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## Examining the Factors Related to Bisexual Individuals' Preference for Future Parenting Partner

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**EXAMINING THE FACTORS RELATED TO BISEXUAL  
INDIVIDUALS' PREFERENCE FOR FUTURE PARENTING  
PARTNER**

by

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B.A., May 2012, Christopher Newport University

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXAMINING THE FACTORS RELATED TO BISEXUAL INDIVIDUALS' PREFERENCE FOR FUTURE PARENTING PARTNER**

Laurin B. Roberts  
Old Dominion University, 2015  
Director: Dr. James F. Paulson

Although a notable amount of research has examined sexual minority parents and their families over the last decade, very little literature has focused on bisexual parents. Most of the research emphasis has been placed on parenting by lesbian women and gay men, with parenting by bisexual individuals often being subsumed by these categories. There is currently a lack of understanding of what factors contribute to bisexual individuals' preference for gender of their future parenting partner. Because of this, the current study examined the factors related to parenting partner preferences of bisexual students. Forty-seven bisexual individuals completed a series of questionnaires examining variables such as general religiosity, the desire to have children, sexual attractions and behaviors, experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice, and internalized biphobia. Preferences for opposite-sex and same-sex future parenting partners were assessed among all participants. Findings indicated that various components of bisexual participants' identities were related to parenting partner preferences. Specifically, higher levels of opposite-sex attractions predicted higher preferences for opposite-sex partners, whereas higher levels of same-sex attractions predicted lower preferences for opposite-sex partners. Further, higher amounts of sexual contact with the opposite-sex predicted higher preferences for opposite-sex partners. In contrast, higher amounts of sexual contact with the same-sex predicted higher preferences for same-sex partners. Lastly,

participants' desire to have children was predictive of both opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences, where parenting desire demonstrated linear and quadratic predictive relationships with opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences, respectively.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my aunt, Kelly Roberts.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Research examining lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents has gained momentum within the last decade. However, much of the research emphasis has been placed on parenting by lesbian women and gay men, and studies have largely ignored the unique experiences of bisexual parents. In a recent book reviewing the literature on sexual minority families, Goldberg (2010) notes that the LGBT acronym is frequently misleading due to the tendency for research to collapse the results of bisexual parents together with lesbian and gay parents, which renders parenting experiences of bisexual individuals indistinctive. Additionally, research tends to classify bisexual parents in same-sex arrangements as either gay or lesbian; disregarding their bisexual status and further limiting the scope of research (Goldberg, 2010).

According to Biblarz and Savci (2010), the result of these limitations in the literature is that a number of important questions regarding bisexual parents and their families remain unanswered. Most recently, Ross and Dobinson (2013) put out a “call for research on bisexual parenting” (p. 87), citing a significant lack of research and subsequent understanding of the unique experiences of bisexual parents. The importance of studying the experiences of bisexual parents is highlighted by a recent Pew Research Center publication (2013), which surveyed a large sample of LGBT Americans and found that bisexual individuals, as compared to gay men and lesbian women, were more likely to already be parenting. Specifically, of the bisexual individuals surveyed, 52% reported being parents (*women = 59%; men = 32%*), compared to only 31% of lesbian women and 16% of gay men surveyed (PEW, 2013). Furthermore, research has indicated that

bisexual individuals who are not currently parenting are more likely to report a desire to have children (*women* = 75.4%; *men* = 70.4%) as compared to lesbian women (37.4%) and gay men (57.0%) (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, & Chambers, 2007). Taken together, these studies suggest that bisexual individuals are currently parenting, and may be considering parenting more often than their lesbian and gay counterparts, but research has historically focused on lesbian and gay parents. Therefore, the current study strives to alleviate the lack of research on parenting by bisexual individuals by examining factors related to bisexual individuals' future parenting partner preferences.

### **Bisexual Identity**

Before discussing the current literature on bisexual parents, it is necessary to explore and understand the process of bisexual identity formation. When reviewing the history of research on bisexual identity formation, a consistent theme is that the study of bisexuality has largely emerged from the exploration of lesbian and gay experiences. Essentially, the examination and understanding of bisexual identity development began when researchers determined that bisexual individuals may undergo unique identity formation sequences separate from the sexual identity development of lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals. Historically however, bisexuality has been described as a transitory phase between heterosexuality and homosexuality (e.g., Chapman & Brannock, 1987; Miller, 1979; Ponce 1978), thus rendering the assertion of a bisexual identity invalid. Researchers have argued that this historical viewpoint has contributed to the “invisibility” of bisexuality and the subsequent lack of research on the unique experiences of this population (e.g., Bower, Gurevich, & Mathieson, 2008; Rust, 1993). Moreover, the discussion of sexuality among the general population and research

literature has perpetuated the dichotomous terminology of either “homosexual” or “heterosexual” identities (Bereket & Brayton, 2008), which further masks the presence of a bisexual identity. Only recently has research begun to acknowledge bisexuality and examine the trajectories in which these individuals come to identify as bisexual.

Rust (1993) was one of the first researchers to systematically observe and conceptualize an identity formation process that was distinct for bisexual women, as compared to lesbian women. The study included 60 bisexual women and 346 lesbian women who completed questionnaires assessing their sexual identity histories. On average, bisexual women were found to experience events of sexual attraction and the adoption of a bisexual identity at older ages as compared to lesbian women (Rust, 1993). Specifically, bisexual women noted an average age of 18 years old for their first feelings of sexual attraction to a woman (lesbian women,  $M = 15$  years old) and an average age of 25 years old for the adoption of a bisexual identity (lesbian women,  $M = 22$  years old). The findings suggest that bisexual women may experience a different trajectory of identity development, experiencing milestone events at older ages, when compared to lesbian women. Furthermore, Rust (1993) suggested that the development of a sexual minority identity, including both bisexual and lesbian identities, does not follow a linear stage formation but can be better understood as an ongoing process that changes as the individual responds to the social environment. Therefore, bisexual identity development may be influenced by numerous factors such as an individual’s perceived social support, the socio-political environment, and other personal or social influences (Fox, 1996; Rust, 1993).

In an initial effort to describe the process of bisexual identity formation, Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) developed a stage model in the context of the lesbian and gay identity formation literature. Based in a qualitative analysis of bisexual individuals, the authors proposed that bisexual individuals pass through four stages during their sexual identity development including (1) initial confusion, (2) finding and applying the label, (3) settling into the identity, and (4) continued uncertainty. The researchers suggested that the bisexual identity begins with a heterosexual identity, which becomes challenged by the stage of initial confusion during which individuals describe feelings of sexual attraction toward members of the same-sex in addition to feelings of sexual attraction toward members of the opposite-sex. The initial confusion stage may last for many years but will eventually lead into the discovery and application of the label “bisexual.” Over the course of this application of a bisexual label, individuals will eventually become comfortable and accepting of their bisexual identity and begin the settling into the identity stage. Finally, Weinberg and colleagues (1994) found that bisexual individuals often enter in the fourth stage, continued uncertainty, where bisexual individuals self-label as such but still experience periodic confusion and uncertainty about their sexual identity. Not surprisingly, the researchers found that numerous factors differentially contributed to participants’ level of continued uncertainty. For instance, variables such as social support, social validation, and negative reactions from lesbian and gay or heterosexual communities contributed to the diverse experiences of this stage of bisexual identity (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). However, this initial model of identity development includes a significant limitation such that it assumes all bisexual individuals undergo continued uncertainty about their sexual identity.

Addressing this limitation, Brown (2002) reconceptualized the fourth stage of the bisexual identity development model as *identity maintenance*, such that bisexual individuals may continue to experience cognitive and emotional uncertainty regarding their sexuality but also maintain the label “bisexual” despite this potential ambiguity. In line with previous research (e.g., Fox, 1996; Rust, 1996; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994), Brown (2002) described the development of a bisexual identity as emerging from an existing heterosexual identity. Furthermore, variables such as social support, environmental validation, and negative attitudes from lesbian and gay or heterosexual communities are hypothesized to affect a bisexual individual’s identity development. In contrast to previous models, Brown (2002) differentiated among the stages of bisexual identity development for both male and female bisexuals, suggesting that separate experiences, conflicts, or difficulties across the phases may occur due to one’s gender. For instance, during the initial confusion stage, men may encounter greater anxiety related to feelings of threatened masculinity whereas females may experience a greater tolerance of nonnormative sexual behavior (Brown, 2002). While he sought to expand upon prior bisexual identity models and alleviate some previous limitations, Brown (2002) still conceptualized identity development in a linear stage model, despite previous criticism of this model type as being a simplistic and limiting explanation of the actual process (e.g., Rust, 1993).

While additional research is needed to explore the trajectory through which an individual comes to recognize and accept a bisexual identity, common themes regarding this phenomenon have emerged in the literature. Specifically, bisexual individuals may begin the identity formation process having already established a heterosexual identity,



which is later challenged by feelings of same-sex attraction (e.g., Brown, 2002; Fox, 1996; Rust, 1996; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). Additionally, bisexual identity formation is typically a lengthy process (e.g., Brown, 2002; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994) marked by milestones that occur at later ages as compared to lesbian women (Rust, 1993) and gay men. Furthermore, over the course of their lifetime bisexual individuals may experience continued cognitive or emotional uncertainty in regards to their sexual identification (e.g., Brown, 2002; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994), which may contribute to the emerging trend that bisexual individuals are much less likely to identify as bisexual as compared to their lesbian and gay counterparts (See & Hunt, 2011). Finally, there is a general consensus that the development of a bisexual identity occurs within a social context and therefore may be influenced by factors such as social support, the socio-political environment (e.g., Brewster & Moradi, 2010b; Meyer, M. D. E., 2003; Rust, 1993), and other social identities such as race, religion, and gender (e.g., Brown, 2002; Chun & Singh, 2010; Dworkin, 2002). While limited, these findings help to establish a basis from which to conceptualize the unique identity experiences of current bisexual parents as well as bisexual individuals' future parenting aspirations and preferences.

### **Parenting by Bisexual Individuals**

As previously discussed, there has been minimal analysis of the unique experiences of bisexual parents among the LGBT parenting literature. Although limitations exist, recent research has established a small but important foundation for studying parenting in this population. Both peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed sources have examined bisexual parents' experiences in regards to identity disclosure,

diversity among parenting arrangements, and differential desires for parenting or trajectories toward parenthood. Together these areas provide a foundation from which to examine potential factors related to bisexual individuals' future parenting partner preferences.

**Disclosure of a bisexual identity.** Disclosure experiences of sexual minorities have been widely researched. In the context of parenting, lesbian and gay parents have more obvious identities that are visible via their partner's gender. However, as Ross and Dobinson (2013) discuss, bisexual parents' identities are largely invisible. A bisexual parent's sexuality cannot be identified solely based on the gender of their co-parent or partner and therefore these individuals may have unique experiences related to disclosure when compared to their lesbian, gay, or heterosexual counterparts. Although bisexual "invisibility" is a clear distinction from lesbian, gay, and heterosexual visibility, research has continued to examine bisexual parent disclosure in conjunction with lesbian and gay parents (e.g., Buxton, 2005; Costello, 1997).

Two empirical studies have examined bisexual parents' disclosure experiences. Costello (1997) interviewed LGB parents about their experiences of coming out to their families of origin. Unlike other participants in the study, a self-identified bisexual participant described disclosing her sexual identity to her parents without experiencing a traumatic or displeased reaction. Costello goes on to speculate that the lack of an adverse reaction on the part of the participant's parents may be due to her bisexual identity disclosure taking place in the context of a heterosexual marriage, therefore alleviating the perceived threat of non-traditional parental or family values so often discussed in the context of same-sex parenting. While a single participant's qualitative experience is far

from generalizable, Costello's findings may allude to a greater familial acceptance of the disclosure of a bisexual identity in the context of a heterosexual parenting arrangement.

A second empirical study conducted by Goldberg (2007) describes the disclosure practices of adults who were raised by lesbian, gay, or bisexual parents. Of the 42 participants, two women reported being raised by a bisexual mother; a sample that again highlights a significant limitation in the bisexual parenting research. Furthermore, the parents' sexual identity was identified solely through the recollection of the adult children, which may not be a reliable measure. Despite its limitations, this study provides valuable information regarding identity disclosure in sexual minority parents. Among the numerous explanations that the participants discuss for disclosing their parents' sexual identities, Goldberg highlights the reasoning "I won't hide (anymore)" with an example from a bisexual woman raised by a bisexual mother. The bisexual participant emphasized her motivation for being out about her family was a need for honesty stemming from her mother's closeted sexuality during her childhood:

One thing I learned from my mom's own experience is to never deny who I am or try to be someone else. So for example, I've been open about my own bisexuality with every relationship I've had since then because I'm not going to hide it (p. 119).

While Goldberg also supports this reasoning with evidence from other adults with lesbian or gay parents, these results allude to the possibility of differential experiences in bisexual identity disclosure. Specifically, some bisexual parents may choose to disclose their identity (Costello, 1997) while others may remain closeted (Goldberg, 2007). What

is not well understood are what variables may contribute to a bisexual parent choosing to disclose or contain their sexual identity.

Little to no systematic empirical research has sought to examine what factors contribute to a parent disclosing their bisexual identity, however detailed first-person accounts allude to the importance of perceived social support. Brand (2001) discusses his experiences with coming out as a bisexual individual in the Netherlands. Brand cited the most influential variable in his decision to disclose was the support of his wife. Additionally, he suggests that the success of his coming out experience may have been in large part due to the societal acceptance of sexual minority identities in the Netherlands. While he did not describe any negative reactions to his bisexual identity, Brand did discuss experiencing great anxiety over disclosing to his two sons, their girlfriends, and his in-laws, suggesting that disclosure of one's bisexual identity as a parent may be met with feelings of apprehension.

Similarly, a first-person account by Anders (2005), an American residing in California, describes his experiences with disclosing his bisexuality to his 12-year-old son. Throughout the account, Anders discusses feeling unsure about how his disclosure would affect his relationship with his son. At one point, he reflects upon his wife's pregnancy and how much easier it would be to disclose to a daughter over a son stating, "a son would ignore the bisexual aspect and go right to the gay-homo, queer, fag-stereotype. A daughter would not find the revelation as threatening as a son; a daughter would love you just as much" (Anders, 2005, p. 116). Ultimately, the disclosure to his son was received positively and his fears were allayed.

The process of disclosure may also have an effect on the parent's spouse, partner, or children. Through a review of literature and collection of self-reports from over 8,000 LGBT spouses and heterosexual spouses in mixed-orientation marriages, Buxton (2005) described the effects of the disclosure of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity on the individual's spouse and/or children. Buxton discussed how, following the disclosure of their spouse's bisexual identity, many heterosexual spouses conclude that they were not sexual enough to suppress their partner's same-sex attraction. Furthermore, Buxton purports that gay or bisexual parents often fear the experience of rejection, confusion, or anger when preparing to disclose to their children. Not surprisingly, disclosing one's bisexual identity following the establishment of a heterosexual marriage and resulting children may bring about feelings of anxiety as seen in the first-person accounts of Brand (2001) and Anders (2005). Taken together, the literature on disclosure experiences of bisexual parents establishes a basis from which to develop a greater understanding of this phenomenon while also highlighting the significant gaps within the research.

**Diversity in parenting arrangements.** Very little research has examined bisexual individuals' parenting arrangements. Specifically, little is known about how many bisexual individuals are parenting in the context of an opposite-sex relationship, same-sex relationship, or an even less examined polyamorous relationship (which is currently poorly-understood). Biblarz and Savci (2010) cite the understanding of how bisexual individuals are parenting and who they are parenting with as one of the core questions that remain unanswered in the LGBT parenting literature. In contrast to their gay, lesbian, and heterosexual counterparts it appears that the gender of a bisexual

individual's co-parent is much less determined, therefore alluding to potential differences among parenting arrangements and factors that contribute to this unique decision process.

Pursuing this idea that bisexual parents may experience diverse parenting relationship arrangements, Power et al. (2012) surveyed 48 Australian/New Zealand bisexual parents from the larger Work, Love, Play Study. The larger study included 466 participants who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other forms of nonheterosexual identification (Power et al., 2010). The researchers found that there was a great diversity of contexts in which self-identified bisexual individuals were parenting. Bisexual parents were found in opposite-sex relationships, same-sex relationships, co-parenting with ex-partners or non-partners, and single parenting (Power et al., 2012). In an effort to address whether differences existed among these parenting arrangements, the researchers examined open-ended responses to survey questions, which targeted the specific parenting arrangements and subsequent challenges and benefits of these agreements. Overall, the researchers concluded that family life does not appear to be static, with many participants citing continuous parenting negotiations with current partners, ex-partners, and various co-parents. Specifically, separation and remarriage was found to be a prominent feature among participants. Additionally, numerous participants had moved from an opposite-sex relationship into a same-sex relationship while others moved from a same-sex relationship into an opposite-sex relationship. The researchers concluded that negotiations surrounding family life and parenting arrangements might be particularly salient to bisexual individuals. These findings allude to patterns among bisexual parenting arrangements that may result in potential differential effects in the outcomes of

their children. Therefore examining the factors related to these arrangements and future parenting choices is essential in clarifying the current literature.

In line with this idea of negotiation, it is useful to revisit the previously discussed first-person account of Brand (2001). The author describes entering into a heterosexual marriage, having children, and then disclosing his bisexual identity. Following his disclosure, Brand negotiated an agreement with his wife to maintain a same-sex relationship outside of their marriage. Brand notes that the male he describes as his boyfriend also shared a bisexual identity and was in a committed heterosexual marriage. Again, while first-person accounts are not generalizable, an examination of Brand's situation suggests that bisexual parents may experience unique negotiations of familial relationships.

In regards to the bisexual individuals choosing to enter into a polyamorous relationship, Firestein (2007) described a study that investigated various aspects of bisexual individuals in polyamorous relationships. Specifically, 2,169 bisexual individuals completed a survey that was disseminated over the World Wide Web. Among participants identified as being in a current polyamorous relationship, 38% stated that they were currently raising children or stepchildren (Firestein, 2007). While the literature suggests an existence of diverse parenting arrangements among bisexual individuals, very little is understood about the variables contributing to a bisexual individual's choice of one arrangement over another.

**Desires for parenting and methods of having children.** Early empirical research has examined whether differences exist among bisexual and lesbian women and their desire to become a parent. Johnson, Smith, and Guenther (1987) systematically

examined bisexual women's desire to parent and opinions toward the selection of different means of conception. Participants included 1,921 lesbian and 424 bisexual women who were asked to complete a questionnaire. Results indicated that 256 (60.6%) of the bisexual women and 1,133 (58.8%) of the lesbian women reported that they had considered having a child, suggesting a slightly higher desire among bisexual individuals. Of the possible options for conception, bisexual women ( $n = 256$ ) were more likely to consider intercourse with a man (cooperative man,  $n = 166$ , 65%; unsuspecting man,  $n = 56$ , 22%) over donor insemination ( $n = 97$ , 38%) or adoption ( $n = 136$ , 53%). Conversely, lesbian women ( $n = 1,133$ ) were more likely to favor donor insemination ( $n = 691$ , 61%) and adoption ( $n = 703$ , 62%) over intercourse with a man (cooperative man,  $n = 419$ , 37%; unsuspecting man,  $n = 170$ , 15%) as a means of achieving parenthood. Furthermore, only 47 (2%) of all lesbian and bisexual participants reported success in obtaining a child through one of these options, and all successful pregnancies within the bisexual group resulted from intercourse with a man (Johnson, Smith, & Guenther, 1987). While this early research provides valuable information regarding parenting desires and methods of having children among bisexual women, it may be dated information especially due to advances in artificial insemination and greater acceptance of same-sex parental adoption.

More recently, Pavia and colleagues (2003) examined the desire for parenthood among Brazilian men living with HIV. While no data were reported on self-identification of bisexuality, 80% of the participants were in current sexual relationships with women, 28% of men had sexual intercourse with men in the course of their lives, and 23% had engaged in sexual intercourse with men in the previous year. Utilizing these data as a



measure of bisexual behaviors, the researchers assessed whether differences existed among parenting desires of bisexual and heterosexual men. The results indicated that the wish to become a father did not vary significantly among the groups, with 43% overall (both bisexual and heterosexual men) indicating that they did want to have children in the future (Pavia et al., 2003). However, the researchers did not examine through what means the bisexual participants would prefer to become a parent (i.e. intercourse, adoption). Additionally, the examination of men living with HIV provides a significant limitation of the generalizability of the sample to all parenting populations such that those suffering from this disease may exhibit less general parenting desires as a factor of not wishing to harm others. Furthermore, the researchers' conceptualization of a bisexual identity is limited such that they relied on behaviors rather than utilizing a measure of self-reported sexual identity.

How bisexual individuals become parents has not been examined in an empirical study, however first-person accounts and secondary findings reporting on bisexual parenting experiences suggest that many bisexual individuals become parents in the context of heterosexual intercourse in a heterosexual relationship (e.g., Anders, 2005; Brand 2001; Morris, Balsam, Rothblum, 2002; Power et al., 2012). An empirical evaluation of these anecdotal accounts is needed, as well as an examination of the factors that contribute to a bisexual individual becoming a parent in the context of a heterosexual relationship.

Additionally, how a desire for parenthood may shape one's bisexual identity is not well understood. Two first-person accounts allude to the idea that parenting desire or experiences may contribute to an individual's bisexual identity development. In her

personal account, Wells (2011) discusses being a single lesbian mother who has struggled with past lesbian partners' willingness or desire to raise a child. One day, she saw a man pushing a stroller and carrying a second child in a shoulder pack and found that she was attracted to him based on his parental nurturance. Wells describes abandoning her strictly lesbian identity and developing a bisexual identity as a result of her desire to find a partner of either gender who was willing to co-parent. Blanco (2009), describes having always been bisexual but recently becoming more active within her identity following becoming a parent. Specifically, she discussed a strong desire to normalize the experience of bisexuality for her daughter and describes becoming more active and engaged in the LGBT community in an effort to educate her daughter. In these accounts, desires to parent or the experience of parenting seemed to shape or influence each individual's bisexual identity.

### **Biphobia**

Similar to the trend within sexual identity research, the examination of a construct known as biphobia emerged in the context of the literature examining homophobia. A relatively new construct, biphobia was first defined by Bennett (1992) as "prejudice against bisexuality" (p. 205) and "the denigration of bisexuality as a valid life choice" (p. 207). This definition suggests that those who hold biphobic attitudes are likely to view bisexuality as a life choice, rather than a biological state, which align with attitudes found in homophobia (i.e., lesbian and gay individuals chose this lifestyle). Similar to experiences of homophobia, biphobia has been hypothesized to affect many aspects of a bisexual individual's life including their overall well-being and mental health (e.g., Brewster & Moradi; 2010a; Meyer, I. H., 2003; Mulick & Wright, 2008). However, what

distinguishes biphobia from homophobia is what Ochs (1996) described as “double discrimination,” meaning that the existence of biphobia can be found in heterosexual *and* lesbian/gay communities. Thus, bisexual individuals may experience prejudice or discrimination from heterosexuals, lesbian women and gay men, or both.

In an effort to support this notion that biphobia emerges from both heterosexual and lesbian/gay communities, Mulick and Wright (2008) developed the Biphobia Scale and tested the construct among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual undergraduate students. The researchers found that 58% ( $n = 128$ ) of students fell in the mild range of biphobia, 37% ( $n = 83$ ) in the moderate range, and 6% ( $n = 13$ ) in the severe range. Furthermore, biphobia was found in both lesbian/gay and heterosexual communities, with 41% ( $n = 79$ ) of heterosexual participants scoring in the moderate range, 7% ( $n = 13$ ) of heterosexual participants scoring in the severe range, and 13% ( $n = 3$ ) of lesbian and gay participants scoring in the moderate range. The results support previous research suggesting the presence of negative attitudes toward bisexuals among undergraduate students (e.g., Eliason, 1997) as well as the existence of biphobia among both populations.

Due to its relatively recent conceptualization as a construct, minimal research has examined the effects of biphobia and anti-bisexual prejudice on bisexual individuals. Galupo (2006) discussed literature examining the intersections of sexism, heterosexism, and biphobia in the selection of friendships among bisexual women. According to the review, it appears that bisexual individuals’ friendship patterns may be influenced by experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay and heterosexual populations. Specifically, Rust (1995) suggested that negative feelings toward bisexual women, as

perpetuated by lesbians and gay men, may impede bisexual women from developing friendships within this population. Additionally, feelings of rejection from the lesbian and gay community have been shown to influence bisexual individuals' tendency to participate and associate with the lesbian/gay community (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Furthermore, biphobia may influence dating patterns among bisexual individuals. According to Klesse (2011) bisexual individuals face stereotypes regarding promiscuity, infidelity, and transmission of HIV when seeking to engage in dating and romantic relationships. This suggests that when these stereotypes are felt from a particular population (e.g., lesbian/gay individuals, heterosexual individuals), bisexual individuals may be less likely to engage in romantic partnerships with a member of that group. Additionally, perceived biphobia may contribute to feelings of isolation or "other" (e.g., Sarno & Wright, 2013; See & Hunt, 2011), a phenomenon also seen within the general sexual prejudice literature (e.g., Meyer, I. H., 2003). Thus, feelings of anti-bisexual prejudice or perceived biphobia may affect bisexual individuals' friendships, dating partners, and potentially marital and parenting partners.

### **The Current Study**

A review of the literature regarding parenting by bisexual individuals reveals a significant gap in the exploration and understanding of unique bisexual parenting experiences. As previously mentioned, much of the research on this population is plagued by small sample sizes and largely inconclusive results. Furthermore, experiences of bisexual parents are often inappropriately collapsed within the experiences of lesbian and gay parents, which stands in the way of understanding processes that may be unique to bisexual individuals. Those studies that have exclusively examined bisexual parents

are limited to qualitative methodology, which, while it provides important information regarding the population, leaves the literature in a much more preliminary state than the more strongly hypothesis-driven research in gay and lesbian populations. Much remains to be understood about the unique experiences of bisexual parents, particularly in regards to their disclosure of a bisexual identity, experience of parenting arrangements, and desire to parent.

The current study seeks to address these limitations within the LGBT parenting literature by (1) examining bisexual individuals separately from lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals and (2) examining the factors related to bisexual individuals' preferences for the gender of a future parenting partner through quantitative methods. As evidenced by the bisexual identity formation literature, the late teens and early twenties are often a critical period of transition, when these individuals are recognizing and internalizing a bisexual identity. With this identification may come novel and more meaningful ways of thinking about future life experiences, such as relationships and parenting. Additionally, a bisexual identity is thought to develop in a social context, thus alluding to the potential influence of experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice on future parenting partner preferences. Therefore, the current study examines the effects of bisexual students' social identities and social context on preferences for the gender of a future parenting partner.

**Theoretical framework.** The current study is guided by an Intersectionality framework, which proposes that an individual's multiple social identities interact to form different meanings and experiences that jointly influence outcomes (e.g., Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Warner, 2008). With its development through the examination of race and

gender interactions, Intersectionality has been used to guide research in understanding experiences of groups holding multiple disadvantaged statuses (Cole, 2009). For example, the framework has been applied in understanding intersections among gender, sexuality, and race as they relate to participants' experiences of racism, sexism, and homophobia (e.g., Bowleg, 2008; 2012), as well as how these intersections among identities may influence specific outcomes (e.g., motives and timing for parenthood; Goldberg, Downing, & Moyer, 2012). Recently, Eliason and Elia (2011) called for the use of Intersectionality in research to examine factors specific to bisexuality, suggesting that the framework allows for the exploration of "unique and complicated effects on the lives of real people" (p. 415).

Major criticisms of the Intersectionality framework in regards to its applicability to research include its ambiguity and open-endedness. Specifically, the theory offers no clear guidelines for methodology or limitations for the number of identities to be considered. Indeed, if researchers seek to include numerous aspects of social identity, analyses become inherently complex. Furthermore, it is practically impossible "to include individuals representing every permutation of race, gender, class, or other social identity" within a study (Cole, 2009, p. 176). Thus, it is necessary to employ guidelines by which to select the most meaningful dimensions or categories of identity to include in research.

In recognition of Intersectionality's ambiguity, researchers have proposed ways to apply the framework to psychological research. Warner (2008) offered a "best practices guide" for the application of Intersectionality to psychological research through the examination of three central issues and offering of corresponding guidelines. First,

researchers must constrain the number of identities to be studied and this decision should be guided by attending to *why* a particular intersection is selected. Second, focus on either *master* (e.g., gender) or *emergent* (e.g., sexuality) categories should be guided by which types of categories are expected to explain behavior. Finally, Warner (2008) argues that conceptualizing identity within a social structural context is necessary for psychological research. These considerations and guidelines shaped the application of Intersectionality to the current study and, in conjunction with past research, helped to inform corresponding hypotheses and research questions.

***Constraining identities.*** In choosing relevant identities, both *master* and *emergent*, Warner (2008) describes three criteria that should researchers should consider. Specifically, researchers should consider (1) why one *master* or *emergent* category will be examined over another, (2) the rationale for making these choices, and (3) how these identities together explain something that each identity alone does not.

Using these guidelines along with past research, it is evident that one's bisexual identity, in terms of sexual attraction and behaviors, can be influential in the choice of future parenting partner because these factors shape who a bisexual individual may be attracted to and may, in turn, influence who they envision themselves parenting with. Furthermore, bisexual identity and related preferences may differ by gender as different identity development processes may occur for males and females (e.g., Brown, 2002). Men may encounter greater anxiety related to feelings of threatened masculinity when first encountering both same-sex and opposite-sex attractions whereas females may experience a greater social tolerance of nonnormative sexual behavior, and therefore less anxiety (Brown, 2002). Finally, past and current literature indicates robust differences of

parenting desire among bisexual individuals and their lesbian, gay, and heterosexual counterparts. For instance, bisexual individuals who are not currently parenting are more likely to report a desire to have children (*women* = 75.4%; *men* = 70.4%) as compared to lesbian women (37.4%) and gay men (57.0%) (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, & Chambers, 2007). Additionally a first-person account (Wells, 2011) alludes to the potential intersection of parenting desire with sexual identity to influence partner choice. Specifically, Wells (2011) discussed her adoption of a bisexual identity from a previous lesbian identity due to the desire for a co-parent of either gender. Thus it is important to consider an individual's desire to become a parent as potentially intersecting with their bisexual identity to influence outcomes related to preference of the gender of future parenting partner. Although additional identities such as race, religiosity, etc. may interact with one's bisexual identity to form differential outcomes, it is unclear within the current literature how influential these potential intersections may be in bisexual individuals' preference of future parenting partner. Thus, these identities are not explicitly specified within analyses of the current study and instead are considered as covariates.

***Social structural context.*** Intersectionality emphasizes the importance of examining and understanding identity within a social structural context (Warner, 2008). In line with this idea, past research has conceptualized the process of bisexual identity development as influenced by social factors (e.g., Fox, 1996; Rust, 1993). A social experience that may be particularly salient for bisexual individuals is the experience of anti-bisexual attitudes, or biphobia, from the lesbian and gay community, the heterosexual community, or both. Additionally, these social experiences may interact



with feelings of internalized biphobia to create influences on bisexual individuals' social identities. Not surprisingly, experiences or feelings of anti-bisexual prejudice may contribute to isolation or a feeling of "otherness" that can be considered particularly influential in a young adult population such that emerging adulthood is categorized by explorations of dating, relationships, and quests for physical and emotional intimacy (Arnett, 2000; Brewster & Moradi, 2010a). Thus, in the context of young adulthood, the social experiences of biphobia and anti-bisexual prejudice may intersect with bisexual students' social identities to jointly influence preferences for the gender of their future parenting partner.

### **Hypotheses**

It was hypothesized that bisexual individuals would vary in preference between same-sex and opposite-sex future parenting partners, and this preference would be a function of different social identities, specifically:

**H1.** Sexual attractions would predict preference of future parenting partner's gender.

**H1a.** Bisexual individuals with more opposite-sex attractions would demonstrate greater preference for opposite-sex partners and individuals with more same-sex attractions would demonstrate less preference for opposite-sex partners.

**H1b.** Bisexual individuals with more same-sex attractions would demonstrate greater preference for same-sex partners and individuals with more opposite-sex attractions would demonstrate less preference for same-sex partners.

**H2.** Source of anti-bisexual prejudice would predict preference of future parenting partner's gender.

**H2a.** Bisexual individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay community would demonstrate greater preference for opposite-sex partners and individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the heterosexual community would demonstrate less preference for opposite-sex partners.

**H2b.** Bisexual individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the heterosexual community would demonstrate greater preference for same-sex partners and individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay community would demonstrate less preference for same-sex partners.

**H3.** Sexual attractions and source of anti-bisexual prejudice would interact to predict preference of future parenting partner's gender:

**Opposite-Sex Parenting Partner Preferences**

**H3a.** Bisexual individuals who experience low or high levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would demonstrate greater preferences for opposite-sex partners.

**H3b.** Bisexual individuals who experience low levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population, and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate less preferences for opposite-sex partners. In contrast, bisexual individuals who experience high levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate an increase in preferences for opposite-sex partners.

**H3c.** Bisexual individuals who experience low levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would

demonstrate greater preferences for opposite-sex partners. In contrast, bisexual individuals who experience high levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would demonstrate a decrease in preferences for opposite-sex partners.

**H3d.** Bisexual individuals who experience low or high levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate less preferences for opposite-sex partners.

### **Same-Sex Parenting Partner Preferences**

**H3e.** Bisexual individuals who experience low or high levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would demonstrate less preferences for same-sex partners.

**H3f.** Bisexual individuals who experience low levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population, and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate greater preferences for same-sex partners. In contrast, bisexual individuals who experience high levels of prejudice from the lesbian/gay population and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate a decrease in preferences for same-sex partners.

**H3g.** Bisexual individuals who experience low levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would demonstrate less preferences for same-sex partners. In contrast, bisexual individuals who experience high levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the opposite-sex would demonstrate an increase in preferences for same-sex partners.

**H3h.** Bisexual individuals who experience low or high levels of prejudice from the heterosexual population, and have more attractions toward the same-sex would demonstrate greater preferences for same-sex partners.

**Exploratory Hypothesis.** It was hypothesized that additional social identities such as sexual behaviors, parenting desires, and gender may predict bisexual individuals' preference of future parenting partner's gender, however directionality of these predictions was unclear. Therefore, these variables would be examined within the model to determine if effects exist and in what direction these potential effects operate.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Participants

Participants included bisexually-identified students enrolled at Old Dominion University (ODU) and Norfolk State University (NSU). To be eligible, participants must have been at least 18 years old and non-parents. Sixty-six bisexual individuals participated. One participant was removed due to an incorrect response to the sexual identification item (the participant identified as “bisexual” in the demographics questionnaire, but later reported a heterosexual identification when posed with open-ended questions related to bisexuality). Of the remaining participants ( $n = 65$ ), seven did not complete the survey and were dropped from analyses. An additional eleven participants did not complete one, or both of the dependent variable measures and were therefore dropped from analyses. Figure 1 includes details regarding participant dropout and the process of arrival at the final sample. The final sample included 47 bisexual participants.

The mean age of participants was 21.34 years old ( $SD = 3.81$ ). The sample was included 37 females (78.7%) and 10 males (21.3%). Sample ethnicity was 57.4% Black ( $n = 27$ ), 29.8% White ( $n = 14$ ), 6.4% Asian/Pacific Islander ( $n = 3$ ), 2.1% Hispanic/Latino/Mexican American ( $n = 1$ ) and 4.3% other ( $n = 2$ ). Most participants identified their relationship status as single ( $n = 21$ ; 44.7%) or in a committed relationship ( $n = 14$ ; 29.8%). Detailed demographic characteristics of the sample as a function of participants' gender are reported in Table 1.

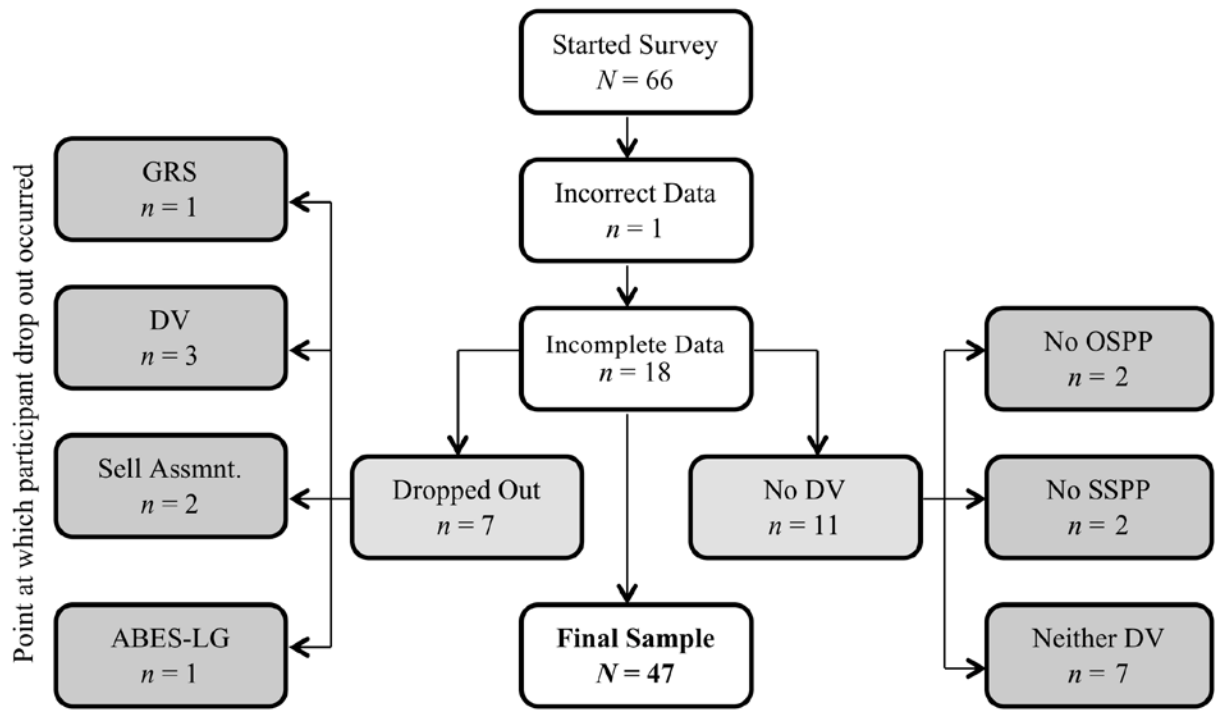


Figure 1. Flow-chart of final sample.

Note. DV = Dependent Variable; GRS = General Religiosity Scale; ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale – Lesbian/Gay Subscale; OSPP = Opposite-Sex Partner Preference; SSPP = Same-Sex Partner Preference.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample*

Characteristic	Bisexual Male ( <i>n</i> = 10) <sup>a</sup>	Bisexual Female ( <i>n</i> = 37)
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	3 (8.1%)
Black	6 (60.0%)	21 (56.8%)
Hispanic/Latino(a)	0	1 (2.7%)
White	4 (40.0%)	10 (27.0%)
Other	0	2 (5.4%)
<i>Relationship Status</i>		
Married/Civil Union	0	3 (8.1%)
Divorced/Separated	0	0
Living with Partner	0	3 (8.1%)
Committed Relationship	0	14 (37.8%)
Open Relationship	2 (20.0%)	2 (5.4%)
Single	6 (60.0%)	15 (40.5%)
Other	1 (10.0%)	0
<i>Education</i>		
High School	4 (40.0%)	6 (16.2%)
Some College	2 (20.0%)	23 (62.2%)
Associates Degree	2 (20.0%)	6 (16.2%)
Bachelor's Degree	1 (10.0%)	2 (5.4%)
Master's Degree	1 (10.0%)	0
Doctoral Degree	0	0
<i>Political Affiliation</i>		
Extremely Conservative	1 (10.0%)	0
Conservative	0	0
Leaning Conservative	0	2 (5.4%)
Moderate	1 (10.0%)	7 (18.9%)
Leaning Liberal	3 (30.0%)	7 (18.9%)
Liberal	1 (10.0%)	9 (24.3%)
Extremely Liberal	3 (30.0%)	1 (2.7%)
Politically Uninvolved	1 (10.0%)	11 (29.7%)

Table 1 continued

Characteristic	Bisexual Male ( <i>n</i> = 10) <sup>a</sup>	Bisexual Female ( <i>n</i> = 37)
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>		
Anglican/Episcopalian	0	0
Baptist	2 (20.0%)	17 (45.9%)
Buddhist	0	0
Eastern Orthodox	0	0
Hindu	0	0
Jewish	0	1 (2.7%)
Lutheran	0	0
Methodist	0	0
Mormon/LDS	0	0
Muslim	1 (10.0%)	0
Christian (no denomination)	1 (10.0%)	2 (5.4%)
Pentecostal	0	1 (2.7%)
Presbyterian	0	0
Roman Catholic	0	1 (2.7%)
No religious affiliation	3 (30.0%)	10 (27.0%)
More than one affiliation	1 (10.0%)	3 (8.1%)
Other	2 (20.0%)	2 (5.4%)

<sup>a</sup>One bisexual male did not complete the relationship status item.



## **Procedure**

Participants were recruited through a series of campus-wide email announcements at both ODU and NSU. At ODU, participants were also recruited using the psychology research participation system (SONA). Through this system, students received class credit for their participation in the study. Upon receiving the link, individuals were directed to a study description page that provided a brief explanation of the current study, exclusionary criteria, objectives, risks, and benefits of the study. Prior to continuing, each participant was asked to read and accept all of the elements of this informational page. Participants were instructed to discontinue the study if they did not agree to accept these criteria.

After accepting the elements of the information page, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. Individuals who identified as current parents on this questionnaire were screened out from the survey and sent directly to a conclusion page. Participants were then asked to complete the General Religiousness Scale (Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson, Froese, & Tsang, 2009), The Self Assessment of Sexual Orientation (Sell, 1996), the Desire to Have Children Questionnaire (Rholes et al., 1997), and the dependent variable measure (created for this study). Participants were then directed to complete the Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale (Brewster & Moradi, 2010a), the Internalized Homonegativity subscale of the LGBIS (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000; Sheets & Mohr, 2009), and a series of open-ended questions. The current study was approved by Old Dominion University's Human Subjects Committee and Norfolk State University's Institutional Review Board.

## Measures

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that was created for the purposes of this study (see Appendix A). The questionnaire included items assessing the following demographic information: age; gender; race/ethnicity; relationship status; education; academic major; parental status; religious affiliation; political ideology; sexual identity; sexual identity certainty.

**Religiosity.** To assess general religiosity, participants were asked to complete the General Religiousness Scale (Rowatt et al., 2009; Appendix B). The scale contained four-items examining the participant's "degree of religiousness, frequency of attendance at religious services, reading of sacred books, and praying outside of religious services" (Rowatt et al., 2009, p. 17). Composite scores for the religiosity measure were created by first standardizing each item (i.e.  $z$ -scores) and then calculating the total sum of the four individual items. In past research, the scale has demonstrated good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .81$ ; Rowatt et al., 2009). The items have also been shown to load onto a single factor, which accounted for 64.15% of the variance (Rowatt et al., 2009). Lastly, the scale has demonstrated evidence of convergent validity through a significant, positive correlation with right-wing authoritarianism ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ; Rowatt et al., 2009) In the current study, the General Religiousness Scale demonstrated acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

**Sexuality.** To assess additional aspects of sexuality, participants were asked to complete The Sell Assessment of Sexual Orientation (Sell, 1996; Appendix C). The Sell Assessment is a 12-item questionnaire designed to assess three dimensions of sexuality: sexual attractions (six items); sexual behavior (four items); sexual identity (two items).

On items of sexual attractions, participants are asked to report the frequency with which they have been sexually attracted to both men and women in the past year. On items of sexual behavior, participants are asked to report the frequency of sexual contact with both men and women in the past year. Finally, on items of sexual identity, participants are asked to self-report their sexual identity on spectrums of *homosexuality* and *heterosexuality*. For the purposes of this study, an additional item was added to assess participants' sexual identity on the spectrum of *bisexuality*.

Participants' scores for the Sell Assessment were calculated as prescribed by Sell (1996). First, responses for each individual item were "standardized" by assigning a value of 1 (*not at all*), 2 (*slightly*), 3 (*moderately*), or 4 (*very*) based upon their raw score response. For example, on item one a participant would receive a value of 1 if they selected answer choice "none," a value of 2 if they selected answer choice "1," "2", or "3-5," a value of 3 if they selected answer choice "6-10" or "11-49," and a value of 4 if they selected answer choice "50-99" or "100 or more." Next, participants were given single scores on four dimensions including sexual attractions to males, sexual attractions to females, sexual contact with males, and sexual contact with females. This was accomplished through selecting the maximum standardized value among the group of items contributing to the index. That is, if a participant had standardized responses of 2, 3, and 3 on the three sexual attraction items to males, they would receive a dimension score of 3 (*moderately*). Lastly, for the purposes of the current study, these values were recoded to reflect opposite-sex and same-sex terms by accounting for participants' gender.

The Sell Assessment has demonstrated sufficient test-retest reliability over a two-week interval, with correlation coefficients for each item ranging from 0.93 to 0.98 (Sell, n.d.). The measure has also demonstrated good convergent validity, positively correlating with a Kinsey-type measure of sexual attraction ( $r = 0.86$  to  $0.92$ ), sexual contact ( $r = 0.96$ ), and sexual orientation identity ( $r = 0.85$ ; Sell, n.d.). In the current study, internal consistency of the measure was assessed through an evaluation of each of the dimensions (i.e. sexual attraction to males,  $\alpha = .80$ ; sexual attraction to females,  $\alpha = .73$ ; sexual contact with males,  $\alpha = .25$ ; sexual contact with females,  $\alpha = .53$ ). The low observed alpha values of both sexual contact domains in the current study was likely due to only two items composing each subscale.

**Perceived experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice.** Participants' perceptions of experiences with anti-bisexual prejudice were assessed using the Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale (ABES; Brewster & Moradi, 2010a; Appendix D). The ABES is a 17-item questionnaire examining three factors of anti-bisexual prejudice: sexual orientation instability, sexual irresponsibility, and interpersonal hostility. The measure assesses bisexual individuals' experiences with anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian and gay population (ABES-LG) as well as the heterosexual population (ABES-H). Participants were asked to report the frequency associated with each item using a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*almost all of the time*). Total scores for responses to the ABES-LG form and the ABES-H form were calculated through summation and considered separately for analysis purposes. The ABES has demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 for the ABES-LG form and 0.93 for the ABES-H form. Furthermore, Cronbach's alphas ranged from 0.82 to

0.94 (ABES-LG) and 0.81 to 0.91 (ABES-H) for the measure's subscales. The ABES-LG and -H full scales have demonstrated sufficient convergent and discriminant validity. Both scales have appropriately correlated with a measure of stigmatization awareness, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.41 to 0.54 for ABES-LG and 0.37 to 0.51 for ABES-H. Additionally, both scales have demonstrated good discriminant validity with a measure impression management such that correlation coefficients between ABES-LG, ABES-H, and impression management are non-significant (Brewster & Moradi, 2010a). In the current study, the ABES-LG and ABES-H full scales demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with alpha values of 0.92 and 0.94, respectively.

**Internalized Biphobia.** An adapted form of the Internalized Homonegativity subscale from the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000; Sheets & Mohr, 2009; Appendix E) was used in order to assess participants' level of internalized biphobia. The subscale includes five items that measure an individual's feelings about themselves as a bisexual. Example questions include "I am glad to be a bisexual person," which are rated along a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). Higher scores on the measure are indicative of greater internalized biphobia or binegativity. The adapted questionnaire has demonstrated adequate ( $\alpha = .77$ ; Sheets & Mohr, 2009) to good ( $\alpha = .85$ ; Brewster & Moradi, 2010a) internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, the measure has been shown to correlate negatively with a measure of life satisfaction among a sample of bisexual individuals ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ; Sheets & Mohr, 2009). Total scores for participants were created through summation of the five items. The scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency in the current study ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Desire for parenting.** In order to assess desire for future parenting, participants completed an adapted version of The Desire to Have Children questionnaire (Rholes, Simpson, Blakely, Lanigan, & Allen, 1997; Appendix F). The Desire to Have Children questionnaire includes 12 items that assess different factors related to parenting desires. Participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with items using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 7 (*I strongly agree*). Example questions include “I have a strong desire to have children” and “I know I would be very upset and disappointed if my partner/spouse and I are unable to have children” (Rholes et al., 1997). The questionnaire has demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .90$ ) and has correlated with measures of perceived ability to relate well with children ( $r = .75, p < .01$ ; Rholes et al., 1997). In the current study, two questions were modified to orient participants to future parenting desires (see Appendix F).

Due to examiner error, question five of the Desire to Have Children questionnaire was not included in the survey for the first two waves of data collection. This included only participants at Old Dominion University who either received the survey through a campus-wide email announcement, or completed the survey through the SONA research participation system in the 2014 fall semester. The question was included in the 2015 spring semester data collection. Separate reliability analyses for the modified (i.e. absence of question five) and original Desire to Have Children scales revealed similar results of internal consistency with alpha values of .89 and .93, respectively. Thus, the analyses within the current study utilize the modified version of the Desire to Have Children questionnaire, which omits item number five, in an effort to retain data and

consistency. Participant total scores for the scale were created through summation of the remaining 11 items.

**Future Parenting Partner Preference.** In order to measure the dependent variable, gender preference of a future parenting partner, participants were asked to respond to two items created for the purposes of this survey (see Appendix G). The items were as follows: (1) On a scale of 0 (*no-preference*) to 100 (*strong preference*), please indicate your degree of preference for an opposite-sex future parenting partner; (2) On a scale of 0 (*no-preference*) to 100 (*strong preference*), please indicate your degree of preference for a same-sex future parenting partner. Evidence for validity of the two dependent variable items, as demonstrated within the current study, is reported in the results section.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

Prior to conducting main analyses, data were examined for accuracy and cleaned. A Missing Values Analysis (MVA) was conducted and revealed missingness on the following items and measures: relationship status (2.13%), General Religiousness Scale (GRS), The Sell Assessment, Desire to Have Children questionnaire (DTHC), ABES-LG, and ABES-H (see Table 2). Due to the small percentages of missingness on each of these variables (i.e., no variables with 5% or more missing values) missing data were determined to be missing at random (MAR) and non-demographic missing data were addressed through imputation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

All missing data on the GRS, DTHC, ABES-LG, and ABES-H scales were imputed using the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm through the SPSS software (25 iterations). Missing data on The Sell Assessment were not imputed, as participants can still receive total scores on the measure despite missing an item. In order to establish confidence in the EM imputation method, major analyses were repeated with and without missing data. Results of both methods were similar and therefore analyses using data with imputed missing values are reported in the current study. Descriptive statistics for each of the measures are presented in Table 3. Frequencies for the Sell Assessment are presented in Table 4.



Table 2

*Percentages of Missing Data on Quantitative Measures*

Item	Measure					
	GRS	DTHC	Sell	ABES-LG	ABES-H	LGBIS-B
1	2.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	0.00	0.00	2.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.13	0.00	0.00
4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5		--	0.00	0.00	4.26	0.00
6		0.00	0.00	0.00	2.13	
7		0.00	0.00	2.13	2.13	
8		2.13	0.00	0.00	2.13	
9		0.00	0.00	0.00	2.13	
10		2.13	0.00	0.00	2.13	
11		4.26	0.00	4.26	0.00	
12		2.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	
13			0.00	0.00	0.00	
14				2.13	0.00	
15				2.13	0.00	
16				2.13	2.13	
17				2.13	0.00	
18						
19						
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*Note.* GRS = General Religiosity Scale; DTHC = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire; ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Lesbian/Gay Subscale; ABES-H = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Heterosexual Subscale; LGBIS-B = Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity Scale – Internalized Binegativity.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics of Study Measures*

Measure	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Range [Min, Max]	Skewness ( <i>SE</i> )	Kurtosis ( <i>SE</i> )
GRS	0.00 (3.17)	10.88 [-4.68 6.20]	0.20 (0.55)	-0.97 (0.68)
DTHC	50.27 (15.79)	56 [21, 77]	0.08 (0.35)	-1.24 (0.68)
OSA	3.32 (0.89)	3 [1, 4]	-0.88 (0.35)	-0.60 (0.68)
SSA	3.32 (0.94)	3 [1, 4]	-1.36 (0.35)	1.03 (0.68)
OSC	2.36 (0.97)	3 [1, 4]	0.11 (0.35)	-0.91 (0.68)
SSC	1.81 (0.80)	3 [1, 4]	0.90 (0.35)	0.70 (0.68)
ABES-LG	47.00 (18.00)	68 [17, 85]	0.20 (0.35)	-0.57 (0.68)
ABES-H	46.06 (18.54)	69 [17, 86]	0.32 (0.35)	-0.67 (0.68)
LGBIS-B	12.72 (8.50)	28 [5, 33]	0.97 (0.35)	-0.20 (0.68)
OSPP	63.83 (35.06)	100 [0, 100]	-0.59 (0.35)	-0.94 (0.68)
SSPP	42.46 (34.53)	100 [0, 100]	0.19 (0.35)	-1.33 (0.68)

*Note.* GRS = General Religiosity Scale; DTHC = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire; OSA = Opposite-Sex Attraction; SSA = Same-Sex Attraction; OSC = Opposite-Sex Sexual Contact; SSC = Same-Sex Sexual Contact; ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale – Lesbian/Gay Subscale; ABES-H = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale – Heterosexual Subscale; LGBIS-B = Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity Scale – Internalized Binegativity; OSPP = Opposite-Sex Partner Preference; SSPP = Same-Sex Partner Preference.

Table 4

*Frequencies of the Sell Assessment for male and female participants.*

Value	Males ( <i>n</i> = 10)	Females ( <i>n</i> = 37)
<i>Opposite-Sex Attractions</i>		
Not at all	0	1 (2.7%)
Slightly	2 (20.0%)	8 (21.6%)
Moderately	3 (30.0%)	6 (16.2%)
Very	5 (50.0%)	22 (59.5%)
<i>Same-Sex Attractions</i>		
Not at all	2 (20.0%)	2 (5.4%)
Slightly	0	3 (8.1%)
Moderately	1 (10.0%)	13 (35.1%)
Very	7 (70.0%)	19 (51.4%)
<i>Opposite-Sex Sexual Contact</i>		
Not at all	4 (40.0%)	6 (16.2%)
Slightly	5 (50.0%)	11 (29.7%)
Moderately	1 (10.0%)	14 (37.8%)
Very	0	6 (16.2%)
<i>Same-Sex Sexual Contact</i>		
Not at all	4 (40.0%)	14 (37.8%)
Slightly	4 (40.0%)	18 (48.6%)
Moderately	2 (20.0%)	3 (8.1%)
Very	0	2 (5.4%)
<i>Homosexual Identification</i>		
Not at all	2 (20.0%)	5 (13.5%)
Slightly	2 (20.0%)	12 (32.4%)
Moderately	6 (60.0%)	20 (54.1%)
Very	0	0
<i>Heterosexual Identification</i>		
Not at all	2 (20.0%)	1 (2.7%)
Slightly	3 (30.0%)	7 (18.9%)
Moderately	4 (40.0%)	21 (56.8%)
Very	1 (10.0%)	8 (21.6%)
<i>Bisexual Identification</i>		
Not at all	1 (10.0%)	0
Slightly	1 (10.0%)	8 (21.6%)
Moderately	3 (30.0%)	9 (24.3%)
Very	5 (50.0%)	20 (54.1%)

Histograms and descriptive statistics were used to assess normality, skewness, and kurtosis. Univariate outliers were examined through boxplots and multivariate outliers were examined through the calculation of Cook's  $D$  (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Results did not indicate any univariate or multivariate outliers among the sample. Linear regression assumptions were addressed, which revealed non-linearity of the desire to have children variable in the same-sex parenting partner preference model for bisexual participants. Instead, this predictor demonstrated a quadratic shape and was therefore transformed into a quadratic term for regression analyses. Assumptions of residuals (i.e. homoscedasticity, independence, normality) were also assessed and revealed no violations. Predictor variables including desire to have children, anti-bisexual experiences, and internalized binegativity were centered for regression analyses in order to reduce potential multicollinearity. The results of correlations between predictor and outcome variables can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

*Intercorrelations of Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Age	--																
2. GND	-.44**	--															
3. EDC	.56***	-.09	--														
4. GRS	-.07	.12	-.23	--													
5. DTHC	-.11	.27	-.11	.34*	--												
6. OSA	.01	.01	.10	-.17	.20	--											
7. SSA	.20	.01	.28	.01	-.13	-.07	--										
8. OSC	-.12	.36*	.06	-.03	.29*	.50***	-.16	--									
9. SSC	.11	.01	-.05	.48***	-.02	-.19	.35*	-.28	--								
10. LGID	.10	.00	.14	.24	.15	.06	.50***	.12	.24	--							
11. HID	.04	.29*	.21	.10	.21	.49***	.14	.27	.18	.01	--						
12. BID	.17	.06	.28	.01	.00	.22	.48**	.03	.09	.32*	.13	--					
13. ABES-LG	.05	-.06	-.03	.07	-.30*	.04	.05	.06	.17	.06	.20	.08	--				
14. ABES-H	.12	-.17	-.11	.11	-.35*	-.13	.11	-.03	.12	.18	.22	.07	.82***	--			
15. LGBIS-B	-.15	-.07	-.28	.55***	.33*	-.41**	-.01	-.19	.13	.32*	.23	.28	-.15	-.03	--		
16. OSPP	-.15	.42**	-.05	.32*	.58***	.39**	-.33*	.47**	-.02	.11	.37*	.05	.09	-.06	.12	--	
17. SSPP	.14	-.02	.11	.04	-.29*	-.21	.27	-.29	.37*	.22	.10	.29	.06	.01	-.07	-.08	--

*Note.* GND = Gender, (1 = *female*; 0 = *male*); EDC = Education; GRS = General Religiosity Scale; DTHC = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire; OSA = Opposite-Sex Attraction; SSA = Same-Sex Attraction; OSC = Opposite-Sex Sexual Contact; SSC = Same-Sex Sexual Contact; BID = Bisexual Identification, Sell Assessment; ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale – Lesbian/Gay Subscale; ABES-H = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale – Heterosexual Subscale; LGBIS-B = Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity Scale – Internalized Binegativity; OSPP = Opposite-Sex Partner Preference; SSPP = Same-Sex Partner Preference.

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

### **Validity Evidence for Parenting Partner Preference Measures**

In the current study, both the opposite-sex (OSPP) and same-sex parenting partner preference (SSPP) items demonstrated evidence of convergent validity. Evidence for convergent validity for the continuous OSPP item was demonstrated through significant correlations with opposite-sex sexual attractions ( $r = 0.39, p = .007$ ) and same-sex sexual attractions ( $r = -0.33, p = .022$ ). The continuous SSPP item did not demonstrate significant relationships with these measures, but both correlations were in the expected direction (OSA  $r = -0.21; p = .167$ ; SSA  $r = 0.27, p = .067$ ). Further validity evidence of these items is demonstrated in the resulting correlation between the two for bisexual participants ( $r = -.08, p = .618$ ). The small magnitude of the value and the absence of a significant correlation between these two items provide evidence for the non-conditional nature of partner preferences in the bisexual sample. That is, a higher preference for one sex does not appear to detract from preference for the other in bisexuality; same-sex and opposite-sex preferences exist on a separate continuum for bisexual individuals. This finding is an important indication of validity evidence for the partner preference measures such that it aligns with theoretical understandings of a bisexual identification.

### **Sample Size and Hypotheses**

It is important to note that the current study relies on an obtained sample size of 47 bisexual individuals. Because of this small  $N$ , it was determined that some of the hypothesized analyses would not be completed as there would be limited power to detect effects in the more complex models that were originally proposed. Specifically, the interaction hypothesis (H3) would require a larger sample size to detect hypothesized interaction effects. Therefore, hypothesis three was not tested in the current study.

Instead, analysis for hypotheses one and two as well as the exploratory hypothesis were simplified are discussed below.

### **Hypothesis 1**

*It was hypothesized that sexual attractions would predict preference for future parenting partner's gender.*

**Hypothesis 1a.** *It was hypothesized that bisexual individuals with more opposite-sex attractions would demonstrate greater preference for opposite-sex partners and individuals with more same-sex attractions would demonstrate less preference for opposite-sex partners.*

**Hypothesis 1b.** *It was hypothesized that bisexual individuals with more same-sex attractions would demonstrate greater preference for same-sex partners and individuals with more opposite-sex attractions would demonstrate less preference for same-sex partners.*

To test these hypotheses, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. For each analysis, predictor variables included opposite-sex sexual attractions and same-sex sexual attractions. Results of each multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

*Multiple Regression Analyses of Sexual Attractions Predicting Opposite-Sex and Same-Sex Partner Preferences*

Regression and Predictors	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $r^2$
<i>Opposite-Sex Partner Preferences</i>				
Opposite-Sex Attractions	0.37	5.19	.008	0.15
Same-Sex Attractions	-0.31	4.93	.025	0.11
<i>Same-Sex Partner Preferences</i>				
Opposite-Sex Attractions	-0.19	5.56	.199	<i>ns</i>
Same-Sex Attractions	0.26	5.27	.080	<i>ns</i>

As expected, sexual attractions predicted preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners. Participants who reported higher levels of opposite-sex attractions identified higher preference for an opposite-sex partner ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $SE = 5.19$ ,  $p = .008$ ), whereas participants who reported higher levels of same-sex attractions identified lower preference for an opposite-sex partner ( $\beta = -0.31$ ,  $SE = 4.93$ ,  $p = .025$ ) (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.21$ ). When examining preferences for a same-sex parenting partner, the data did not support the hypothesized significant relationships. Both opposite-sex attractions ( $\beta = -0.19$ ,  $SE = 5.56$ ,  $p = .199$ ) and same-sex attractions ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $SE = 5.27$ ,  $p = .080$ ) were congruent with the predicted direction, however neither variable emerged as a significant predictor.

**Hypothesis 2**

*It was hypothesized that source of anti-bisexual prejudice would predict preference of future parenting partner's gender.*

**Hypothesis 2a.** *It was hypothesized that bisexual individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay community would demonstrate greater preference for opposite-sex partners and individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual*



*prejudice from the heterosexual community would demonstrate less preference for opposite-sex partners.*

**Hypothesis 2b.** *It was hypothesized that bisexual individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the heterosexual community would demonstrate greater preference for same-sex partners and individuals experiencing more anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay community would demonstrate less preference for same-sex partners.*

These hypotheses were tested with two multiple regression analyses. For each analysis, predictor variables include the centered lesbian/gay and heterosexual population scales of the anti-bisexual experiences scale (ABES-LG; ABES-H). Results of each multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

*Multiple Regression Analyses of ABES Predicting Opposite-Sex and Same-Sex Partner Preferences*

Regression and Predictors	$\beta$	SE	p	partial $r^2$
<i>Opposite-Sex Partner Preferences</i>				
ABES-LG	0.41	0.50	.118	<i>ns</i>
ABES-H	-0.39	0.48	.134	<i>ns</i>
<i>Same-Sex Partner Preferences</i>				
ABES-LG	0.16	0.50	.548	<i>ns</i>
ABES-H	-0.12	0.49	.659	<i>ns</i>

*Note.* ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Lesbian/Gay Subscale; ABES-H = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Heterosexual Subscale

The results did not support the hypotheses. While the effects of the predictors were in the expected direction, anti-bisexual experiences from the lesbian/gay population ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $SE = 0.50$ ,  $p = .118$ ) and anti-bisexual experiences from the heterosexual

population ( $\beta = -0.39$ ,  $SE = 0.48$ ,  $p = .134$ ) did not predict opposite-sex partner preferences. Further, anti-bisexual experiences from the lesbian/gay population ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $SE = 0.50$ ,  $p = .548$ ) and anti-bisexual experiences from the heterosexual population ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $SE = 0.49$ ,  $p = .659$ ) did not predict same-sex partner preferences.

Although anti-bisexual prejudice did not emerge as a significant predictor of partner preferences, further examination of the bivariate correlations suggests evidence for a significant negative relationship between these experiences and bisexual individuals' desire to have children (ABES-LG  $r = -.30$ ,  $p = .038$ ; ABES-H  $r = -.35$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Thus, in order to determine whether anti-bisexual experiences predicted whether or not bisexual participants demonstrated no partner preferences (i.e., a value of 0 on both outcome measures) an exploratory logistic regression analysis was performed. The outcome was a dichotomous representation of bisexual participants who indicated no partner preference (i.e., 1 = a value of 0 on both the opposite-sex and same-sex partner preference measures;  $n = 5$ , 10.6%) or some type of partner preference (i.e., 0 = a value greater than 0 on one, or both of the opposite-sex and same-sex partner preference measures;  $n = 42$ , 89.4%). Predictor variables included both subscales of the anti-bisexual experiences scale. Results of the logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 8; both predictors were non-significant.

Table 8

*Logistic Regression Analyses of ABES Predicting No Partner Preferences*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	df	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
ABES-LG	-0.04	0.05	0.56	1	.455	0.96
ABES-H	0.04	0.05	0.78	1	.378	1.04

*Note.* ABES-LG = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Lesbian/Gay Subscale; ABES-H = Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale - Heterosexual Subscale

**Exploratory Hypothesis**

*It was hypothesized that additional social identities may predict bisexual individuals' preference of future parenting partner's gender, although no directional predictions were made.*

The exploratory hypothesis was examined through two multiple regression analyses. Each model was built by first examining bivariate correlations for the bisexual sample. Exploratory variables that were significantly correlated with the outcome variable (i.e. OSPP or SSPP) were identified and utilized for each respective regression analyses. Predictor variables for the opposite-sex partner preference model included gender, general religiosity, desire to have children, opposite-sex sexual contact, and level of heterosexual identification. Predictor variables for the same-sex partner preference model included the desire to have children and same-sex sexual contact. As previously discussed, the desire to have children variable was found to have a non-linear relationship with the dependent variable of same-sex partner preferences (see Figure 3). Therefore, the SSPP multiple regression analysis also included a quadratic term for the desire to have children measure. Results of the exploratory analyses are presented in Tables 9 and 10. Due to the limited sample size, adjusted  $R^2$  values in these models were examined for overfitting, however the model results did not show evidence of this problem.

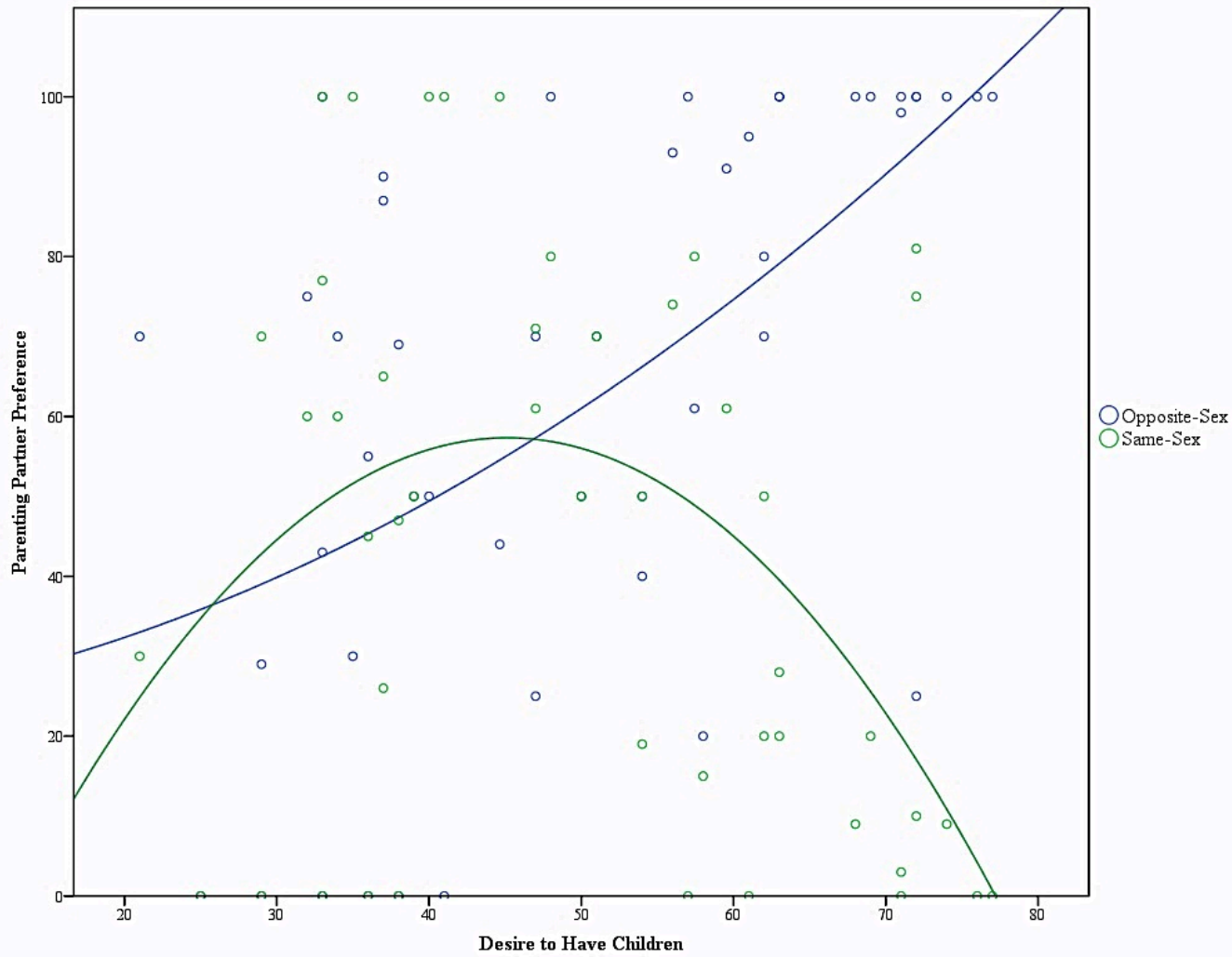


Figure 3. Relationships of the desire to have children with opposite-sex and same-sex parenting partner preferences.

Table 9

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Opposite-Sex Partner Preferences*

Variable	$\beta$	SE	<i>p</i>	partial $r^2$
Gender	0.15	10.22	.229	<i>ns</i>
OSC	0.27	4.39	.034	0.10
HID	0.20	5.10	.094	<i>ns</i>
GRS	0.21	1.30	.083	<i>ns</i>
DTHC	0.35	0.28	.008	0.16

*Note.* adjusted  $R^2 = 0.47$ ; Gender (1 = *female*, 0 = *male*); OSC = Opposite-Sex Sexual Contact; HID = Heterosexual Identification, The Sell Assessment; GRS = General Religiosity Scale; DTHC = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire.

Table 10

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Same-Sex Partner Preferences*

Variable	$\beta$	SE	<i>p</i>	partial $r^2$
SSC	0.30	5.76	.031	0.10
DTHC	1.74	2.20	.090	<i>ns</i>
DTHC <sup>2</sup>	-2.05	0.02	.048	0.09

*Note.* adjusted  $R^2 = 0.24$ ; SSC = Same-Sex Sexual Contact; DTHC = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire; DTHC<sup>2</sup> = Desire to Have Children Questionnaire, Quadratic Term.

Results revealed that higher amounts of sexual contact with the opposite-sex ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $SE = 4.39$ ,  $p = .034$ ) and having higher desires to have children ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $SE = 0.28$ ,  $p = .008$ ) were significant predictors of higher opposite-sex partner preferences. The model accounted for 47% of the variance in opposite-sex partner preferences. In comparison, higher amounts of sexual contact with the same-sex ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $SE = 5.76$ ,  $p = .031$ ) predicted higher same-sex partner preferences. Furthermore, the quadratic term of the desire to have children ( $\beta = -2.05$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $p = .048$ ) emerged as a significant predictor of same-sex partner preferences. The model accounted for 24% of the variance

in same-sex partner preferences. The results of this hypothesis reveal the predictive abilities of additional social identities on partner preferences among bisexual individuals (i.e. sexual contact, parenting desire).

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

This study's goal was to examine the factors related to bisexual individuals' future parenting partner preferences in regards to opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences. It was hypothesized that opposite-sex and same-sex sexual attractions would be predictive of preferences for opposite-sex and same-sex parenting partners, respectively. Further, it was hypothesized that experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice from the lesbian/gay and heterosexual communities would predict opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences, respectively. Lastly, it was hypothesized that sexual attractions and experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice would interact to predict preferences for opposite-sex and same-sex parenting partners. An exploratory hypothesis was also proposed which would examine the predictive nature of different aspects of bisexual participants' social identities (e.g., parenting desire, gender, etc.) on parenting partner preferences.

#### **Sexual Attractions and Parenting Partner Preferences**

The first aim of the current study was to examine the role of bisexual participants' sexual attractions in parenting partner preferences. Guided by a review of the bisexual identity formation literature and an Intersectionality framework, it was hypothesized that sexual attractions would be predictive of bisexual participants' preferences for the gender of their future parenting partner. Specifically, more opposite-sex sexual attractions would predict higher preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners, whereas more same-sex sexual attractions would predict higher preferences for same-sex parenting partners. The current findings partially supported this hypothesis.

Higher levels of opposite-sex attractions were predictive of higher preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners whereas higher levels of same-sex attractions were predictive of lesser preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners. In contrast, neither opposite-sex nor same-sex attractions emerged as significant predictors of same-sex parenting partner preferences. The reason for this null finding may be due to small sample size and low power, particularly since both regression coefficients were operating in the expected directions. Future research may benefit from examining these variables with larger samples in an effort to detect these potential effects. Taken together, these findings highlight the influential role that sexual attractions may play in bisexual individuals' parenting partner preferences.

### **Experiences of Anti-Bisexual Prejudice and Parenting Partner Preferences**

Past research has demonstrated the existence of biphobia among heterosexual and lesbian/gay communities (e.g., Brewster & Moradi; 2010a; Mulick & Wright, 2008) and has alluded to biphobia's potential effects on bisexual individuals' mental health (e.g., Meyer, I. H., 2003), experiences of rejection and isolation (e.g., Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Sarno & Wright, 2013; See & Hunt, 2001), and friendship (e.g., Rust, 1995) or romantic relationships (e.g., Klesse, 2011). From this, it was hypothesized that bisexual individuals' partner preferences would be related to experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice from either the heterosexual or lesbian/gay communities. Specifically, individuals who experienced higher amounts of anti-bisexual prejudice from the heterosexual community were expected to endorse higher preferences for same-sex parenting partners, whereas individuals who experienced higher amounts of anti-bisexual



prejudice from the lesbian/gay community would endorse higher preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners. The current findings did not support this hypothesis.

This null finding may be a function of limitations of the outcome variables. While validity evidence for both the opposite-sex and same-sex parenting partner preference measures was found in the current study, it is possible that a single-item did not capture the potential nuances of anti-bisexual prejudices' effects on partner preferences. For instance, results from bivariate correlation analyses suggest that experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice from both the lesbian/gay and heterosexual populations are negatively related to bisexual individuals' desire to have children. Thus, perhaps prejudicial experiences are influential on parenting preferences in a way that decreases their general desire to parent. To examine this relationship, an exploratory analysis was conducted to characterize the relationship between anti-bisexual prejudice and no partner preferences. The results did not support this exploratory hypothesis. Again, the null finding may be a result of potential measurement limitations. Given the presence of a significant relationship between anti-bisexual prejudicial experiences and parenting desires, future research may benefit from exploring these variables further.

### **The Role of Additional Social Identities in Parenting Partner Preferences**

The final goal of the current study was to examine the potential effects of multiple social identities on parenting partner preferences. Due to the limited amount of research on the topic of parenting by bisexual individuals, it was important to complete exploratory analyses with social identities that had not yet been widely researched with parenting preferences (i.e., gender, parenting desires, etc.). Exploration was further warranted by the theoretical framework of Intersectionality, which suggests that multiple

social identities may interact to influence outcomes (e.g., Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008).

Results of these analyses suggest that social identities, outside of one's bisexuality, may indeed predict parenting partner preferences.

First, opposite-sex sexual contact emerged as a significant predictor of opposite-sex partner preferences. Participants who reported higher levels of sexual contact with the opposite-sex reported higher levels of preference for an opposite-sex partnering partner. Additionally, same-sex sexual contact emerged as a significant predictor of same-sex partner preferences, where higher levels of sexual contact with the same-sex was predictive of higher same-sex partner preferences. Taken together, these findings continue to highlight the influential role of one's bisexual identity on parenting partner preferences. That is, bisexual individuals who experience more opposite-sex or same-sex sexual experiences may be more likely to envision themselves parenting with an opposite-sex or same-sex partner, respectively. To further establish the role of differences in one's bisexual identity on partner preferences, it may be beneficial for future research to explore how experiences of sexual contact might intersect with sexual attractions to influence outcomes.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings is the significant prediction of both opposite-sex and same-sex parenting partner preferences by one's desire to have children. That is, higher levels of parenting desire predicted higher levels of opposite-sex partner preference among bisexual participants. Further, a quadratic relationship emerged between the desire to have children and bisexual participants' preferences for a same-sex parenting partner. Specifically, at low levels of desire to have children, bisexual participants reported low levels of same-sex partner preferences. As the desire to have

children increased, same-sex parenting partner preferences also increased. Upon reaching a moderate level of parenting desire, bisexual individuals' preferences for same-sex and opposite-sex parenting partners converged. However, when parenting desire continued to increase toward its highest values, preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners continued to increase whereas preferences for same-sex parenting partners began to decrease.

Taken together, these findings suggest potential differential effects of parenting desires on opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences. Although the literature on this topic is limited, there are specific first-person accounts as well as empirical studies that are consistent with the demonstrated relationship. Two first-person accounts have alluded to the idea that parenting desire may contribute to bisexual identity development (i.e., Wells, 2011; Blanco, 2009). Indeed, Wells (2011) described her transition from a lesbian identification to a bisexual identification as a result of previous female partner's low desire or unwillingness to raise children. Empirically, past research has demonstrated that bisexual women, as compared to lesbian women, were more likely to consider intercourse with a man over donor insemination or adoption as a means to parenthood (Johnson, Smith, & Guenther, 1987). Lastly, first-person accounts and secondary findings reporting on bisexual parenting experiences suggest that many bisexual individuals become parents in the context of a heterosexual relationship (e.g., Anders, 2005; Brand, 2001; Morris, Balsam, Rothblum, 2002; Power et al., 2012). Perhaps as parenting desire increases, bisexual individuals' preference for opposite-sex partners also increases as a result of the potential means toward parenthood – that is, in the context of heterosexual intercourse, which may be more readily available as opposed to alternatives

(e.g., adoption, surrogacy, donor insemination). This may also explain the quadratic effect seen in same-sex parenting partner preferences. Specifically, perhaps preferences for same-sex partners decrease as the means of obtaining parenthood in this relationship context at times require the election of adoption, surrogacy, or donor insemination.

Given past research on bisexual individuals' diversity in parenting arrangements, and the limited examination of how these individuals become parents, future research may benefit from further examining the association of parenting desires and these partner choices.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations exist within the current study, the first of which is sampling. While the present sample size rivals many studies that exclusively examine bisexual individuals in the context of parenting, it is a significant limitation when using quantitative analyses. Small sample sizes limit power and the ability to detect effects in subset analyses. In the context of the current study, this limitation impacts the implementation of Intersectionality-based analyses such that there may not be adequate power to detect effects, especially among “intersections” or interaction analyses. Additionally, generalizability of the current findings may be limited by the amount of participants and the method by which participants were recruited (i.e., undergraduate student announcements; research participation systems). Larger, randomly selected samples can increase the heterogeneity among the bisexually identified group, while also increasing the power to detect small effects, which can allow for more representative conclusions.

Another limitation is the use of cross-sectional data, which limits researchers' ability to conclude causality. We cannot conclude absolutely that one's opposite-sex or same-sex sexual attractions directly cause preference for opposite-sex parenting partners. Further, we cannot ascertain that higher levels of parenting desire lead bisexual individuals to prefer opposite-sex to same-sex parenting partners. Future studies may benefit from examining longitudinal research in which parenting desires and outcomes are examined over time across representative samples of bisexual individuals.

### **Future Directions**

The current study begins to address an important gap within the literature on bisexual parenting through examining factors related to bisexual individuals' preferences for future parenting partners. Results of the current study, in conjunction with its limitations, reveal important next steps for future research. First, future research would benefit from extending the present study's findings to bisexual individuals in *current* parenting relationships. That is, research should aim to establish the predictive nature of factors such as sexual attractions, desires to have children, etc. in the criterion of bisexual individuals' parenting partner selection. In addition, future research may benefit from including both quantitative and qualitative analyses to address these relationships. Through qualitative examination, researchers can work toward answering the "why" behind these quantitative results. Specifically, research should seek to examine why bisexual individuals' desires to parent might predict their preferences for opposite-sex and same-sex partners. Further, future research can expand upon the roles of Intersectionality in bisexual individuals partner preferences by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as well as through recruiting larger samples.

Despite limitations, the results of the current study begin to address the gaps within the expansive literature on LGBT parenting and take an important first step in examining the factors related to bisexual individuals' parenting partner preferences.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The present study was the first to examine the factors related to bisexual individuals' preferences for parenting partner's gender. Guided by an Intersectionality framework, the effects of bisexual individuals' social identities on preferences for opposite- and same-sex parenting partners were assessed. Overall, the findings reveal the impact of multiple social identities on bisexual individuals' partner preferences. Sexual attractions were related to opposite-sex partner preferences. Sexual contact with the opposite-sex and same-sex were predictive of opposite-sex and same-sex partner preferences, respectively. Lastly, bisexual individuals' desire to parent was predictive of higher preferences for opposite-sex parenting partners and exhibited a quadratic predictive relationship with same-sex parenting partner preferences. Future research may benefit from an examination of these findings with current bisexual parents and with longitudinal methodologies to predict parenting partner outcomes.

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**APPENDIX A****BASIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Where did you find out about this survey?
  - University email announcements
  - SONA
  - From a friend
  - From a family member
  - Other:  

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2. What is your age?  
[Open Ended]
3. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
4. What is your ethnicity?
  - Asian/Pacific Islander
  - Black
  - Hispanic/Latino/Mexican American
  - White
  - Other:  

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5. What is your relationship status?
  - Married/Civil Union
  - Divorced/Separated
  - Living with Partner
  - Widowed
  - In a committed relationship
  - In an open relationship
  - Single
  - Other:  

---
6. If you are in a current relationship, what is the gender of your partner?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Not applicable



7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Less than grade 12
  - High school
  - Some college
  - Associates degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Doctoral degree
8. If currently an undergraduate or graduate student, what is your academic major?  
[Open Ended]
9. Are you a parent?
- Yes
  - No
10. How would you describe yourself politically?
- Extremely Conservative
  - Conservative
  - Leaning Conservative
  - Moderate
  - Leaning Liberal
  - Liberal
  - Extremely Liberal
  - Politically Uninvolved
11. Which of the following *best describes* your sexual identity?
- Heterosexual
  - Lesbian/Gay
  - Bisexual
12. In regards to the previous question about sexual identity, how would you rank your certainty of this identity? Please use the scale 0 (*Not at all certain*) to 100 (*Completely certain*).  
[Sliding Scale 0 – 100]
13. What religion do you most identify with?
- Anglican/Episcopalian
  - Baptist
  - Buddhist
  - Eastern Orthodox
  - Hindu
  - Jewish
  - Lutheran
  - Methodist
  - Mormon/LDS

- Muslim
  - Non-denominational Christian
  - Pentecostal
  - Presbyterian
  - Roman Catholic
  - I do not affiliate with any religion
  - Other:
- 

14. What statement best describes your belief in a higher power?
- I believe in a higher power that is active in this world (e.g., answers prayers; creates miracles)
  - I believe in a higher power that is connected to us spiritually, but is relatively inactive in the physical world
  - I believe in a higher power that is passive (e.g., a creator that is not actively involved in human activities)
  - I am not sure whether or not a higher power exists
  - I don't believe in a higher power
15. Is the religion that you most closely affiliate with considered evangelical?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not Sure
16. Do you believe the sacred scriptures of your religion should be taken as literal truth?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not Sure

**APPENDIX B****GENERAL RELIGIOUSNESS SCALE**

1. How religious do you consider yourself to be?
  - Not at all religious
  - Not too religious
  - Somewhat religious
  - Very religious
  
2. How often do you attend religious services?
  - Never
  - Less than once a year
  - Once or twice a year
  - Several times a year
  - Once a month
  - 2-3 times a month
  - About weekly
  - Weekly
  - Several times a week
  
3. How often do you read the Bible, Koran, Torah or other sacred book?
  - Never
  - Less than once a year
  - Once or twice a year
  - Several times a year
  - Once a month
  - 2-3 times a month
  - About weekly
  - Weekly
  - Several times a week
  
4. About how often do you pray or meditate outside of religious services?
  - Never
  - Only on certain occasions
  - Once a week or less
  - A few times a week
  - Once a day
  - Several times a day

**APPENDIX C****THE SELL ASSESSMENT OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

I. Sexual Attractions- The following six questions are asked to assess how frequently and intensely you are sexually attracted to men and women. Consider times you had sexual fantasies, daydreams, or dreams about a man or woman, or have been sexually aroused by a man or woman.

1. During the past year, how many different men were you sexually attracted to (choose one answer):

- a. None.
- b. 1.
- c. 2.
- d. 3-5.
- e. 6-10.
- f. 11-49.
- g. 50-99
- h. 100 or more.

2. During the past year, on average, how often were you sexually attracted to a man (choose one answer):

- a. Never.
- b. Less than 1 time per month.
- c. 1-3 times per month.
- d. 1 time per week
- e. 2-3 times per week.
- f. 4-6 times per week.
- g. Daily.

3. During the past year, the most I was sexually attracted to a man was (choose one answer):

- a. Not at all sexually attracted.
- b. Slightly sexually attracted.
- c. Mildly sexually attracted.
- d. Moderately sexually attracted.
- e. Significantly sexually attracted.
- f. Very sexually attracted.
- g. Extremely sexually attracted.

4. During the past year, how many different women were you sexually attracted to (choose one answer):

- a. None.
- b. 1.

- c. 2.
- d. 3-5.
- e. 6-10.
- f. 11-49.
- g. 50-99.
- h. 100 or more.

5. During the past year, on average, how often were you sexually attracted to a woman (choose one answer):

- a. Never.
- b. Less than 1 time per month.
- c. 1-3 times per month.
- d. 1 time per week
- e. 2-3 times per week.
- f. 4-6 times per week.
- g. Daily.

6. During the past year, the most I was sexually attracted to a woman was (choose one answer):

- a. Not at all sexually attracted.
- b. Slightly sexually attracted.
- c. Mildly sexually attracted.
- d. Moderately sexually attracted.
- e. Significantly sexually attracted.
- f. Very sexually attracted.
- g. Extremely sexually attracted.

II. Sexual Contact – The following four questions are asked to assess your sexual contacts. Consider times when you had contact between your body and another man or woman's body for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.

7. During the past year, how many different men did you have sexual contact with (choose one answer):

- a. None.
- b. 1.
- c. 2.
- d. 3-5.
- e. 6-10.
- f. 11-49.
- g. 50-99.
- h. 100 or more.

8. During the past year, on average, how often did you have sexual contact with a man (choose one answer):

- a. Never.
- b. Less than 1 time per month.

- c. 1-3 times per month
- d. 1 time per week.
- e. 2-3 times per week.
- f. 4-6 times per week.
- g. Daily.

9. During the past year, how many different women did you have sexual contact with (choose one answer):

- a. None.
- b. 1.
- c. 2.
- d. 3-5.
- e. 6-10.
- f. 11-49.
- g. 50-99.
- h. 100 or more.

10. During the past year, on average, how often did you have sexual contact with a woman (choose one answer):

- a. Never.
- b. Less than 1 time per month.
- c. 1-3 times per month
- d. 1 time per week.
- e. 2-3 times per week.
- f. 4-6 times per week.
- g. Daily.

III. Sexual Orientation Identity- The following three questions are asked to assess your sexual orientation identity.

11. I consider myself (choose one answer):

- a. Not at all homosexual.
- b. Slightly homosexual.
- c. Mildly homosexual.
- d. Moderately homosexual.
- e. Significantly homosexual.
- f. Very homosexual.
- g. Extremely homosexual.

12. I consider myself (choose one answer):

- a. Not at all heterosexual.
- b. Slightly heterosexual.
- c. Mildly heterosexual.
- d. Moderately heterosexual.
- e. Significantly heterosexual.
- f. Very heterosexual.
- g. Extremely heterosexual.

13. I consider myself (choose one answer):

- a. Not at all bisexual.
- b. Slightly bisexual.
- c. Mildly bisexual.
- d. Moderately bisexual.
- e. Significantly bisexual.
- f. Very bisexual.
- g. Extremely bisexual.

## APPENDIX D

### THE ANTI-BISEXUAL PREJUDICE SCALE

For the following items please indicate on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*almost all of the time*) the frequency in which the experience has occurred for you from the lesbian/gay population.

1. People have acted as if my bisexuality is only a sexual curiosity, not a stable sexual orientation
2. When my relationships haven't fit people's opinions about whether I am really heterosexual or lesbian/gay, they have discounted my relationships as "experimentation"
3. People have not taken my sexual orientation seriously because I am bisexual
4. Others have pressured me to fit into a binary system of sexual orientation (i.e., either gay or straight)
5. People have acted as if my sexual orientation is just a transition to a gay/lesbian orientation
6. People have denied that I am really bisexual when I tell them about my sexual orientation
7. When I have disclosed my sexual orientation to others, they have continued to assume that I am really heterosexual or gay/lesbian
8. People have addressed my bisexuality as if it means that I am simply confused about my sexual orientation
9. People have stereotyped me as having many sexual partners without emotional commitments
10. People have assumed that I will cheat in a relationship because I am bisexual
11. People have treated me as if I am likely to have an STD/HIV because I identify as bisexual
12. People have treated me as if I am obsessed with sex because I am bisexual
13. Others have treated me negatively because I am bisexual
14. Others have acted uncomfortable around me because of my bisexuality
15. I have been excluded from social networks because I am bisexual
16. I have been alienated because I am bisexual
17. People have not wanted to be my friend because I identify as bisexual

For the following items please indicate on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*almost all of the time*) the frequency in which the experience has occurred for you from the heterosexual population.

1. People have acted as if my bisexuality is only a sexual curiosity, not a stable sexual orientation
2. When my relationships haven't fit people's opinions about whether I am really heterosexual or lesbian/gay, they have discounted my relationships as "experimentation"
3. People have not taken my sexual orientation seriously because I am bisexual



4. Others have pressured me to fit into a binary system of sexual orientation (i.e., either gay or straight)
5. People have acted as if my sexual orientation is just a transition to a gay/lesbian orientation
6. People have denied that I am really bisexual when I tell them about my sexual orientation
7. When I have disclosed my sexual orientation to others, they have continued to assume that I am really heterosexual or gay/lesbian
8. People have addressed my bisexuality as if it means that I am simply confused about my sexual orientation
9. People have stereotyped me as having many sexual partners without emotional commitments
10. People have assumed that I will cheat in a relationship because I am bisexual
11. People have treated me as if I am likely to have an STD/HIV because I identify as bisexual
12. People have treated me as if I am obsessed with sex because I am bisexual
13. Others have treated me negatively because I am bisexual
14. Others have acted uncomfortable around me because of my bisexuality
15. I have been excluded from social networks because I am bisexual
16. I have been alienated because I am bisexual
17. People have not wanted to be my friend because I identify as bisexual

**APPENDIX E****ADAPTED FORM OF INTERNALIZED HOMONEGATIVITY SUBSCALE OF  
THE LGBIS**

For the following items please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement on a scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*).

1. I would rather be straight if I could
2. I am glad to be a bisexual person
3. Bisexual lifestyles are not as fulfilling as heterosexual lifestyles
4. I'm proud to be a part of the LGB community
5. I wish I were heterosexual

## APPENDIX F

### THE DESIRE TO HAVE CHILDREN QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the follow items using the seven-point scale below.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>I Strongly Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>			<b>I Strongly Agree</b>	

1. *At a point in my life when I am ready to have children, I know I would be very upset and disappointed if my partner/spouse and I are unable to have children*
2. I have a strong desire to have children
3. I would like to have only one child
4. I am not sure I want to have children
5. I could be quite happy without having children\*
6. *If at a point in my life when I am ready to have children, and my partner/spouse and I could not have children, I definitely will try to adopt*
7. I can never marry someone who is strongly against having children
8. Without children, I would feel unfulfilled
9. I want a big family
10. To me, family life is very important
11. Sometimes I think that I want children, sometimes I think that I do not
12. I really have not thought much about whether I want to have children, and I do not have a strong attitude either way.

*\*Not used in current analysis*

**APPENDIX G****FUTURE PARENTING PARTNER PREFERENCE**

On a scale of 0 (*no-preference*) to 100 (*strong preference*), please indicate your degree of preference for an opposite-sex future parenting partner.

No Preference ----- Strong Preference  
(0) (100)

On a scale of 0 (*no-preference*) to 100 (*strong preference*), please indicate your degree of preference for a same-sex future parenting partner.

No Preference ----- Strong Preference  
(0) (100)

## VITA

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### Background

Laurin B. Roberts is a fourth year graduate student in the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology. She is pursuing her Master's degree in Experimental Psychology at Old Dominion University and, in the fall of 2015, her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. She is currently a research assistant in the Early Family Laboratory of Dr. James Paulson. Laurin's research interests include the study of parenting and family dynamics, with an emphasis in the LGBT community.

### Selected Presentations

- Roberts, L. B., & Paulson, J. F.** (2015, May). *Bisexuals' preferences for future parenting partners*. Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention (APS), New York, NY.
- Moore, N. A., **Roberts, L. B.**, Maduro, R. S., Ellis, K. T., & Paulson, J. F. (2015, May). *Changes in attitudes toward same-sex parenting: The effects of religiosity and political affiliation*. Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention (APS), New York, NY.
- Roberts, L. B., & Paulson, J. F.** (2015, April). *Biphobia in the heterosexual community: Examining the factors related to negative attitudes toward bisexuality and bisexual individuals*. Poster presented at the Virginia Psychological Association's Annual Spring Convention (VPA), Virginia Beach, VA.
- Roberts, L. B.,** Maduro, R. S., Stoyneva, I., & Paulson, J. F. (2014, August). *Political conservatism as a mediator of religiosity and negative attitudes toward same-sex parenting*. Poster presented at the American Psychological Association's Annual Convention (APA), Washington, D.C.