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Chapter title: Family formations and LGBT+ parenting: pioneering waves of self-defining families and their implications for children

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Research on LGBT+ parenting has been published in psychiatry, developmental psychology, or social science journals since the early 1980s (Tasker, 2013). However, in recent years the amount of scholarly research on LGBT+ parenting has increased exponentially; a casual search on google scholar using the term “lesbian parenting” revealed approximately 438,000 sources (23 January, 2020). Studies have differed in terms of their research aims and whether the focus of the investigation has been upon children’s well-being and the varied experiences these children have of family diversity, or upon the experiences of the LGBT+ parents themselves (Tasker & Lavender-Stott, 2020). Our current review here is not an exhaustive systematic review of studies of LGBT parenting. Instead we focus attention upon key research studies in the USA and UK that have examined the outcomes for children in LGBT+ parented families. We then explore the implications of these findings for LGBT+ parented families in Spain and consider relevant research in Hispanophone and Lusophone contexts.

Various commentaries on LGBT parenting have charted how research in the field has mirrored societal trends (Golombok, 2007; Johnson, 2012; van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). For example, Johnson (2012) outlined three distinct waves of research on lesbian parented families. Johnson’s first wave of research considered the well-being of children brought up by lesbian mothers who had left a previous heterosexual relationship (PHR) in which they had conceived a child or children. These were the first openly lesbian mothers who became visible when they sought to maintain their relationship with their children in disputed custody and access battles in the family courts. Johnson’s second wave of research on lesbian parenting focused on the well-being of children raised by lesbian mothers after donor insemination and the well-being of children adopted by lesbian mother or gay fathers. The second wave arose with the boom in the number of babies planned and conceived by lesbian couples through donor insemination. As with the first wave of research much of the second

wave of studies was driven by a research agenda examining whether children brought up in homes without fathers were thriving. If children were doing well, then parental sexual orientation was not a justifiable concern in either custody or access decisions in family law courts, nor should it be a concern restricting children's placement in adoption or a prospective parent's access to assisted reproductive techniques. Thus, research in Johnson's first and second waves focused upon whether the children were doing as well as children brought up in comparable heterosexual parent families in terms of their psychosocial well-being.

Distinct from the comparability concerns of Johnson's first and second waves the third wave of research focused not on comparisons, but instead on the unique challenges faced by lesbian mothers (Johnson, 2012) and by extension gay fathers. For example, in planning to use assisted reproductive technologies same-gender couples make decisions about whose gametes to use. Sexual minority parenting groups also face the challenge of dealing with stigma both on an everyday basis and the challenge of societal discrimination in legislation or when engaging with services predicated upon the assumption that children's parents are heterosexual.

Over recent years a new fourth wave has become apparent to us within social science research on LGBT parent families – a wave of family and self-definition in contemporary diversity - and with this wave a sense of family empowerment (Tasker, 2018; Tasker, 2020). We characterize this fourth wave as an increasing awareness of self-definition, not only of sexuality but also of family relationships, and the implications that this has for different family members and children's developmental outcomes. Through consideration of the ambiguity and fluidity of definition both of individual sexuality and of family membership research studies have begun to consider the fuzziness of categorization, to recognize non-

binary sexual and gender identities leading to blossoming of research on queer parenting, bisexual and plurisexual parenting and transgender and non-binary parented families.

To frame our research review below we consider each wave of research in turn to direct attention to pioneering research studies considering children's development in LGBT parented families. We situate parallel research conducted in Hispanophone and Lusophone context within our wider framework.

The First Research Wave: Lesbians and gay men who had become parents while in heterosexual relationships (family & child outcome comparisons)

The first wave of research studies charting the psychological development of children with lesbian mothers or gay father began to be published in the 1980's when journals based in Britain or the USA focused on children's development. Much of the drive for this early research came from a growing awareness both in the UK and the USA of the absence of evidence on the well-being of children who were brought up in non-traditional families (Golombok, 2015). In the UK the loosening of the criteria for granting divorce in Divorce Reform Act (1969) together with guaranteed legal access independent of financial means (the Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949) led to the widespread availability of divorce and an increase in the numbers of divorced mothers seeking legal custody and fathers seeking access or visitation rights. In most divorce proceedings mothers were granted custody of any children. However, when custody was contested on grounds of parental sexual orientation, family law court judges usually did not award custody to a lesbian or bisexual mother on the grounds of "moral fitness" as a parent or on the basis that homophobia might be harmful to the child (Harne & The Rights of Women, 1997). Sometimes courts decreed that it was in the best interests of a child to restrict a parent's access or visitation, for example, a child's visits to see a gay father might be denied in the presence of their father's boyfriend (Logue, 2002).

In the UK Golombok's pioneering study of PHR lesbian parenting was begun in the late 1970s using a quasi-experimental design comparing school-aged children brought up in a lesbian mother family with children brought up by a single heterosexual mother. Thus, both groups of mothers were matched on the absence of the child's father in the home and on other sociodemographic variables. Interviews and standard questionnaires completed by the mothers and children revealed no significant group differences in children's well-being scores. Likewise in both family types, children's gender-role behaviours were equivalent and mother-child relationships seemed equally warm and committed. At later follow-up when the sample were aged between 18 and 35 years old both sons and daughters retained close relationships with their mothers and those in the lesbian mother group reported good relationships with between them and their mother's female partner (Tasker & Golombok, 1997). In fact, lesbian stepmothers seemed to have more easily fitted into the post-divorce family network in an adaptable way, perhaps because of the absence of expectations that they would somehow replace an absent father. Aside from general open-mindedness regarding the possibility of same-gender relationships, having a lesbian mother was not associated with the young person's own sexual orientation and most young adults identified as heterosexual.

Subsequently a number of important reviews summarized and debated the findings and concluded that parental sexual identity made little difference to either parenting or children's progress in terms of psychological well-being, psychosocial or psychosexual outcomes (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010; Crowl, Ahn & Baker, 2008; Fedewa, Black & Ahn, 2015; Perrin & The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on the Psychosocial Aspects of Child & Family Health, 2002; Tasker, 2005; Telingator & Patterson; 2008).

These findings have been replicated in Spain. In their seminal study, González, Morcillo, Sánchez, Chacón, and Gómez (2004) analyzed 28 Spanish families with gay fathers and lesbian mothers, with children between 3 and 16 years old; most of them had become

parents while in heterosexual relationships (PHR 64%) and the remaining either through adoption (18%) or through artificial insemination (18%). Children from these families reported medium or medium-high scores on scales of cognitive abilities, social skills and self-esteem and their scores were outside scale bands indicative of clinical problems.

Furthermore, children living with lesbian mothers or gay fathers were significantly more flexible in terms of their gender roles and demonstrated a greater acceptance of homosexuality than their counterparts with heterosexual parents (González, Chacón, Gómez, Sánchez, & Morcillo, 2003). Interestingly, some of these children ($N = 30$) were later interviewed by López (2014) as young adults (aged between 18 and 36 years old). Findings revealed that these young adults became aware of their parents' homosexuality in three different ways: i) gradually, in a day-by-day manner; ii) during a conversation in which their father or mother informed them about the matter; or iii) they discovered the situation in their own way. Negative feelings were apparent only among those who found out about their parents' sexual orientation abruptly, but these often later evolved into more positive feelings.

Regarding the young person's degree of openness about their family, patterns varied from not coming out to others at all to total openness, with others displaying selective openness by only mentioning their family background in certain environments or with certain people. In these post-heterosexual relationship lesbian or gay parented families, with their other (heterosexual) parent there was full openness in most cases and in addition openness and a good level of acceptance from extended family members too. Both parents and young people were most cautious when it came to disclosing within a context related to the child's school environment. Almost one third of the participants felt that they suffered some type of discrimination or harassment during their childhood or adolescence. Nevertheless, by the time of interview most of the participants interviewed by López stated that their families showed a pattern of total openness. These young adults also displayed medium-high levels of

self-esteem, satisfaction with life, social support and mental health. Most of the participants identified as heterosexual as young adults with four identifying as LGB and most participants had considered their own sexual orientation in an open-minded way. The majority of participants in López's study emphasized that they valued the unique character of their experience as a child of a lesbian or gay parent. In particular, participants highlighted the values they had acquired during their upbringing: being open-minded, tolerant, respectful and honest as well as valuing equality.

Elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world acceptance of LGBT parenthood has been slow (e.g., Barrientos, 2015). For example, one of the most conservative countries in Latin America has been Chile where child custody and access has slowly been granted to LGBT parents coming out of previous heterosexual relationships. In February 2012 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (ICHR) ruled in favour of a Karen Atala who had been denied custody of her daughters in previous legal proceedings in Chile (Inter-American Court Of Human Rights, 2012). Careful qualitative research has indicated that the context and profile of lesbian motherhood PHR in the current Chilean context is distinct from that elsewhere. For example, Coleman's (1989) review of the mainly North American research on (previously) married lesbians states that upon "entering the lesbian subculture, the tendency is to immerse herself in this subculture while withdrawing from her husband and family" (Coleman, 1989 p. 125). In contrast, in Chile PHR lesbian mothers appeared to be still connected into family of origin via their own mothers, who often still took on an active grandmother role supporting their daughter in her parenting despite their own disapproval and also that of the local neighbourhood (Figueroa & Tasker (under review). Furthermore, lesbian mothers parenting PHR in Chile seemed to face considerable and ongoing hostility from ex-husbands.

The Second Research Wave: Lesbians and gay men becoming parents after coming out (child and family outcome comparisons)

World renowned organizations have issued reports or policy statements supporting client access to fertility services irrespective of marital status or sexual identity (see for example the Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2013). Nevertheless, many state legislatures do not permit access to ART treatments or adoption by same-gender couples or single unmarried women (Gato, Santos & Fontaine, 2017; Smith, 2011). Only some legislative systems allow for same-gender partners (non-biological co-parents) to become legally recognized as a child's parent under two-parent adoption law; despite the affirmation of the value of second-parent adoption under these circumstances by recognized experts (Perrin & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2002). Elsewhere regional and state governments that do permit access to ART without specification of restrictive criteria may be accessed by "reproductive tourists" purchasing services (Culley, Hudson, Rapport, Blyth, Norton, & Pacey, 2011).

Expert opinion has been consistently underpinned by research findings from studies on children brought up from birth in lesbian or gay parent families. Some studies have included a matched comparison group method and established that children born to lesbian mothers through donor insemination display similar developmental profiles to children from equivalent heterosexual families. For example, in the UK Golombok and colleagues compared children brought up in fatherless families with children brought up from infancy either by lesbian mothers or solo heterosexual mothers and verified that groups did not differ in wellbeing either at preschool or elementary school age (Golombok, Murray & Tasker, 1997) or at follow-up when then children were in early adolescence (MacCallum & Golombok, 2004). As the UK cohort entered emergent adulthood all three groups of young people generally expressed reasonably high levels of well-being (Golombok & Badger,

2010). However, those brought up in families without resident fathers reported fewer problems with alcohol use and higher self-esteem together with fewer symptoms of either depression or anxiety. The young people in the study generally benefitted from good close family relationships (Golombok & Badger, 2010). In fact, mothers in either the solo mother or lesbian led family groups tended to indicate greater emotional connection to their young adult than did mothers in heterosexual two-parent families. However, when the young people themselves were asked about the quality of their family relationships, scores in the three family groups did not differ. Young people in all three groups reported on equivalent and generally good relationships with their peers. Only one daughter in the lesbian mother group identified as bisexual with the rest of the sample in all three family types identifying as heterosexual.

The largest most consistently studied cohort of children raised from birth in a lesbian-led family is the National Longitudinal Study of Lesbian Families (NLLFS) which has followed a cohort of children conceived by lesbian mothers through donor insemination via fertility clinics in the USA (Gartrell, Hamilton, Banks, Mosbacher, Reed, Sparks & Bishop, 1996). The NLLFS does not have a matched comparison group, however, the use of standardized measures to investigate children's well-being has meant that it has been possible to compare findings from the NLLFS with national US data from child development surveys. Following up the mothers and the children over six waves of data collection the offspring in the study were aged 25 years at the latest reports from the NLLFS dataset. At five, ten, and seventeen years old and into late adolescence NLLFS children's profiles indicate positive psychological well-being scores for the group as a whole (Bos, Gartrell, Peyser & van Balen, 2008; Gartrell, Banks, Reed, Hamilton, Rodas & Deck, 2000; Gartrell, Deck, Rodas, Peyser & Banks, 2005). At 25 years old NLLFS participants seemed unremarkable in terms of their mental health profiles, or their educational and vocational performances, when data were

compared with US national norms on the Achenbach Adult Self-Report scale (Gartrell, Bos & Koh, 2018). Unlike the UK young adults from fatherless families studied by Golombok and Badger (2010) the young adult offspring in the NLLFS sample were more likely to report experiencing same-gender attraction or experience and to identify with a sexual minority identity than were matched participants from the USA National Survey of Family Growth (Gartrell, Bos & Koh, 2019). Nevertheless, while the NLLFS group as a whole might manifest more diversity in their sexual orientation profiles, most identified as heterosexual in adulthood (70% of the female offspring and 90% of the male offspring identified as heterosexual).

When the lesbian mothers-to-be were asked about whether they had chosen a known donor, a donor who had agreed to identity release when a child turned 18 years old, or a non-identifiable donor, opinions and reasons clearly varied (Gartrell et al., 1996). Choosing a known donor was sometimes undertaken with a view to answering a child's possible identity questions in the future and sometimes thought of as a prescribed way to include some male involvement in the child's life. Among the group of over 70 offspring of lesbian mothers in the NLLFS who were seen at age 10 years, there were no differences between children who had a known donor (nearly 40% of the group) versus those who had an unknown donor or those who were unable to access donor identity until their 18th birthday (Gartrell, Deck, Rodas, Peyser & Banks, 2005). Gartrell and colleagues also investigated possible differences in child outcome that were associated with family structure but found no effects. For instance, at age 25 years old there were no differences in mental health profiles of those who were raised in a single or two-parent lesbian-led family (Koh, Bos, & Gartrell, 2019). In addition, whether an NLLFS lesbian parenting couple remained partnered or separated made no difference to the mental health of offspring.

How do families planned by lesbians and gay men in southern European and Latin countries compare to those in the US or in the UK? One of the important ways in which families from distinct cultural contexts may vary regards the expectations of social support and solidarity among family members. Latin countries are generally characterized by more familistic and less individualistic values compared to countries such as the US or the UK (Hofstede, 2011). Findings from the USA suggest that wider extended family relationships remained strained for at least some of the white middle class lesbian mothers in the NLLFS sample (Gartrell, Rothblum, Koh, van Beusekom & Bos, 2019). Twenty-five years on from their original inclusion in the NLLFS as lesbians undergoing DI some mothers said that their relationships with their family of origin had improved after much reparative work, but 16% of the sample of mainly white middle class lesbian mothers said that their family unit was still not fully accepted by all of their family of origin members. Findings from a small qualitative study with five lesbian mother families in Portugal have indicated that grandparents-to-be heard the news that their lesbian daughter was expecting a baby with disbelief or incomprehension and struggled to accept that a non-biological mother would also have a maternal relationship with the baby (Costa, Tasker, Carneiro, Pereira & Leal, 2020). Nevertheless, senior generation members in these Portuguese families quickly turned their reactions around to fully embrace grandparent roles. Also in Portugal, Leal, Gato, and Coimbra (2019) found that childless LGB individuals perceived more conflict with their own parents than did the comparison group of heterosexual participants. However, no group differences were found regarding functional solidarity (received social support), suggesting that the possible existence of a conflict did not compromise the willingness of family members to give or receive support.

Leal, Gato, and Tasker (2019) explored the impact of sexual identity on attitudes toward parenthood among childless individuals from Portugal and the United Kingdom (UK).

Compared to UK participants, all Portuguese participants, regardless of sexual identity, were more likely to desire and intend to have children and more concerned about remaining without children. Further, in contrast to UK participants those from Portugal also reported higher levels of commitment to the idea of becoming a parent, anticipated less stigma, and expected more social support upon parenthood. Thus, irrespective of sexual identity living in a familistic society seemed to be associated with the anticipation of parenthood in many different ways and the more familistic culture of Portugal acted as a centripetal force pulling family members together across the generations (McGoldrick, Preto, & Carter, 2015). In contrast lower levels of familism in the UK and also the USA may make parenthood a more daunting project, indicating an additional level of challenge to lesbian, gay and bisexual prospective parents in those countries.

When lacking support and acceptance from their families of origin, LGB individuals sometimes create new relational networks or “families of choice” (Weston, 1991). However, it seems that this process is likely to be culturally specific. In anthropological research about family representations among LGBTQ Spanish individuals, Pichardo indicated that while friends played important roles in the lives of LGBTQ adults, they were generally not considered as family (Pichardo, 2009). For LGBTQ parents in particular family members often featured prominently in their lives. In summary, solidarity between generations, including among families with LGBT members, seems to play an important role in societies where familistic values prevail and where there is insufficient political/public provision (Haber Kern & Szydlik, 2010; Hofstede, 2011), such as the case of Portugal and Spain.

There are now several studies of children born by surrogacy arrangements to gay fathers, which has only recently become accessible to gay men as a route to parenthood (Greenfeld & Seli, 2011; Perkins, Boulet, Jamieson & Kissin, 2016). Surrogacy is an expensive procedure, available only to those who can afford it and barred by legislation in

many countries including Spain, therefore, it is often only feasible through reproductive tourism (Culley et al., 2011; Carone, Baiocco, Manzi, Antonucci, Caricato, Pagliarulo, & Lingiardi, 2018). Even in the UK where voluntary but not paid surrogacy is permitted, both the cost of paying expenses and indeed the difficulty of finding a volunteer surrogate can present barriers that are insurmountable.

Findings from various studies indicate that preschool and school age children of gay fathers born by surrogacy are doing well in terms of standard psychological adjustment measures. For example, Golombok and colleagues found that preschool and elementary school age children of gay fathers in the USA seem to have low rates of externalizing problems, and even lower rates of internalizing problems, compared to those of children of lesbian mothers conceived via DI (Golombok, Blake, Slutsky, Raffanella, Roman & Ehrhardt, 2018). In a similar fashion, and using a different measure of child adjustment, another USA study of children age 3- 10 years old of gay fathers via surrogacy found lower rates of both internalizing and externalizing behaviours than national norms, particular with respect to reduced rates of internalizing behaviours among girls (Green, Rubio, Rothblum, Bergman & Katuzny, 2019). Carone and colleagues in Italy found notably lower than average rates of internalizing problems among girls from gay father families, but higher rates of internalizing problems among girls from lesbian mother families, although both reports were within the normal range (Carone, Lingiardi, Chirumbolo & Baiocco, 2018). Thus, low rates particularly of internalizing problems for children from gay father families seem to be emerging as a pattern across studies. Nonetheless, as acknowledged by the different research teams involved, these low levels of child adjustment problems could be attributable to sampling factors such as the high educational achievement and income bracket occupied by most gay father families or perhaps a gender difference in parental sensitivity to noticing and

reporting children's internalizing problems such that the mothers, who are the parent responders in other groups, are generally more attuned to these than are fathers.

Among young children of Italian gay fathers via surrogacy abroad and also the children of lesbian mothers also conceived via DI arranged abroad low rates of both externalizing and internalizing problems were recorded with these rates being comparable to those of a matched group of children in heterosexual parent two-parent families (Baiocco, Santamaria, Ioverno, Fontanesi, Baumgartner, Laghi & Lingiardi, 2015). These Italian findings were then replicated and found to be lower in a larger sample and a better specified age range of children (3-11 years) (Baiocco, Carone, Ioverno & Lingiardi, 2018). In both Italian studies children in all three family types were found to have good peer relationships.

Studies conducted in Spain (Smietana, Jennings, Herbrand, & Golombok, 2014), Italy (Carone, Baiocco, & Lingiardi, 2017) and the USA (e.g., Blake, Carone, Raffanella, Slutsky, Ehrhardt & Golombok, 2016; Greenfeld and Seli, 2011) from the father's perspective have found predominantly positive and friendly relationships between gay fathers and surrogates. Ongoing contact between parents and the egg donor seemed to happen less frequently than between parents and their surrogate (Carone, Baiocco, Manzi, Antonucci, Caricato, Pagliarulo, & Lingiardi, 2018).

In terms of the home environment and the quality of parenting, Golombok and colleagues interviewed parents and made video observations of parent-child interactions, noting high levels of positive parenting, low levels of negative parenting and typical parent-child interactions on assessed tasks in both gay father families via surrogacy and also lesbian mother DI families studied (Golombok et al., 2018). Using parental self-report data Baiocco and colleagues found that gay fathers and lesbian mothers reported comparable couple relationship satisfaction and couple communication scores to those recorded by the matched group of heterosexual parents (Baiocco et al., 2015). Furthermore, gay fathers recorded

higher levels of flexibility and family cohesion than did either the lesbian mother or heterosexual two parent family groups (Baiocco et al., 2018). One study found that most gay men reported that family of origin members were very pleased to hear that their son was having a baby via surrogacy, although nearly a third of families initially took some time to come to terms with the news (Blake et al., 2017).

Different groups of lesbian mothers and gay fathers for different reasons chose ART over adoption, or indeed adoption over ART, as their preferred route into parenthood. In one study around half the sample of 40 gay couple families in the USA chose to pursue surrogacy because having a genetic connection to their child was important for either of the fathers-to-be (Blake et al., 2017). However, the other gay fathers in Blake et al.'s study gave different sets of reasons for choosing surrogacy. Some men compared fatherhood through surrogacy with parenthood via adoption to conclude that fatherhood through surrogacy either gave them greater control over the process of having children or saw advantages to being involved prior to birth with their baby, or thought that their child would have a less complicated start to life. Gestational surrogacy also meant that the child would not have both a genetic and a biological connection to another parent. In contrast, UK lesbian mothers and gay fathers with adopted children in the Cambridge Adoption Study often stated that adoption had been their first choice route into parenthood; in particular 90% of gay adopters said that they had only ever seriously considered adoption (Mellish, Jennings, Tasker, Lamb & Golombok, 2013). For those who decided to adopt, both lesbian and gay couples then could enjoy an equal non-biological connection to their child and under UK legislation enabling same-sex couples to adopt both partners could also claim an equal legal relationship to their child too (Jennings, Mellish, Tasker, Lamb & Golombok, 2014). In addition many adoptive parents, and prospective adopters too, have elucidated moral arguments in favour of adoption on the

grounds of giving a happy family life to children who would not otherwise have this (Costa & Tasker, 2018; Goldberg, 2012; Jennings et al., 2014; Pralat, 2018).

The longitudinal UK Cambridge Adoption Study examined the well-being of children aged 3-9 years old who had been adopted from the state welfare system either by same-sex couples or by heterosexual couples (Golombok et al., 2014). Golombok and colleagues found that children adopted by gay fathers tended to show fewer current externalizing problems than did children adopted by heterosexual parents, but otherwise the profiles of the children in all three family groups were similar. The parenting profiles particularly of the gay fathers were very positive demonstrating higher levels of warmth, lower levels of disciplinary anger, and greater parent-child interaction than shown by heterosexual parents in terms of ratings from both interview and observational measures. Neither children, nor the gay adoptive fathers who adopted them, had significantly different mental health score profiles to those evident in the comparison group of lesbian mothers and their adopted children. At follow-up, when the children in the Cambridge Adoption Study were aged between 10-14 years old, those adopted by gay fathers were found to be among the most securely attached of the adolescents studied (McConnachie, Ayed, Jadvá, Lamb, Tasker & Golombok, 2020). In the USA Farr and colleagues examined the psychological profiles of children adopted in infancy from private adoption agencies to find that children's psychological profiles at age 3 years, and again at age 8 years were similar irrespective of whether they were brought up in gay, lesbian, or heterosexual two parent families (Farr, Forsell, & Patterson, 2010; Farr, 2017). Additionally, Lavner and colleagues found that American children at high risk of cognitive or socio-emotional development problems because of the pre-adoption profiles were just as likely to make developmental gains when adopted by lesbian or gay couples as those adopted by heterosexual couples (Lavner, Waterman & Peplau, 2012).

Aside from investigating family type differences, data from various studies also have been used to examine the factors that do make a difference to the well-being of children. Reviews have concluded that while family structure seemed to make little or no difference to children of lesbian gay or heterosexual adoptive parents, the quality of family interaction did have consistent effects on child well-being irrespective of parental sexual identity (Carone, Baiocco, Lingiardi & Barone, 2020; Golombok, 2000; Golombok & Tasker, 2015; Lamb, 2012). For example, studies of children conceived through DI to lesbian mothers, or via surrogacy to gay fathers, have indicated that the level of negative parenting (the frequency and seriousness of parent-child conflict coupled with the degree of expressed anger in the parent's disciplinary response) was associated with the extent of children's externalizing problems, notwithstanding the low levels of negative parenting recorded by each group (Golombok et al., 2018). In another USA study gay fathers with a more positive parenting style, more positive co-parenting practices, and also those who reported more social support from friends, described their children as showing fewer adjustment problems (Green et al., 2019).

A similar pattern of results to those from the children conceived via ART studies can be discerned in findings pertaining to adopted children. At age 3 years old children in Farr et al.'s study with more adjustment problems were those whose parents reported higher levels of parenting stress, poorer parenting practices, and more couple relationship problems, irrespective of adoptive family type (Farr, Forssell & Patterson, 2010). At age 8 years children with higher levels of psychological problems were also those whose parents initially indicated experiencing more parenting stress (Farr, 2017). Likewise in the Cambridge Adoption Study, and similarly independent of family type, children's expression of externalizing problems were associated with higher levels of parenting stress as reported by parents (Golombok et al., 2014).

The Third Research Wave: Investigating the unique challenges faced by same-gender couples who parent together

Following Johnson's (2012) typology the third wave of research on families led by sexual minority parents has focused attention on how families manage the unique challenges they face. The third wave of research in part has reflected the growing visibility and confidence of same-gender couples with children to be out about their family unit, for example, in schools and healthcare settings. Research teams have focused their attention on investigating the following challenges: decision making regarding roles in a same-gender couple family; disclosure to children in planned same-gender couple families; managing the impact of sexual minority stress.

Qualitative data has been used to examine the decision making of lesbian couples in deciding which partner will inseminate to experience pregnancy and childbirth. For instance, some of the lesbian mothers in a Swedish study who gave birth were very motivated to experience pregnancy, whereas their partners were not (Engström, Häggström- Nordin, Borneskog & Almqvist, 2018). Other couples in Engström and colleagues study were planning more than one pregnancy, so thought of each one within a turn-taking process after assessing age and career implications. Among the 15 gay male couples in the process of becoming parents via surrogacy in Greenfeld and Seli's qualitative study, different reasons led to different decisions as to who would have the genetic connection with the baby created (Greenfeld & Seli, 2011). In three cases the couples decided to inseminate equal numbers of donor eggs for the surrogate to gestate one embryo from each partner because both fathers-to-be equivalently desired biological parenthood. In the remaining cases only one man provided sperm with partners basing decisions on their respective ages, genetic fitness, and desire for biological fatherhood.

Having become parents through ART it seems that many same-gender couples organize parenthood according to preference and more equally than do different-gender couples. For example, studies of children born to lesbian mothers via fertility clinics in the USA or UK found that their division of labour was more egalitarian than that of most heterosexual couples (Chan, Brooks, Raboy & Patterson, 1998; Patterson, Sutfin, & Fulcher, 2004; Tasker & Golombok, 1998; Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen & Brewaeys, 2003), even if biological mothers tended to do a little more of the childcare than did non-biological mothers (Ciano-Boyce & Shelley-Sireci, 2002; Patterson, 1995). The division of childcare and household labour between lesbian partners appeared to be most associated with the strength of each partner's beliefs about egalitarianism (Patterson et al., 2004). Children's psychological well-being was not related to the distribution of childcare or household tasks between their mothers but was related to non-biological mothers stated satisfaction with the division of labour and also the happiness of the couple's relationship generally (Chan et al., 1998). Furthermore, irrespective of the division of labour and family type, parent-child relationships as reported either by parents, or by their children, were found to be equally warm and affectionate (Tasker & Golombok, 1998).

Among same-gender couples adopting children a more mixed division of labour regarding childcare has been observed. In the Cambridge Adoption Study around a fifth of parents irrespective of family composition shared parenting equally (Golombok et al., 2014; Mellish, Jennings, Tasker, Lamb & Golombok, 2013) whereas among American adoptive parents both lesbian and gay parenting couple groups were more likely to practice an equal division of labour in contrast to heterosexual couples studied (Farr & Patterson, 2014).

The more egalitarian patterns of parental role division seen in studies of two parent lesbian mother or gay father families created via ART or adoption have been less evident in lesbian mother or gay father families PHR. For example, in the USA Moore's study of black

lesbian mothers parenting PHR found that they did proportionately more of the childcare and had a greater impact on family decision making than did their lesbian partners (Moore, 2008). Likewise Gabb observed a similar division of labour among a UK sample of white mainly working class lesbian mothers PHR (Gabb, 2004). Similarly, Tornello, Sonnenberg & Patterson (2015) found a less egalitarian division of child care, but not household tasks, in gay stepfather families PHR than among gay couples who had adopted a child or had a child via surrogacy. However, across all types of gay father families in Tornello et al.'s study the actual division of labor was not associated with child adjustment, while the size of the discrepancy between a father's ideal division of labor and his actual household arrangements was associated with parental well-being and couple relationship dissatisfaction but again had no relationship with children's psychological adjustment.

Unlike the children of gamete donation in heterosexual two-parent families where parents often struggle to talk to their children about fertility problems (Faccio, Iudici & Cipolletta, 2019; Tallandini, Zanchettin, Gronchi & Morsan, 2016), research teams have indicated that children conceived via DI to lesbian mothers tend to be told something about having been conceived via donated sperm much earlier than do children conceived via DI to heterosexual couples (Golombok, 2015). Generally speaking starting to have developmentally appropriate conversations about origins earlier in the child's life has helped children integrate this information into their identity gradually as they grow up (Golombok, 2015). Mitchell and Green (1998) described lesbian mother-child disclosure being initiated early on during conversations that children aged three to six years old had about having two mothers rather than a mother and father. Elsewhere longitudinal findings have indicated that positive parent-child relationships that foster children's attachment security could affect the depth of conversation that gay fathers are able to scaffold with their elementary school child

about the child's birth through surrogacy and the child's subsequent level of understanding of their birth circumstances (Carone, Barone, Manzi, Baiocco, Lingiardi & Kerns, 2020).

Extrapolating from Sexual Minority Stress theory (Meyer, 2003) that children in sexual minority parent families would themselves experience stress from stigma by association, several studies have considered how this might be managed by parents or how it might affect child well-being. Encountering sexual prejudice might mean that children experience negative effects of being victimized because of their family background or at least have to keep educating peers and adults about their family by having to explain their family in the face of persistent heterosexism (Ray & Gregory, 2001). Nonetheless, some children have been notably out and proud about their lesbian mother(s) or gay father(s) and how vulnerable children felt in relation to sexual minority stigma was both due to neighbourhood and school community environment and how visible their family was (Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Tasker, Barrett & de Simone, 2010). Data from successive waves of the NLLFS have been examined to indicate whether there is an association between low psychological well-being and the experience of minority stress. For example, at 10 years old those with more emotional and behavioural problems were also among those likely to have had to cope with peer group prejudice directed at their family type (Bos, Gartrell, Peyser & van Balen, 2008). Factors in the NLLFS data that were associated with better mental health profiles among the 10-year-old offspring were attending a school with an informed LGBT curricula and coming from a lesbian-led family that was integrated within wider lesbian community. Further, when the NLLFS team sampled grown up offspring (then aged 25 years) those who reported having experienced stigmatization in relation to growing up in a lesbian-led family were also those who tended to indicate mental health problems (Koh, Bos & Gartrell, 2019). Similarly other studies have indicated an association between the extent of stigmatization perceived by parents and children showing more externalizing behaviour among 3-9 year old children in

families led by gay fathers or lesbian mothers (Golombok et al., 2018). In Carone et al.'s (2018) Italian study both children's externalizing and internalizing behaviour scores were associated with gay fathers and lesbian mothers reports of stigmatization, with gay fathers reporting higher levels of stigmatization than did lesbian mothers. Likewise Green and colleagues found that the main factor associated with either lower positive parenting scores, or less collaborative co-parenting by gay fathers, was the level of anti-gay prejudice fathers reported having experienced (Green et al., 2019). Further, in Green et al.'s study the experience of anti-gay prejudice was also associated with gay fathers indicating more problematic couple relationships and lower levels of social support surrounding their family than did other gay fathers. Thus, the level of stigmatization experienced could have both direct effects on children's well-being and also indirect effects (via family environment).

Recent studies have suggested that stigma can hinder parenthood plans of LGB individuals, which can be a particularly problematic in countries with a longer history of repression of the (parenting) rights of LGBT individuals. In Portugal, Gato and colleagues explored childless young adults parenthood intentions and verified that LGB individuals were less likely to intend to have children than heterosexuals (Gato , Leal, Coimbra, and Tasker, in press; Gato, Leal, & Tasker, 2019); furthermore, the anticipation of stigma upon parenthood mediated the association between sexual orientation and parenthood intentions, suggesting that the perception of stigma is indeed a deterrent of LGB individuals' parenthood plans (Gato et al., in press). This is not surprising if we take into account high levels of prejudice perceived by LGBT individuals in Portugal (Eurobarometer, 2019; European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, 2013).

Stigma can be particularly deleterious when it is evidenced by professionals in human services. Álvarez and Romo (2015) conducted an ethnographical research with Spanish non-heteronormative mothers to elicit their thoughts about motherhood and assisted reproduction.

Results showed that health policies and social perceptions concerning sexual minority parent families hampered access to non-heteronormative motherhood. Similar results were found in the neighboring country, Portugal. When investigating attitudes toward same-sex adoptive families among Portuguese students from helping professions, Gato and Fontaine (2016, 2017) found an association between modern heterosexism (subtler forms of prejudice) and negative attitudes toward adoptive parenting by lesbians and gay men. In turn, Xavier, Alberto, and Mendes (2017) identified social representations of same-sex parenting in the discourses of psychologists, social workers, lawyers, attorneys, and judges in Portugal with experience in the area of family and parenting. While some arguments asserted that sexual orientation did not define parenting quality, and some asserted specific competencies, many instances of expressed reservation about same-sex couples' access to parenthood were found (and these were particularly evident in the discourses of lawyers and attorneys). These findings are hardly surprising when taking into account recent historical facts: although both Spain and Portugal now have at present advanced LGBT equality laws, both countries were under the rule of authoritarian governments for the most of the 20th century. Furthermore, the shared cultural heritage in Spain and Portugal centred upon the Catholic church has exerted a powerful influence on social mores and the suppression of same-gender relationships.

The Fourth Research Wave: family and self-definition in contemporary diversity

The first and second waves of research have been concerned with family type and establishing a body of research that has emphasized the well-being of lesbian and gay parents experiencing parenthood via different pathways. Informed by first and second wave research the western world has seen widespread recognition of same-gender couple relationships with the opening up of marriage or domestic partnership bringing in their wake gains in equality rights, such as custody and inheritance. In some legislatures marriage has given non-

biological parents legal rights of parentage to their children without having to undergo second parent adoption. Third wave research has helped to inform both legislative change and the knowledge underpinning professional practice in working both with lesbian and gay parented families and those who want to be parents. Notwithstanding the advantages promoted by first, second and third wave research from these has arisen a new fourth wave focus. Being able to grasp societal privileges that came with marriage has in turn focused attention upon a new homonormative version of heteronormativity: were same-gender couples and their children just like families headed by heterosexual couples? Third wave research drew attention to variation in well-being in same-gender couple families as a result of family members' interactions and thus alerted researchers to variations in experience within an intersectional framework of privileged access to resources contextualized by for example race, ethnicity, social class and disability. Activism within the LGBT+ community began to draw attention to people excluded on the margins because doing gender, sexuality or family did not fit within the binary of heteronormative family relationships (McGuire, Kuvankka, Catalpa & Toomey, 2016). With this breaking down of the binaries we see a new wave of family and self-definition within contemporary diversity. We identify four aspects of contemporary diversity that flow through the fourth wave of research: beyond binary sexual identity, non-binary gender identity, the queering research methodologies to appreciate queer families, and the imagination of LGBT+ parents to creatively identify and define families.

Bisexual identity was recognized in early research on lesbian and gay parenting. samples were often described as comprising both lesbian and bisexual mothers (e.g. Golombok Spencer & Rutter 1983) or gay and bisexual fathers (e.g. Barrett & Tasker, 2001). Yet within early studies participants who felt sexual attraction, or who had experienced intimacy, with both men and women were marginalized as a small minority within the group who were generally collectively referred to as lesbian or gay parents. Thus, the parenting

experiences of bisexual mothers, and especially bisexual fathers, remained largely unexplored. Contemporary theorizing of sexuality has recognized gender diversity and alongside monosexual sexual identities (heterosexual, lesbian, or gay) has considered plurisexual identities too (not only bisexual but also pansexual, queer and fluid identities) (Galupo, Mitchell, & Davies, 2015). One North American study of pregnant plurisexual mothers indicated that the lifespan histories of the mothers varied: most had relationships mainly with men, some had relationship histories with both men and women, while the minority mostly had relationships with women (Ross, Tarasoff, Goldberg & Flanders, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative family map work has indicated that the family relationships depicted by British and Irish bisexual mothers varied considerably (Tasker & Delvoye, 2018). While bisexual mothers all depicted a strong family core consisting of mutual caring relationships and the ongoing parenting of grown up offspring, some pushed beyond heteronormative family boundaries to incorporate new partners within family networks or affirmed their bisexuality through the inclusion of family of choice connections. Complex and difficult identity work was done by bisexual mothers at different points in the family life cycle as they tried to fit into or resisted the heteronormative-homonormative binary -- so much so that some felt they had put their sexuality on hold especially when their children were young (Delvoye & Tasker, 2016; Tasker & Delvoye, 2015).

The research field also has seen a revival of interest in the diversity of families led by transgender and non-binary parents. For example, Petit, Julien, and Chamberland (2018) found that Canadian pre- and post-transition trans parents struggled in different ways at different times in their lives: those who had children prior to gender transition struggled to have their gender identity accepted and supported by family members, while those who had children post-transition often faced considerable challenges with institutional services that presumed cisgender parenthood. Although some transgender and non-binary adults do not

want to have children, studies also have indicated that many transgender and non-binary young adults do want to become parents (e.g., Marinho, Gato, & Coimbra, 2020; Tasker & Gato, 2020). Looking at the parenthood plans of transgender and non-binary people in the UK, Tasker and Gato (2020) found that gender identity trajectories had implications for future parenthood; likewise future parenthood had complex implications for the recognition of gender identity. In the UK gender identity clinics had begun to take on board the need to discuss options concerning fertility preservation when discussing hormonal and surgical interventions but assisted reproduction clinics and funding were oriented around cisgender clientele. In Portugal, Marinho et al. (2020) considered the parenthood intentions of Portuguese transgender and non-binary people and their experiences with health services. They found that half of the interviewed participants wanted to be parents, especially through adoption. Most of the remaining were undecided on the subject. Mixed experiences within Portuguese health services were reported and only a few participants were informed by health providers about fertility preservation options. Marinho et al. concluded that at present in Portugal, transgender individuals need to receive clear information about parenthood possibilities in order to make informed decisions about their future.

Research on self-defining families has been slow to develop in part because social scientists have lacked effective research tools to investigate LGBTQ+ parent families. In the twentieth century empiricist traditions of social sciences such as psychology were modelled largely upon the eighteenth and nineteenth century successes of the natural sciences. Natural sciences arguably have benefitted from the hegemony of typologies, i.e. clear-cut classification systems, which drove hypotheses and logically led to verification in the absence of disconfirmation by the scientific community (Popper, 1992). Many of the findings in Johnson's first, second, and third waves of research have been because of clear-cut sampling of groups of small and relatively homogeneous groups of lesbian and gay parents (Tasker,

2013; Tasker & Lavender-Stott, 2020). It is after all more difficult to discuss phenomena if they are not clearly defined or the boundaries between them are blurred in any way. Yet as Breen and Darlaston (2010) among others have argued human societies are complicated and reductionism to produce categories amenable to quasi-experimental methods of investigation does not do justice to complexity. As social scientists seek to research beyond the boundary binaries in sexual minority and gender minority parenting qualitative research paradigms have been increasingly used (Ellis, Riggs & Peel, 2020). Notwithstanding that new techniques of multi-level modelling may also enable quantitative methods also to move beyond binaries and to embrace intersectionality (Fish & Russell, 2018).

With both qualitative and quantitative methodological developments that go hand in glove with an appreciation of diversity, we anticipate that the fourth wave of research on family and self-definition will expand. Queer can be a social identity marker as an umbrella term for many different non-heteronormative sexual and gender identities and queer can also be used as a verb: to question or disrupt both cisnormativity and heteronormativity (van Eeden-Morefield, 2018; Watson, 2005). Queer pushes at the boundaries and enables self and family definition and actualization from both conscious acts of activism to more modest everyday defining of self and family connections (Tasker, Moller, Clarke & Hayfield, 2018). For example, as a process seen in queer stepfamilies boundary negotiations with former partners over children's residence, staying over, and visiting (Bermea, van Eeden-Morefield & Bible, 2020 in press; Bermea, van Eeden-Moorefield, Bible & Petren, 2019) or in the everyday practice of LGBTQ parents of re-storying of media shows to denote the heterogeneity of family and self-define their family relationships (Reed, 2018).

Conclusion

Reviews of LGBT+ parenting research have identified three waves of research on same-sex parenting since the 1980s (e.g., Golombok, 2007; Johnson, 2012). A first wave of

studies concerned lesbian women (and to a lesser extent gay men) who had become parents while in heterosexual relationships (for review see Tasker, 2013). A second wave examined mostly women (and more residually men) who became parents in the context of a non-heterosexual identity (e.g., Gartrell, Banks, Reed, Hamilton, Rodas, & Deck, 2000). In both these waves, family and child outcome comparisons with heterosexual families were conducted. Later, moving away from a comparative agenda (Clarke, Ellis, Peel, & Riggs, 2010; Gato, 2016), a third wave comprised studies dwelling on the unique challenges faced by lesbian mothers associated to their sexual minority status. We propose a new fourth wave of contemporary research encompassing studies in which family members are allowed to self-define enabling families to deconstruct or queer cisheteronormative family structures.

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