income, before taxes, in the most recent calendar year?

▼ $0 - $24,999 ... $200,000 and up

End of Block: Additional Demographics

Start of Block: Interviews

Q66 **Thank you so much for completing this survey! I am also conducting interviews about these topics. Interviews will last approximately one hour and will be conducted via phone call or Skype. If you are interested in participating, please leave a phone number or email address so I can contact you to schedule an interview.**

- Name/Pseudonym _____
- Phone Number _____
- Email Address _____
- Other _____

Q67 Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Interviews