

Review of: "Beyond Blood and Legal Ties The Impact of Dominant Conservative Socializing Agents on Attitudes toward Adoption by Same-Sex Couples"

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Sexual minority stress theory proposes that sexual prejudice inflicts stigma and harm on same-sexually oriented persons, couples, and parents. It is a widely used and accepted theory. Almost inherent in the theory is the idea that religion is hostile to homosexuality and a factor in stigma, even a major factor. A subtheory of sexual minority theory appears to be the theory of “no difference” for same-sex parents, that the outcomes for their children are no different in any aspect than the outcomes for children of heterosexual parents. Included in this notion is the idea that same-sex relationships are similar in stability and quality as heterosexual relationships. One might well begin to wonder if there were any alternative theories to sexual minority stress theory (Bailey, 2020). If there were and if there were evidence for such theories, then it might be apparent that this paper is very one-sided. However, I will consider methodological limitations first.

With respect to the variable of age, the reported standard deviation of 0.50 seems very small compared to the range of 18 to 56 years; usually the range can be approximated by dividing the range difference by between 3 and 8 (I have a couple of articles on this in *Marriage and Family Review*) which would suggest an SD of 4.75 to 12.7. Perhaps there is a typo here and the range was actually closer to 5.0. It might also be that the sample is made up predominately of university students and the older participants are outliers in terms of age. Perhaps they reported the standard error and the standard deviation was closer to 6.8. This should be clarified.

The sample is nearly 30% non-heterosexual. Even though 100% of respondents were allegedly Greek Orthodox members, they were scored as low on religiosity with an SD of 0.06, which would suggest a very small range of values of religiosity. The minimum and maximum values for the religiosity index were not specified. Fewer than 20% had a high school degree or less. About half were left of center politically. Thus, the sample, from what I might guess about the demographic composition of Greece today, is likely different from the characteristics of a random sample of Greek citizens. Thus, it is not clear to whom the results might generalize, outside, perhaps, of university students. Even though the ranges of some variables appear to be very small, it remains possible that some of the observed correlations were possibly related to or magnified by the influence of outliers.

I might question the validity of some of the scales. For example, I would argue that it is a fact that “adoption can interfere with a child's well-being”. Some adoptions fail and children may be sent to multiple caregivers over time, which is not helpful for their well-being. I think that a person could honestly answer that question in the affirmative but still be supportive of adoption in general but the scale seems to assume that answering the question in the affirmative means you are against adoption. Likewise, sometimes adoptive parents love their children as though they were birth children, but

sometimes adoptive parents abuse their children; again, one could disagree with the item but still be supportive of adoption in general.

There are similar issues with the ATHA scale. One question is “children adopted by same sex couples are socially stigmatized”. Certainly some might be and the research by numerous scholars (e.g., Gartrell and others) has found that the children of same sex couples (or their parents) often report having experienced some stigma at some point in their lives. Acknowledging the existence of stigma is not the same as agreeing with it. Another item is “homosexuals are able to provide the same family stability as heterosexuals” which is probably not factual (Allen & Price, 2020), even though many can do so. A third item is “A child raised in a homosexual environment will be more likely to have a homosexual preference.” This is factual (Schumm, 2013; Schumm & Crawford, 2021), though reverse scored. Another item is “homosexual couples are unable to raise a child as well as heterosexual couples”. Taken as an extreme statement, I would probably disagree, but as a sociological statement, I would agree. My point here is that agreement or disagreement with the items may reflect an accurate understanding of science rather than discrimination against same sex parents.

Thus, the scale's validity can be called into question, even if it seems to be unidimensional. In the CFA, item loadings varied from .20 to .94, which may indicate variance in the apparent reliability or validity of the items.

With respect to the analyses, it is not clear if the authors tested for nonlinear patterns or trends or if they tested for interaction effects in their multivariate analyses. It is not clear if gender and race (if any nonwhites?) or ethnicity were assessed as part of an intersectionality analysis. Thus, it is not clear whether or not the results would generalize to more diverse samples outside of Greece.

A more general concern with this paper is the oversimplification of theory (Jones, Hunter, & Tarver, 2022). At this point, perhaps not much can be done about it except to recognize it as a limitation. I have addressed this elsewhere (Schumm, 2020b), suggesting that social exchange theory might be a useful adjunct to sexual minority stress theory (Bailey, 2020) and might explain apparent stigma in a more productive way. Using social exchange theory, one might easily conclude that granting same-sex marriage and parenting equal status with heterosexual marriage and parenting might be producing inequality and injustice rather than creating equality and justice (Schumm, 2015) - once one takes into account the risks and costs of heterosexual activity (e.g., unwanted pregnancy, abortion) for the individual as well as the benefits for society of having both parents biologically related to their children, which seems generally related to higher stability rates for parents. If one wants to understand theory behind support for same-sex marriage and parenting, one might consider an analysis of over 2,700 cases predicting that support from parental sexual orientation, age, gender, education, past bullying, respondent sexual orientation, political orientation, and a scale assessing agreement for sex without the necessity of commitment (Schumm, 2015, p. 14). In that analysis, the strongest predictor was the sex/commitment scale, a factor not assessed in the study under review here, an important omitted variable.

Furthermore, numerous articles have addressed the differential outcomes of same-sex parenting and relationships. In particular, one study found substantial differences among children in terms of illegal drug use (Goldberg et al., 2011) while other differences have been found, especially in terms of children's sexual orientations as young adults in a meta-analysis (Schumm & Crawford, 2021). One study found an interaction effect between parental sexual orientation and parental status on parental relationship stability, such that - compared to non-parent couples - being a parent reduced stability for same-sex couples but increased stability for different-sex couples (Allen & Price, 2020). Reviews of this

literature that report substantial disagreement with older reviews (e.g., Golombok, 2015; Schumm & Crawford, 2019) can be found elsewhere (Schumm, 2016, 2018, 2020a, b).

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