'We told them that we are both really involved parents': sexual minority and heterosexual adoptive parents' engagement in school communities

Abbie E. Goldberg, Kaitlin A. Black, Melissa H. Manley & Reihonna Frost

Published online: 29 Mar 2017.

Submit your article to this journal ⌷

View related articles ⌷

View Crossmark data ⌷

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

'We told them that we are both really involved parents': sexual minority and heterosexual adoptive parents' engagement in school communities

Abbie E. Goldberg, Kaitlin A. Black, Melissa H. Manley and Reihonna Frost

Department of Psychology, Clark University, Worcester, MA, USA

ABSTRACT

The current qualitative study examines how parents' sexual orientation, gender, and other social locations intersect to shape their experiences with and connection to their children's school communities. We applied thematic analysis to interview data from 90 adoptive parents in 45 couples (15 lesbian, 15 gay, 15 heterosexual) in the USA, whose children were mostly in preschool and kindergarten. Parents reported being involved in a variety of ways (e.g. school committees, donations). Gay male couples and heterosexual couples more often described differential involvement, whereby one partner was more involved at school than the other. Benefits of involvement included reduced likelihood of marginalisation (among lesbian/gay participants in particular) and influencing the school to create change. Parents described mixed experiences with other parents; feelings of disconnection sometimes resulted from difficult dynamics related to sexual orientation, gender, and their intersection.

Introduction

The current qualitative study draws from intersectional and critical race frameworks to examine school engagement among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive parents in the USA. Parents' comfort with and integration into their children's school communities have important implications for children's school performance and family well-being. Research in education (Jeynes 2005; Hornby and Lafaele 2011) and the social sciences (Goldberg and Smith 2014) have focused on the nature and predictors of parent engagement in school communities. This work has documented linkages between parents' school engagement during the early school years and positive outcomes for families, including strong parent–teacher relationships (Hornby and Lafaele 2011) and better child academic outcomes (Jeynes 2005). In turn, educational and family scholarship emphasise the importance of optimising family-school partnerships in order to enhance child and family well-being (Barton et al. 2004).

Studies of parents' school engagement have tended to focus more on mothers than fathers, typically assessing mothers' engagement only or disproportionately sampling mothers (Deslandes and Bertrand 2005). This pattern reflects societal ideologies regarding

the greater primacy of mothers in children's lives, as well as structural realities: mothers tend to work fewer paid hours than fathers, and thus tend to be more involved in schooling (Crozier and Reay 2005). Studies that assess both mothers and fathers show that mothers are more likely to volunteer and attend parent–teacher association (PTA) meetings (Vincent and Martin 2005) and are more aware of what is happening at school (Warner 2010). Lareau (2000) found that even fathers who felt 'intimately involved' in children's school lives lacked details and spoke in generalities about their schools. In her interviews with fathers, Lareau (2000) observed that 'fathers often started with the term "we", as in "we signed him up", but … when probed for more information, reduced their own role' (415).

Thus, gendered analyses may reveal differences in the nature and nuances of mothers' and fathers' school engagement – which is important, insomuch as research has tended to stress the importance of 'parent involvement', thus ignoring the reality that it is largely mothers who assume responsibility for activities related to children (Hornby and Lafaele 2011) and rendering gender-based inequalities in parent involvement invisible (Reay 2005). In addition to undertheorising the role of parent gender, research on school engagement has largely focused on heterosexual couples. The few studies of school engagement in lesbian/gay (LG) parents focus on rates and predictors of school involvement (Kosciw and Diaz 2008; Goldberg and Smith 2014). LG parents' motivations and experiences related to school engagement – including interactions with other (heterosexual) parents in the school community – are not well understood. Further, the ways in which parent sexual orientation may interact with parent gender to shape patterns of engagement within and across couples are underexplored.

The current study, which uses data from a larger longitudinal project (Goldberg 2014; Goldberg and Smith 2014) that examines the parenthood and schooling experiences of adoptive parents in the USA, seeks to gain insight into how parents' gender and sexual orientation intersect to shape experiences with and connection to school communities, using a sample of LG and heterosexual parents with adopted children, most of whom were in preschool or kindergarten. This study focuses on two aspects of school engagement, namely school-based involvement (e.g. attending PTA meetings; volunteering) and connections with other parents.

Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in an integrative theoretical lens that incorporates intersectional and critical race frameworks. From an intersectionality perspective (Crenshaw 1991; Cole 2009), parents inevitably experience their gender differently depending upon their sexual orientation, social class positioning, racial/ethnic background, and other social locations. For example, research on LG couples' housework divisions reveals how they may be influenced by heteronormative meaning systems surrounding domestic labour but also how housework is (re)defined in the LG couple context (Goldberg 2013). Studying how LG couples describe their relationships with schools requires an understanding that in the same-sex context, there is no obvious answer as to who 'should' be more involved, at least based on gender. How LG couples explain their school engagement, then, may reveal insights into how gender and relational context interact (e.g. gay men may exhibit different ways of accounting for (un)involvement than heterosexual men). Beyond parents'

sexual orientation and gender, parents' social class positioning and other social locations may further intersect to shape how they relate to school communities.

We also borrow concepts from critical race theory (Crenshaw 1991; Gillborn et al. 2012) in considering ecologies of school involvement. Involvement may be shaped by racial/cultural assumptions embedded in school settings, such that parents from ethnic minority backgrounds may encounter power differences, conflicts, and invisibility, in relation to schools (Barton et al. 2004). Further, racial/ethnic minority parents may experience anxiety about how their children will be treated in school (Crozier 2005). Such anxiety, if present in the context of a certain level of resources, may motivate parents to 'take or try to take pre-emptive action' to prevent negative treatment, such as seeking out schools they believe will 'eschew racist practices' and advocating for their children (Crozier 2005, 44). While the experiences of racial minority parents and sexual minority parents are certainly not parallel, this framework is useful in contextualising the latter group's involvement, in that LG parents may experience similar tensions in heteronormative school settings which may mark them as 'other' or render them invisible and thus may use similar strategies to protect their children from marginalisation. Like families of colour, LG parent families are vulnerable to both invisibility and scrutiny, where 'being ignored and being humiliated [represent] different sides to the same coin' (Crozier 2005, 52).

Child, family, and school factors in relation to parents' school-based involvement

Parental involvement may be shaped by parents' beliefs around involvement (e.g. whether they think it is their responsibility to be involved; whether they feel confident to do so; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1995). But, parents must not only believe that they are responsible for and capable of involvement, but that by being present at school, having a voice in school policy, and so on, they are benefiting their child academically and/or socially (McGrath and Kuriloff 1999).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) argue that once they decide to become involved, other parent factors (e.g. work hours and schedule) become salient in determining the level of involvement (e.g. whether parents volunteer occasionally or continuously) and the range of involvement (e.g. whether parents attend school events or seek leadership positions on school committees; McGrath and Kuriloff 1999; Barton et al. 2004). Perceived characteristics of schools and teachers also affect involvement, such that parent involvement is enhanced when they view schools and teachers as welcoming of, and providing clear opportunities for, involvement (Deslandes and Bertrand 2005; Hornby 2011).

As a key aspect of the broader school culture, the parent community may also shape parents' school engagement. Parent members of marginalised groups (e.g. because of race, class, or sexuality) are vulnerable to marginalisation by dominant parent members of the school community, which can deter involvement (McGrath and Kuriloff 1999). McGrath and Kuriloff (1999) found that the highly involved parents in one school tended to be White, upper-middle-class mothers, who often behaved in ways that excluded other mothers, particularly African Americans, thus upholding their stance as dominant, influential school members. Similarly, studies of working-class mothers (Reay 1999; Nixon 2011) suggest that they may lack confidence and feel out of place among their more privileged and school-savvy middle-class counterparts. Notably, forming

alliances with other parents can be a powerful form of social capital that facilitates school engagement, particularly among members of marginalised groups: Durand (2011) found that stronger communication with other parents facilitated Latino parents' school involvement, creating a possible avenue through which they might develop a collective voice within the school. Although our sample of LG parents is, like working-class and racial minority parents, navigating schools as 'minority' parents, they also occupy privileged class and racial statuses (i.e. most are middle-class and white); thus, although their experiences may in some ways parallel those of parents who occupy other minority statuses, differences are also expected given the sample's increased social capital.

Sexual minority parents: involvement in schools and relationships with other parents

Central to considering LG parents' involvement in schools is the fact that their families are vulnerable to marginalisation related to their family structure within the school setting, although quite possibly in ways that differ in nature and meaning from the marginalisation experiences of racial minority and working-class parents (e.g. McGrath and Kuriloff 1999). Such marginalisation may be explicit, whereby teachers act in a hostile manner towards LG parent families (Goldberg 2014). It may also be implicit, through exclusionary language and content in school curricula (Goldberg 2014), which appears to be more common than explicit exclusion (Kosciw and Diaz 2008).

Of interest is whether their vulnerability to exclusion renders LG parents more or less involved in schools. Several quantitative studies have examined patterns (Kosciw and Diaz 2008) and predictors (Goldberg and Smith 2014) of parent involvement among sexual minorities. The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) survey found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents were more likely than a national sample of kindergarten through 12th grade parents to have volunteered and attended events at school, suggesting that as a group, LGBT parents tend to be engaged in children's schooling (Kosciw and Diaz 2008). Notably, some scholars (Goldberg 2014) have suggested that LGBT parents' school involvement may be driven by a desire to ensure that their children are not discriminated against: having a voice in and being visible at school may inhibit marginalisation. Indeed, Goldberg and Smith's (2014) study of school involvement among LG and heterosexual parents of young adopted children found that heterosexual parents who perceived high levels of adoption stigma at school were less involved than those who perceived low levels, whereas high levels of perceived adoption stigma were related to more school involvement for LG parents. Thus, concerns about mistreatment may motivate LG parents to engage in protective self-advocacy via school involvement (McGrath and Kuriloff 1999).

No previous work has explored the intersection between parent sexual orientation and gender in relation to experiences of involvement (e.g. what parents do, how they feel about it, why they do it), or relationships with other parents. Research on LG parents' relationships with other parents is particularly scarce. The GLSEN survey found that 26% of LGBT parents reported mistreatment by other parents at school, and 15% reported hearing other parents make negative comments about LGBT parents (Kosciw and Diaz 2008). In this study, we are particularly concerned with LG parents' interactions with other parents because (a) LG parents are poorly represented in most school communities

(Goldberg 2014) and thus vulnerable to marginalisation (Durand 2011) and (b) parents' relationship to other parents are an understudied aspect of the school community that may affect engagement (Goldberg and Smith 2014).

Methodology

Description of the sample

Data come from 90 parents in 45 couples (15 lesbian, 15 gay male, 15 heterosexual parent families) who participated in individual, in-depth interviews about their experiences with their children's schools. We present descriptions of the sample, by group, in Table 1, but do not test for statistical differences across groups due to the small group sizes. Parents were mostly white, while children were more often of colour (including biracial/multiracial). The average age of children was 5.78 (SD = 1.51). Forty-four percent of children were in pre-school, 31% were in kindergarten, 9% were in 1st grade, and 16% were in 2nd–5th grade. Forty-four percent attended private schools and 56% attended public schools. Families lived in various regions across the USA, including the Northeast (28.9%), South (22.2%), Midwest (15.6%), and West (31.1%); one family lived in Ontario, Canada (2.2%).

According to Gates et al. (2007), who provide national data from the 2000 U.S. Census on same-sex couples, the average family income for adoptive female same-sex, male same-sex, and heterosexual married couples was $102,331, $102,508, and $81,900, respectively. In our sample, female couples reported a similar average income of $95,867; male couples and heterosexual couples were more affluent ($197,600 and $116,367). Adoptive parents in female, male, and heterosexual married couples at the national level were 77% white, 61% white, and 76% white, respectively. Our sample included more white parents in female (96%) and heterosexual couples (87%), but similar numbers for male couples (63%). National data showed that at least a college degree was reported by 59%, 35%, and 32% of parents in female, male, and heterosexual married couples, respectively. Our sample was more educated: 80%, 87%, and 83% of parents in female, male, and heterosexual couples had at least a college degree.

Participants were drawn from a larger longitudinal study focused on adoptive families. Couples who participated in the larger longitudinal study were contacted 5 years post-adoption. Both partners in each couple completed questionnaires; a subsample was invited to be interviewed about experiences with their children's schools (see Goldberg and Smith 2014 for details about the larger sample). Data are drawn from the 5-year post-adoption interviews.

Process of data analysis

Participants took part in a 1–1.5 hour telephone interview. Interviews were transcribed and anonymised; pseudonyms were used. The interview questions used in our analysis included: (a) Tell me about the school(s) your child has attended; (b) Tell me about your experiences with your child's teachers; (c) Are you involved at the school? How? (d) Tell me about your experiences with other parents.

Interview data were examined using thematic analysis (Bogdan and Biklen 2007). Our analysis was informed by the relevant literatures, as well as intersectional and critical race frameworks. To develop themes, we used a process of analytic triangulation, whereby

Table 1. Demographics of the sample.

	Total sample M (SD) or % of n = 90	Lesbian M (SD) or % of n = 30	Gay M (SD) or % of n = 30	Heterosexual M (SD) or % of n = 30
Urbanicity				
Rural/suburban	51%	27%	53%	73%
Urban	49%	73%	47%	27%
Region				
Northeast	29%	27%	20%	40%
South	22%	27%	33%	7%
Midwest	16%	13%	13%	20%
West	31%	33%	33%	27%
Canada	2%	0%	0%	7%
Family income	$136,611.11 ($79,914.62)	$95,866.67 ($28,639.01)	$197,600.00 ($98,695.49)	$116,366.67 ($56,212.18)
Education*	4.35 (1.08)	4.20 (1.00)	4.38 (1.18)	4.48 (1.09)
Work status				
FT-FT	53%	47%	73%	40%
FT-PT	24%	40%	13%	20%
FT-SAH	23%	13%	14%	40%
Parent race (% white)	80%	96%	63%	87%
Child age	5.78 (1.51)	5.52 (1.25)	5.92 (1.78)	5.91 (1.44)
Child gender				
Boy	56%	40%	60%	67%
Girl	44%	53%	40%	33%
Child race				
% white/not of colour	31%	27%	40%	27%
% of colour including Multiracial/biracial	69%	73%	60%	73%
Child grade				
Preschool	44%	53%	53%	33%
Kindergarten	31%	33%	21%	40%
1st grade	9%	7%	13%	7%
2nd–5th grade	16%	7%	13%	20%
Type of school				
Public	56%	60%	60%	47%
Private	44%	40%	40%	53%
Type of adoption				
Private domestic	64%	60%	73%	60%
Public domestic	18%	27%	13%	13%
International	18%	13%	13%	27%

Note: Education was measured on a scale of 1–6 (1 = *less than high school education*, 2 = *high school diploma*, 3 = *associate's degree/some college*, 4 = *bachelor's degree*, 5 = *master's degree*, and 6 = *PhD/MD/JD*).

each of the four authors coded the data. This ensures that multiple interpretations are considered, enhancing the credibility of the analysis (Patton 2002). The coders, who constitute a diverse group (e.g. regarding sexual orientation and parenting status), discussed our social positioning and the possible influence of our biases during coding. We engaged in an iterative process of coding that involved a continual back and forth between the data and our analysis. Once we had formed clearly articulated codes, we applied focused coding, using the most significant codes to sort the data. These codes, which are more conceptual and selective, became the basis for the 'themes' developed in our analysis.

Findings

First, we present data on parents' descriptions of how they were involved in schools. Then, we discuss couple-level patterns of involvement, and parents' explanations for such patterns. We then address parents' perceptions of the rewards of involvement. Finally, we explore parents' perceptions of their relationships with other parents. We use the following acronyms: LM = lesbian mother, GF = gay father, HM = heterosexual mother, HF = heterosexual father; LC = lesbian couple, GC = gay couple, and HC = heterosexual couple.

School involvement: What do parents do?

Parents described a variety of ways in which they were involved in their children's schools. Most notable was the fact that LG parents were more likely to describe *participating in school committees/organisations*, with 6 lesbian mothers (1 LC, 4 LM), 8 gay fathers (2 GC, 4 GF) and one heterosexual mother asserting that they served in a *leadership role* on at least one committee (e.g. PTA; Fall Fair committee). Another 8 parents (4 LM, 3 GF, 1 HM) described having *attended meetings* of, but not having a formal leadership role in, committees (e.g. fundraising, PTA). Thus, the LG parents appeared to be active school citizens, enacting roles within the school that would hopefully enhance their reputation and voice (Vincent and Martin 2005). Two of the gay men in leadership positions were explicitly invited to participate 'to add to the diversity of the school', highlighting how the novelty of both their gender and sexual orientation may have contributed to their perceived 'value' on school committees, bringing to mind Crenshaw's (1991) warning that 'tokenistic, objectifying, voyeuristic inclusion is at least as disempowering as complete exclusion' (1261). Notably, both men's reactions to being singled out for inclusion were neutral ('It's ok; it's fine'), suggesting that at least on an explicit level, they did not experience such invitations as tokenism.

Some parents (2 LC, 3 LM; 1 GC, 9 GF; 6 HM) described *volunteering in the classroom/ school on a regular or ongoing basis* (e.g. reading to the class once a week; acting as the classroom parent). No heterosexual fathers were engaged in this way. Several LG parents noted that involvement opportunities were not encouraged explicitly by teachers, but came about because of their own initiative. Todd, who worked full time and who regularly read books to his son's class, exclaimed,

> It's so much fun! … To my knowledge, no other parent has asked to come in and read, but the teachers love it! The teacher, if she knows what book I'm going to read, will do research and come up with an exercise to do that correlates with it.

Thus, although rare, LG parent-initiated involvement had the potential to be personally rewarding and well received, and to foster parent–teacher collaboration.

In contrast, 'one time' *volunteer events* (e.g. dressing up as Santa Claus; planting seeds) were endorsed by parents of all couple types who worked full time (1 LC, 3 LM; 3 GF; 1 HC, 2 HM; 5 HF), but most often by heterosexual fathers, particularly those who described their jobs as 'extremely time consuming'. Some parents, especially lesbian mothers (3 LC, 2 LM; 5 GF; 2 HM), all of whom worked at least part time, noted that while they did very little on-site volunteering, they regularly *donated classroom materials* (e.g. books, snacks), which enabled them to contribute within the time constraints of their job. LG parents specifically described having donated books that featured diverse families, to ensure that 'there's not just heterosexual families' represented in classroom materials. One gay father and one lesbian mother had donated books they felt would not be too 'polarising', illustrating how some LG parents feel that they must 'toe the line' between self-advocacy and 'disruptive' activism, paralleling the tensions that racial minority parents encounter in advocating for children in school (Crozier 2005). In this way, parents enacted their involvement in ways that were shaped not only by their work status and gender, but also their sexual orientation – and their awareness of their family's potentially stigmatised status in the school setting (Goldberg 2014).

Relational patterns of school involvement

Parents typically described their school involvement in relation to their partners – a finding that is notable given that the interview did not explicitly prompt for relational comparisons. We describe the different patterns of involvement that emerged, attending to how parents explained differences in involvement between parents.

The tendency for one partner to be described as more involved than the other was the most pronounced in gay (*n* = 9) and heterosexual (*n* = 8) couples; lesbian couples were slightly less likely to describe a pattern of differential involvement (*n* = 5). As Cole (GF) stated, 'To be honest, [partner] has been dealing a lot with the volunteering, the teacher-parent relationship. I work far away [and come] back at 5:30 every night, so … I try to be involved when I can.'

Echoing Lareau's (2000) findings, three heterosexual men in the 'differentially involved' group (and one of their wives) used 'we' language to describe their involvement, which at first obscured potential differences in involvement; yet later, or elsewhere, men provided details suggesting that their wives were more involved. Raymond noted,

> Probably not as much as we'd like, but we participate – in the school events … We do … parent tea, [where] you join the classroom for about the first half hour; all the parents are there as guests and then we do circle with them.

Later, Raymond revealed that he rarely dropped his daughter off, and thus rarely participated in parent tea; whereas his wife, who did not work, regularly attended. Eric said, 'As we go year to year, we get more involved', but then gave examples that primarily centred on his wife's involvement ('She went and spent a couple of hours there last week because one of the teachers couldn't be there'), and highlighted the constraints of his 45–50 hour per week job, noting, 'Yeah, I'm a little bad.' As in Lareau (2000), fathers' use of 'we' language served to obscure their own lesser involvement, which became apparent

upon further probing. Notably, our inclusion of LG and heterosexual couples established that this phenomenon was not simply a gendered phenomenon but arose as a result of relational context (i.e. gay men did not display this pattern).

In explaining differences in involvement between partners, *work schedule, flexibility, and hours* were emphasised by members of 8 gay couples (4 GC, 4 GM), 6 heterosexual couples (4 HC, 2 HM), and 7 lesbian couples (1 LC, 5 LM): one partner worked fewer hours or had a more flexible schedule, allowing them to more frequently volunteer, attend committee meetings, and so on. Dennis (HF), who worked full time and whose wife, Erin, did not work, said, '[My volunteering] is limited because I work during the day. Erin does pretty much all the dropping off and picking up and she volunteers at school.' Lengthy commutes compounded the struggles that parents with long work hours or inflexible schedules encountered with respect to involvement; whereas, short commutes and telecommuting enabled even full time employed parents to be involved. Gloria (HM) shared: 'It's easy for me, because I work a lot of days from home. I'm always like, "I should go in and pop by"'. For Gloria, and other parents like her, a flexible schedule gave her the freedom to be involved in her child's education, highlighting an advantage that middle-class parents with professional jobs often possess (Reay 1999; Nixon 2011).

Beyond work-related reasons for differing involvement, members of two couples (1 GC, 1 HC) attributed differences in involvement to differences in *personality*, whereby one partner was described as 'having the temperament' for volunteering and communicating with teachers. And, one heterosexual father, Craig, invoked *gender-based ideologies* in explaining his lesser involvement: 'I think someone goes in and reads a story once a week or something, like a mother or someone. So it's like – it's not like I can just leave work for an hour and come back.' Greg's comment reveals how gender ideologies (i.e. women bear greater responsibility for schooling; Reay 2005) may implicitly shape parents' explanations for (un)involvement, even when structural factors (e.g. work hours) are explicitly identified as the reason for differing involvement.

When describing their lesser involvement, it is notable that several lesbian mothers (*n* = 4) expressed *disappointment and frustration* with the constraints that seemingly prevented them from being more involved, and hoped to be more involved in the future. Brianna asserted that she had volunteered, but less than she would like: 'This is mostly because I'm working 40 hours a week. I do make it to family nights but I desperately wish that I could be more present.' Shawna voiced frustration that work demands – and fear of job loss – had limited her involvement: 'I didn't count on a recession, and some of our employees have been fired … so I haven't had time to volunteer as much as I thought I would.' Perhaps these lesbian mothers had particularly high expectations for their involvement (due to their intersecting statuses as women, sexual minorities, and middle class); in turn, faced with demanding and non-negotiable job responsibilities, they experienced a unique form of maternal guilt (Christopher 2012).

Contrastingly, some men (6 HF, 3 GF) described *relative indifference, or resignation*, regarding their lesser involvement, seeming to accept it as the inevitable function of the fact that work was demanding and prioritised. Stewart (HF) said, 'I haven't looked for any opportunities to volunteer at school. It's a far distance, my work takes up a lot of time … It's fine.' When asked if he would like to be more involved, Greg (HF) responded: 'Sure. It's just – my work is very comfortable, where I am, and they treat me very well.' Greg hints at a preference for maintaining the status quo – perhaps because he simply enjoys

work, or because of a perception that becoming more involved could represent a threat to the positive treatment that he receives at work. Unspoken but relevant are the gendered expectations that likely shape men's lesser involvement: straight or gay, men may feel that the potential negative consequences of cutting back at work outweigh any potential benefits of additional involvement (Goldberg 2013).

In some couples, more so lesbian (*n* = 5) and gay (*n* = 5) than heterosexual (*n* = 2), parents described a pattern of shared involvement, where they were identified as very involved by both partners. They often used 'we' to describe their mutual, collective high level of involvement – but then gave specific examples of such involvement as opposed to hiding their own lesser involvement behind their partner's (Lareau 2000), highlighting the intersection of gender and relational context in shaping discourse surrounding involvement (Goldberg 2013). Miriam (LM), shared, 'We [were] invited to help out with a fundraiser, which we will do … We want to get involved and understand what's going on.' Later, she shared examples of her own and her partner's volunteer efforts ('I am part of the parent association … Edie volunteers on a [curricula] committee'). Roxie (LM), shared, 'Beth does the volunteering for the PTA. The school soccer team is my realm. We split up the duty; it's kept us both in contact with the school.'

In explaining their shared, high level of involvement, three participants (1 LM, 1 HC) emphasised *work flexibility* (i.e. both parents' schedules were flexible). In addition, both members of 4 couples (3 GC, 1 HC) emphasised the school's *facilitation of parent participation*, whereby parents were encouraged, even expected, to be involved. Jay (GF) specifically noted that being welcomed *as gay parents* made a huge difference for him and his partner, noting that 'yes, we have definitely made the effort', but adding that the fact that 'the teachers have appreciated that, and been accepting of us' had facilitated their continued engagement. Jay observed that his son's placement in a private school, where there was an 'acknowledgment that we are the client', likely was part of the reason why teachers were accepting of parental involvement, thus highlighting the intersection of class, gender, and sexual orientation in facilitating involvement (Cole 2009).

In some couples, more often heterosexual (*n* = 5) and lesbian (*n* = 5) than gay (*n* = 1), parents described both partners as fairly minimally involved, whereby they attended the 'important things, like meetings with teachers', but did not count themselves among the parents that 'help out all the time, are at school all the time; that's not us'. Lenny (HF), shared: 'We're not super involved [or there] on a regular basis, but we go to school for certain little activities when parents are invited.'

Parents sometimes offered explanations for their mutual, fairly low level of involvement. Members of 7 couples (2 LC, 2 LM, 1 GC, 2 HC) said that they both *worked full time and were very busy*. In turn, they felt overwhelmed by the requests for volunteering, and expressed irritation at the scheduling of school events which were 'held during work hours, [which is] not convenient for dual-earner parents'.

Members of three couples (2 HC, 1 LC) emphasised *lack of interest in involvement* from the schools as the reason for their low level of involvement: 'The teachers seem … resistant to having help in the classroom.' For a few parents (1 HC, 1 HF), *school disorganisation* was a barrier to involvement. James (HF) said: 'Finding ways to volunteer at [son's] school [has been hard]. His old school made it natural by using sign-up sheets to plan good times for parents to come in and participate. This school has no mechanism for that.' Finally, both partners in two heterosexual couples agreed that their *child's behaviour problems*

were worse when they were at the school; thus, to 'avoid interrupting' their child's routine, they did not volunteer.

That heterosexual parents were more likely to report low involvement, and to be deterred by school factors, is similar to prior work showing that heterosexual parents who saw their children's schools as more stigmatising of adoption were less involved, whereas LG parents who perceived high stigma were more involved (Goldberg and Smith 2014). In the context of high educational and financial resources, LG parents who are likely aware of their vulnerable status in the school, may be compelled to engage in protective self-advocacy, while heterosexual parents have less to 'lose'. In this way, these LG parents' sexual minority status likely compels them to action, and their ability to act is further propelled by their class advantages (e.g. familiarity with educational systems; valuing of education Reay 1999).

Benefits and rewards of involvement: what function does it serve?

In describing the benefits of involvement, some parents, particularly lesbian (2 LC, 4 LM) and gay (4 GC, 6 GF), rather than heterosexual (1 HM), alluded to the possibility that being involved at school (e.g. volunteering in the classroom; serving on committees; checking in regularly with teachers) *reduced the likelihood of marginalisation* towards themselves or their children (i.e. as a function of their sexual orientation in all but one case, and, in a few cases, their family's adoptive and/or multiracial status). Their involvement served to (a) enhance their knowledge of what was happening at school, enabling them to prevent or address mistreatment and (b) endeared them to teachers, reducing the likelihood that their families would be mistreated (e.g. because they were helpful parent citizens). LG parents often emphasised involvement as a 'given'; they were aware they had to 'be proactive' and go 'above and beyond'. Todd stated: 'We talk with the teachers daily [so they know] we are very involved. We *will* know what's going on.' Brian exclaimed,

> We realised we're going to have to push ourselves. At the Open House, we chose to sit in front, not the back. That was a conscious decision. We can't afford to sit in back. We're going to have to do a little more, push a little more, but we're not going to be obnoxious.

Brian's quote reveals that he is simultaneously aware of the need to work harder than other parents to ensure that his family is not marginalised or rendered invisible in the school, but also the possibility that his efforts could bring unwanted scrutiny (Crozier 2005).

Some parents specifically described how being visibly involved was important insomuch as it helped to foster 'comfort with the same-sex parent thing' on the part of teachers and parents. Aware that her daughter was the only 'kid with two moms', Rachel:

> joined the PTA the first week of school. I volunteer weekly in my kid's classroom. I'm also the room parent. I haven't had any parents have any issues [with me or my child], but even if they did, they kind of have to go through me (*laugh*). But it hasn't been an issue. She's received lots of invitations to play.

Like Brian, Rachel seems to recognise the benefits of going above and beyond the expected level of parental effort – and suggests that her involvement may have undermined potential difficulties with other families (Nixon 2011).

Notably, these parents often spoke about their involvement as an investment in the future (i.e. 'ammo', or social capital). They were building their reputation as valuable, helpful members of the school community with the hope that they would be treated respectfully if and when they ever complained about heterosexist treatment. By becoming involved, and getting to know teachers, parents were laying the groundwork for easier communication if their families should 'run into problems'. Will was one of a few parents to have experienced this firsthand. He felt that because he and his partner were involved, he was taken more seriously:

> I think we have a good influence there because we do help a lot and I'm there with the kids constantly. I do feel they're *considering* me. And it's one of those things where it's – like I said, we're having a problem right now with one of her classmates [who is bullying her]. So I sent an e-mail and the next morning I got responses from the teacher and the director … things were changed and different procedures were in place [soon after]. It was really quick.

As noted, LG parents were more likely than heterosexual parents to describe involvement on school committees – which, presumably, offered the opportunity to gain knowledge of, and influence, the school at large. The desire *to influence the school and create change* was highlighted by some LG, particularly gay male, participants (2 LM; 2 GC, 6 GF). Jacob stated, 'School politics-wise, it's important [to be involved]. We've been going to PTA meetings, and Ronnie just got voted onto the site council, which shapes policy. We're excited to push some social justice and anti-oppressive practices that way.' By pushing for greater inclusivity and diversity in curricula, policy, and family membership, these parents were helping to effect change that would indirectly affect their families by shifting the overall school environment (McGrath and Kuriloff 1999).

Finally, a few parents (1 LC, 2 LM; 2 GM; 4 HM), described the *sense of community* they derived from being involved. Danielle, a stay-at-home heterosexual mother who volunteered regularly, described the parent community as 'really involved', and felt that she was able to benefit from available support through her involvement. The school philosophy, she said, emphasised 'community and family; so if anybody needs anything, people help each other'.

Parents' relationships with other parents

Most parents described generally neutral or positive experiences with other parents. For example, Shawna (LM) noted,

> I can't think of anybody offhand that's been [even] a little sort of standoffish. If I get that vibe at all, then I just move on. We just try to be ourselves … there are so many other families that are totally good with it … [our being gay] is not even an issue.

Some parents (1 LC, 3 LM; 3 GF; 1 HM) noted that *shared experiences as parents* had facilitated a sense of connection to other parents, with LG parents specifically noting that differences in parent sexuality were overshadowed by the common ground they shared as parents (e.g. not getting enough sleep). Shawna went on to say: 'Like, you're just making it through the day, and you're tired; you have these kids keeping you up at night … we have plenty of other things in common than to worry about whether or not you're a heterosexual.' Todd noted that he regularly 'chatted' with other parents, and

so far they've been fine. If there's any hesitation there, I don't think it lasts long. They see that we're not that different, like, 'You've got an established family, you're doing things in the community, like going to soccer on Saturdays … you're just another fiber of the community fabric.'

Parents like Todd hinted at ways in which their embodiment of other privileged and valued statuses (i.e. middle-class, monogamous, family- and community-oriented) served to normalise and endear them to other parents, decreasing the potential salience of their sexual minority status.

In a few cases (1 LM, 2 GF, 1 HM), *shared experiences as minority parents* had fostered a sense of connection to at least a subset of the parent community, such that meeting other parents who were sexual minorities and/or had adopted was 'a huge relief', even 'transformative' in that it allowed for 'instant bonding'. Thus, shared experiences, whether they were minor (e.g. typical parenting struggles) or major (e.g. adoption), created a valued sense of connection with other parents (Durand 2011).

But some parents, particularly LG parents, voiced a sense of disconnection from parents. Such disconnection sometimes centred on sexual orientation-related stigma. In other cases, sexual orientation intersected with gender to shape parents' experiences.

Perceptions or fears of rejection by other parents based on sexual orientation were named by some parents (5 LM; 1 GC, 1 GF); as Emily said, 'I feel like the straight parents kind of stick together and don't like to go outside of their bubble.' In turn, they described avoiding either interacting with other parents, or drawing attention to their sexuality. Brittany said, 'Mostly I feel invisible … and anxious about, and avoid, interactions with families. I'm afraid we'll be rejected.' Sylvia shared, 'We don't do anything to bring attention to ourselves or our sexuality.' Thus, in these cases, parents sought invisibility, not acceptance – perhaps in part because they sensed the possibility of rejection based on their sexual minority status (Nixon 2011).

Gender and sexual orientation intersected in complex ways to structure some parents' interactions with other parents. For several men (4 GF), a sense of disconnection from other parents arose from what they perceived to be parents' *stereotypes or assumptions* about them based on their status as *gay men*. Vincent described how the general sentiment from other parents was, '[Daughter] is so lucky she has two dads, and her hair is so fabulous!' In this way, a common stereotype of gay men – that they are fashionable and image-conscious (Sánchez et al. 2009) – was deployed in such a way that it was presumably meant as a 'compliment' yet was ultimately offensive. Vincent also described how parents and some school staff paid a 'lot of attention' to how his daughter was dressed,

> making this assumption like, of course they're great at dressing their kid. I don't want to dress my kid down but sometimes – and I do think it's a [consequence of] the stigma of being gay – I don't want her to stick out. I [started to] play her [clothes] down.

Vincent's narrative reveals the ways in how gay men in particular are often scrutinised for their performance and enactment of gender, as well as for their parenting (Goldberg 2013); in turn, awareness of such scrutiny ultimately led Vincent to alter the way that he dressed his daughter so as to avoid too much attention (Kane 2006).

Several gay fathers (1 GC, 4 M) noted how their high involvement at school *distanced them from other (heterosexual) fathers*, whereas heterosexual mothers, 'specifically the stay-at-home moms', were their 'contemporaries'. These men tended to feel more connected to heterosexual mothers ('we have more in common' … '[straight] guys don't

really like to talk about parenting') than their heterosexual male counterparts, yet also experienced awkwardness in relating to heterosexual mothers, around whom they felt like 'something of an anomaly'. A quote by Jim reveals how gay men sometimes struggled to feel comfortable in a parent community where the other involved parents differed from them in terms of gender and sexual orientation:

> The mothers are always much more inviting than the fathers. At one point I got invited to a Tupperware party, and I looked at the woman and I thought she was joking and I laughed … So it's always weird … So would I say I felt comfortable [around them]? No, absolutely not. I didn't go to any parent fundraising events that didn't involve reasons for me to be there for [daughter].

Jim continued:

> [The mothers] were always polite … but, like, after school they would say, 'Let's go to the park sometime.' I'm like, 'I don't want to go to the park with these women, I have nothing to talk to them about, they're all going to sit there and bitch about their husbands.'

Jim's narrative reveals how, even in a generally welcoming atmosphere, gay men especially may encounter a double sense of 'outsiderness' within female-dominated parent communities (Crozier 2005; Vinjamuri 2015).

Gender affected heterosexual men's connection to other parents somewhat differently. Several men (4 HF) described a sense of *disconnection from the parent community* because most of the parents whom they saw and interacted with at school were mothers – and, they were not at school enough 'to really know the other parents'. Stewart said, 'I haven't really met any of the parents. My wife has. So I haven't had the opportunity to interact with them.' Eric asserted 'sometimes you don't see the other parents except to say hi and bye, so there's not much interaction there,' but also acknowledged that he was 'not really comfortable' talking to other parents, whereas his wife was 'friends with other moms', suggesting that both his sense of outsiderness and his wife's greater ease in relating to other parents reflected gendered processes (Lareau 2000).

For a few women (1 LC, 2 LM; 2 HM), gender intersected with *family building route* to create barriers to connection. They observed that not having birthed their children made interactions with other mothers uncomfortable, and noted the 'awkwardness' of the fact that 'most other moms gave birth', which had a 'way of coming up'. Ashley (LM) said, 'At one of the functions, they were all talking about giving birth. But I didn't really care about them (*laugh*). They were not inclusive, and I didn't really feel the need to make an effort with them.' Thus, parenthood route and gender – and perhaps sexual orientation – combined to create a sort of 'outsider status' for adoptive mothers, who violated 'biocentric and heterosexist ideals of whiteness [and] nuclear family ideals' (De Graeve 2014, 689), paralleling the feelings of outsiderness that gay fathers experienced in relation to both heterosexual mothers and fathers.

Gender expression was cited by several lesbian mothers (1 LC, 1 LM) as creating a sense of distance from other parents. Rachel felt that she was accepted more easily by the parent community because she was 'feminine [and] looks like a soccer mom'; they were 'confused' by her partner, Viv, who said: 'It is not my orientation, but my gender expression that is causing issues. Parents are less likely to interact with me than my wife, who is more gender conforming.' Viv went on to say:

> I feel left out. Rachel feels welcomed by [parents]; they have all friended her on Facebook. I don't have any of that. Sometimes when I'm there to drop off or pick up, they hardly talk to me. They know that we're together [but] I think they're uncomfortable with the fact that I'm not like a traditional female. Rachel … fits more of the traditional female … appearance. Sometimes when you're outside the norm of the gender expression, you get ostracised. That's definitely happening here … At first I thought, Is it my shyness? I kept trying to put myself out there, and it was like, No, I think it is something else.

Viv's experience of exclusion by other parents highlights the intersection of gender expression and sexuality in dominant constructions of 'acceptable' womanhood and motherhood, whereby Viv, who deviated in multiple ways from these norms, was marked as 'other' whereas Rachel was presumably accepted, at least marginally, given her concession to feminine ways of being (Moore 2012). Viv's experience parallels the experience of other parents who are minorities in some way (McGrath and Kuriloff 1999) but uncovers how rejection by the dominant group often reflects multiple forms of marginalisation and deviance (i.e. race *and* class; sexual orientation *and* gender expression).

Conclusions

This study was the first to examine the specific ways in which LG parents enact and explain their school involvement. It is also the first to qualitatively explore LG parents' experiences with the general parent community, and reveals how sexual orientation, gender, and gender expression may interact to influence interactions with other parents.

Regarding school involvement, this study extends prior work on heterosexual couples, illustrating how involvement is relationally constructed in male, female, and heterosexual couples. Mirroring the findings of previous work (Crozier and Reay 2005; Vincent and Martin 2005), heterosexual mothers were more likely to be involved in their child's school than heterosexual fathers, likely in part because they were more likely to be working part time or not at all. These mothers, then, had time to invest in the school community, which allowed them to conform to traditional gender expectations for parental involvement (Dudley-Marling 2001). Lesbian mothers, who demonstrated a range of relational patterns of involvement, were the only ones to express feelings of regret or frustration regarding perceived low involvement, perhaps reflecting both situational constraints and their awareness of motherhood ideologies (Reay 2005), the impact of which may have been uniquely amplified by their status as sexual minorities (i.e. their knowledge that they would already be judged for not conforming to 'ideal' representations of motherhood).

Patterns of involvement were further shaped by social class and its intersection with gender and sexual orientation. The flexibility in scheduling afforded to those in professional occupations gave many parents the freedom to be involved in schools, a freedom those in working-class jobs do not possess (Reay 1999). Notably, though, gay fathers, lesbian mothers, and heterosexual mothers were the most likely to take advantage of work flexibility, perhaps reflecting the nature of their jobs but possibly also heterosexual fathers' lesser willingness to take advantage of flextime.

The high level of engagement that gay fathers showed in their children's schools, illustrated most strikingly by their leadership on school committees, echoes prior work highlighting racial/ethnic minority parents' awareness of the need to go above and beyond to

effectively advocate for their children at school (Crozier 2005). Gay fathers are in violation of heteronorms and gender norms related to parental involvement: as sexual minorities, and men, they are potential 'outsiders' in the school setting, rendering their involvement doubly visible and perhaps doubly necessary to create a more positive experience for their children. Indeed, gay fathers' gender and sexuality can be experienced as a doubling of 'trouble' (Nixon 2011), whereby both statuses count against them, perhaps seeming to warrant a particularly high level of vigilant engagement in the school system. Or, alternatively, it may be that gay men's marginalised sexual orientation, combined with their privileged gender (and high social and economic capital), foster the subjective dimensions of power and confidence needed to advocate for their families and push for change in the system. These findings illustrate both the relational nature of parent involvement (Barton et al. 2004), and the complexity of studying socially constructed, interdependent, and mutually constitutive identities (Cole 2009).

Some sexual minority parents emphasised that shared experiences with other parents helped to foster a sense of connection that overshadowed differences (e.g. in parent sexual orientation) which in other circumstances could have created tension (Vinjamuri 2015). Yet gay men's narratives revealed how they sometimes felt like outsiders in relation to their heterosexual male counterparts (by virtue of their higher level of involvement) and also the other involved parents (by virtue of their gender). This left them in a predicament whereby they felt like a social 'anomaly' in relation to other parents, and without a true peer group. And, lesbian and heterosexual mothers described their method of family building as a source of disconnection from other biological, heterosexual mothers, thus highlighting how parents' positionality in relation to nuclear family ideals shaped their connectedness to other parents (De Graeve 2014).

Our study reveals how parental concerns, for example, regarding child mistreatment, shape parents' approaches to school involvement. Some LG parents became involved as a means of pre-emptive action aimed at discouraging discriminatory treatment. Other LG parents described avoiding unnecessary interaction with schools, particularly other parents, out of a desire to minimise their exposure to rejection or scrutiny (Kane 2006; Nixon 2011). Although these findings do not directly parallel the experiences of racial minority and working-class parents, they do highlight commonalities in minority parents' efforts to thwart (or avoid) stereotyping and exclusion (Gillborn et al. 2012).

Our findings have implications for scholarship and practice. Researchers should consider how not only parent gender, but also the relational context, interact with gendered norms to shape school engagement. Schools should recognise the significance of structural opportunities for, and teachers' encouragement of, involvement in shaping parents' school engagement (Deslandes and Bertrand 2005). Formal invitations to volunteer or attend school events may be particularly important for parents who may feel uncertain about whether they are welcome, such as sexual minority parents. As our findings show, LG parents are valuable members of the school community and schools should seek to engage them. In this way, schools can play a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of affirming environments that allow diverse families to thrive.

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

Abbie E. Goldberg is a professor of clinical psychology in the Department of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester MA, USA. Her research examines key life transitions and family processes in diverse family structures.

References

Barton, Amanda, Corey Drake, Jose Perez, Kathleen Louis St., and Magnia George. 2004. "Ecologies of Parental Engagement in Urban Education." *Educational Researcher* 33: 3–12. doi:10.3102/0013189x033004003.

Bogdan, Robert, and Sari Biklen. 2007. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. 5th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Christopher, Karen. 2012. "Extensive Mothering." *Gender & Society* 26: 73–96. doi:10.1177/0891243211427700.

Cole, Elizabeth. 2009. "Intersectionality and Research in Psychology." *American Psychologist* 64: 170–180. doi:10.1037/a0014564.

Crenshaw, Kimberle Williams. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–1299. doi:10.2307/1229039.

Crozier, Gill. 2005. "Beyond the Call of Duty: The Impact of Racism on Black Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education." In *Activating Participation: Parents and Teachers Working Towards Partnership*, edited by Gill Crozier and Diane Reay, 39–56. London: IOE Press.

Crozier, Gill, and Diane Reay, eds. 2005. *Activating Participation: Parents and Teachers Working Towards Partnership*. London: IOE Press.

De Graeve, Katrien. 2014. "Queering the Family? A Multi-layered Analysis of Relations of Inequality in Transnational Adoption." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 16: 683–696. doi:10.1080/13691058.2014.901562.

Deslandes, Rollande, and Richard Bertrand. 2005. "Motivation of Parent Involvement in Secondary-level Schooling." *Journal of Educational Research* 98: 164–175. doi:10.3200/joer.98.3.164-175.

Dudley-Marling, Curt. 2001. "School Trouble: A Mother's Burden." *Gender and Education* 13: 183–197. doi:10.1080/09540250124726.

Durand, Tina. 2011. "Latino Parental Involvement in Kindergarten: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 33: 469–489. doi:10.1177/0739986311423077.

Gates, Gary, Lee M. V. Badgett, Jennifer Macomber, and Kate Chambers. 2007. *Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Gillborn, David, Nicola Rollock, Carol Vincent, and Stephen J. Ball. 2012. "'You Got a Pass, So What More Do You Want?': Race, Class, and Gender Intersections in the Educational Experiences of the Black Middle Class." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 15: 121–139. doi:10.1080/13613324.2012.638869.

Goldberg, Abbie E. 2013. "'Doing' and 'Undoing' Gender: The Meaning and Division of Housework in Same-sex Couples." *Journal of Family Theory and Review* 5: 85–104. doi:10.1111/jftr.12009.

Goldberg, Abbie E. 2014. "Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Adoptive Parents' Experiences in Preschool Environments." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 29: 669–681. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2014.07.008.

Goldberg, Abbie E., and JuliAnna Z. Smith. 2014. "Predictors of School Engagement Among Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Adoptive Parents of Kindergarteners." *Journal of School Psychology* 52: 463–478. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2014.08.001.

Hoover-Dempsey, Kathleen, and Howard Sandler. 1995. "Parental Involvement in Children's Education: Why Does It Make a Difference?" *Teachers College Record* 97: 310–331.

Hornby, Garry. 2011. *Parent Involvement in Childhood Education: Building Effective School-Family Partnerships*. New York: Springer.

Hornby, Garry, and Rayleen Lafaele. 2011. "Barriers to Parental Involvement in Education: An Explanatory Model." *Educational Review* 63: 37–52. doi:10.1080/00131911.2010.488049.

Jeynes, William. 2005. "A Meta-analysis of the Relation of Parental Involvement to Urban Elementary School Student Academic Achievement." *Urban Education* 40: 237–269. doi:10.1177/0042085905274540.

Kane, Emily. 2006. "'No Way My Boys Are Going to Be Like That!' Parents' Responses to Children's Gender Nonconformity." *Gender and Society* 20: 149–176. doi:10.1177/0891243205284276.

Kosciw, Joseph, and Elizabeth Diaz. 2008. *Involved, Invisible, Ignored: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Parents and Their Children in Our Nation's K-12 Schools*. New York: GLSEN.

Lareau, Annette. 2000. "My Wife Can Tell Me Who I Know: Methodological and Conceptual Problems in Studying Fathers." *Qualitative Sociology* 23: 407–433. doi:10.1023/A:1005574724760.

McGrath, Daniel J., and Peter J. Kuriloff. 1999. "'They're Going to Tear the Doors Off This Place': Upper-Middle-class Parent School Involvement and the Educational Opportunities of Other People's Children." *Educational Policy* 13: 603–629. doi:10.1177/0895904899013005001.

Moore, Mignon. 2012. "Intersectionality and the Study of Black, Sexual Minority Women." *Gender & Society* 26: 33–39. doi:10.1177/0891243211427031.

Nixon, Catherine. 2011. "Working-class Lesbian Parents' Emotional Engagement with Their Children's Education: Intersections of Class and Sexuality." *Sexualities* 14: 79–99. doi:10.1177/1363460710390564.

Patton, Michael. 2002. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Reay, Diane. 1999. "'Class Acts': Educational Involvement and Psycho-sociological Class Processes." *Feminism & Psychology* 9: 89–106. doi:10.1177/0959353599009001008.

Reay, Diane. 2005. "Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schooling: Social Reproduction in Action?" In *Activating Participation: Parents and Teachers Working Towards Partnership*, edited by Gill Crozier and Diane Reay, 23–38. London: IOE Press.

Sánchez, Francisco, Stefanie Greenberg, William Ming Liu, and Eric Vilain. 2009. "Reported Effects of Masculine Ideals on Gay Men." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 10: 73–87. doi:10.1037/a0013513.

Vincent, Carol, and Jane Martin. 2005. "Parents as Citizens: Making the Case." In *Activating Participation: Parents and Teachers Working Towards Partnership*, edited by Gill Crozier and Diane Reay, 113–136. London: IOE Press.

Vinjamuri, Mohan. 2015. "Reminders of Heteronormativity: Gay Adoptive Fathers Navigating Uninvited Social Interactions." *Family Relations* 64: 263–277. doi:10.1111/fare.12118.

Warner, Catharine. 2010. "Emotional Safeguarding: Exploring the Nature of Middle-class Parents' School Involvement." *Sociological Forum* 25: 703–724. doi:10.1111/j.1573-7861.2010.01208.x.