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A review of gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations and destination choices: gaps in research and future directions

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Abstract

Academic tourism research is traditionally concerned with individual decisions and fails to address the viewpoint of the family unit. Indeed, while family tourism remains unexplored, lesbian and gay parented family tourism is further overlooked, with little attention in tourism research given to families whose configurations do not fit the heteronormative model, namely, the 'mother-father-children' trinomial. This paper critically reviews the literature on the topics that offer insight into same-sex parented family tourism and identifies gaps in knowledge in four different areas: travel motivations, destination choice, family decision-making, and strategies used by lesbians and gay men to manage sexuality in public spaces. The paper ends with recommendations designed to progress theoretical and empirical research.

Keywords

Gay and lesbian parented families; family tourism; gay and lesbian tourism; travel motivations; destination choices; sexuality.

Introduction

This paper provides a critical review of literature that illuminates holiday motivations and destination choices of same-sex parented families whilst identifying knowledge gaps and potential for future research in the area. For the scope of this paper, same-sex parented families are units formed of at least one child and one gay father or one lesbian mother. A family holiday is construed as encompassing travel made by a family with the purpose of leisure, recreation and/or to visit relatives and friends, as well as the activities performed during the trips and the decisions that precede them.

Although same-sex parented families are not a new phenomenon, increased legal protection has resulted in greater recognition, especially in Western nations. For example, fourteen countries worldwide have legalised same-sex marriage and fifteen countries globally now accept joint adoption, which allows children of lesbian and gay couples to be registered under both parents' names (ILGA 2014). Like all families, gay and lesbian parented families are leisure consumers and tourists. Lesbian and gay travel is an increasingly important market segment to the tourism and hospitality industries (Hughes and Southall 2012; Blichfeldt, Chor, and Milan 2013). If, as reported by a 40,000 people survey conducted by Out Now (2011), a marketing agency catering for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) market, 40% of lesbians and gays are keen to become parents in the future, then these families may become a significant consumer group for the tourism industry. More importantly, while these groups have gained increased social acceptance in some countries, their voices and experiences need to be listened to not only in the tourism context but also as expressions of a fair and just society.

Nonetheless, academic tourism research on families parented by gay men and lesbians is scarce. Indeed, all types of family tourism remain largely unexplored in research with

theory mostly centred on individual decision-making (Carr 2011). An overrepresentation of the individual tourist (Schänzel 2012) fails to address the complexity of family holiday decisions (Decrop 2006), and thus creates a gap in tourism knowledge. In addition, the voices of children are often neglected in family tourism. This is due to numerous factors, such as a lack of researchers' expertise, the ethical issues involving research with children, and a lack of theories and conceptual models that contemplate the children's viewpoints (Poria and Timothy 2014). This indicates more studies are needed that address the complexity of family tourism.

The underrepresentation of the family in tourism research is even more apparent in the case of families who do not fit the 'conventional' heteronormative model, namely, the 'mother-father-children' trinomial. Yet, the notion of the 'family' as a social institution constantly evolves, with historic configurations of families no longer considered the norm (Yeoman et al. 2012). While the single parent family has undergone recent recognition as a focus for tourism research (Quinn 2013), 'traditional' nuclear layouts of families remain the benchmark for 'the family' (Hughes and Southall 2012).

Thus, research about families that differ from the heteronormative paradigm is needed, especially with regard to their holiday motivations and decisions, which are central to tourism marketing and management. Against this background, this paper builds on Hughes and Southall's (2012) call for further research on lesbian and gay family tourism and offers several areas of contributions. Firstly, it provides insight into the holiday motivations and decisions of lesbians and gay men, and, thus, calls into question the heteronormativity that prevails in tourism research. Secondly, it sheds light upon family travel choice, adding to a greater understanding of group decisions in tourism scholarship. Thirdly, it highlights the gaps in knowledge of non-heteronormative families' travel motivations and choices. Finally, this paper illuminates the mechanisms through which lesbians and gay men may navigate

their sexuality in public spaces and offers insight into how heteronormativity impacts their leisure choices when part of a family unit.

The paper is structured in three sections. The first part reviews current research into travel motivations while the second investigates holiday destination choice. In both sections, there is a particular focus on the travel decisions of lesbians and gay men, and those of families as a way of investigating potential intersections and gaps. The third section examines the literature on same-sex parented families focussing on how gay men and lesbians manage their sexual identities in heteronormative tourist spaces. The paper ends with recommendations designed to progress theoretical and empirical research.

Travel motivations

Understanding tourist motivations has long been the focus of research (see Crompton 1979; Iso-Ahola 1980; Dann 1981; Gnoth 1997; Gountas and Carey 2000; Li and Cai 2012). Motivation, from the Latin word *movere* (to move), is what generates action (Dann 1981), or, as Li and Cai (2012) suggest, the underlying force that propels behaviour. Motivations encompass a state of mind and a meaningful action (Dann 1981). However, this does not imply motivations are synonymic with reasons. Reasons are cognitive justifications of motivations (Dann 1981). On the other hand, motivations, although possibly target-oriented, are not always rational. They may be driven by additional factors such as emotions, yet, rationalised through logical articulations of thought. As Decrop (2006) clarifies, holiday decisions are not always based on rational choices; they may also be the product of hedonistic pleasure. Therefore, travel motivations, and not reasons, should ground a study on holiday choices. Furthermore, travel motivations are important for the tourism industry as they can be helpful to differentiate tourism sub-groups (Biran, Poria, and Oren 2011). Weber (1978, 11)

described motivations as the ‘complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself and to the observer an adequate ground for conduct.’ Thus, motivations are inseparable to the meanings people attribute to them, which underpins their subjectivity and fluidity.

Motivations have been the focus of academic inquiry in diverse fields and disciplines. Most theories of motivations explain them as responses to something that is missing (Maddi 1996) or as action-generating forces that are propelled by the projection of a result (Vroom 1964). Tourism research is no different, and travel motivations are traditionally explained through two different perspectives: need- and expectation-based theories.

For need-based theories, motivation is a result of a need, namely, a lack that creates an internal conflict which in turn causes an individual to act toward the fulfilment of that absence (Crompton 1979). The intersecting point among need-based theories is the understanding and elaboration of motivations as binary constructs. Crompton’s (1979) seminal work, for instance, built upon Dann’s (1977) notion of push and pull factors, which relate to the desire to go on holiday and the attraction exerted by destination attributes, respectively (Gountas and Carey 2000). Dann (1981) further expanded the idea of push factors via another binary construct: anomie, namely, the lack of meaning in daily life that drives people to escape chaos, and ego-enhancement, the need for prestige and status. From a socio-psychological standpoint, Iso-Ahola (1980) stated motivation involves two forces acting in parallel: escaping, the need to shun the pressures of the world, and seeking, the need to search for rewards, such as knowledge, relaxation or social interaction.

Need-based theories are not without their critics. These theories assume needs are the source of motivations and are, thus, considered insufficient to explain how motivations are converted into action (Gountas and Carey 2000). The main weakness of these theories is their simplistic approach, grounded on dichotomies that ignore the multi-layered, pluralistic and

fluid nature of travel motivations. They also lack depth and oversimplify the diversity of human behaviour. For example, they do not offer specific insight into the impact of sexuality on motivations, which, alongside other factors, may be relevant for the understanding of gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations.

Rather than explaining motivations as the result of a need, expectation-based theories associate them with the production of a desired outcome. For Witt and Wright (1992), motivations are formed as functions of three factors: expectancy, which relates to the anticipation of the outcome, instrumentality, linked with the evaluation of the viability of the outcome, and valence, connected with the value and appeal of an outcome. Gnoth (1997) explained that motivations are created around mental projections of the outcome. On the one hand, expectation-based theories clearly elaborate and reinforce the link between motivations and personality, while, on the other hand, they emphasise the rational aspect of motivations. Because they assume human behaviour as utilitarian, they are deployments of economic theories that adopt a positivistic approach and reduce human action to target-driven processes.

Both need- and expectation-based theories suffer from a similar limitation. They are constructed around individual actions and fail to address group motivations, and families in particular (Obrador 2012). A holistic understanding of gay parented families' travel motivations should, as stated, address the impact of sexuality on travel motivations and the holiday motivations of the family unit. Therefore, the next sections explore the literature on both lesbian and gay, and family travel motivations.

Travel motivations of gay men and lesbians

An important yet scant body of academic literature on lesbian and gay tourism was produced in the late 1990s and 2000s. This mainly addressed the holiday motivations of gay men and lesbians, and compared them to those of heterosexuals. Whilst some academic work

suggests gay men's desire to engage in sexual activities may be a motivating factor to go on holiday (Ryan and Hall 2001; López López and Van Broeck 2010), the majority of outcomes pointed to gay men and lesbians being driven by the same aspects as 'straight' people with regards to their travel motivations (see for instance Clift and Forrest 1999; Pritchard et al. 2000; Hughes 2005).

However, while travel motivations of lesbians and gay men do not largely differ from those of heterosexuals, there is consensus in the doctrine that tourism helps construct and/or reinforce gay and lesbian identity. For example, many gay men and lesbians travel to have their first sexual experience away from their hometown (Hughes 2006). While this may also apply to heterosexuals, Hughes (2006) suggests gays and lesbians are particularly driven to have a first sexual experience in an environment where they are not known, or where they can feel at ease. He implies this is often not the case in their own hometown. If discovering and exploring their sexuality happens when they travel, then travelling and 'coming out of the closet' (accepting and revealing one's own homosexuality) are inextricably linked (Hughes 2006). This is line with Poria and Taylor's (2002) claim that gay and lesbian motivations to be involved in tourism activities are often linked to their coming out process. Therefore, tourism helps construct and reinforce sexual identities. Lesbian and gay identity is also achieved through a search for belonging to a group. In this sense, lesbians and gay men travel to seek spaces where they can feel comfortable among equals, where they can 'learn to be gay' (Cox 2002; Blichfeldt, Chor, and Milan 2013). Consequently, gay and lesbian 'meccas', such as San Francisco and Lesbos, become places of pilgrimage where lesbian and gay identities are learned, constructed and strengthened (Howe 2001), and, thus, remain popular destinations (Gorman-Murray, Waitt, and Gibson 2012).

In addition to a search for homosexual identity, lesbians and gay men are motivated by a need to escape and be themselves (Pritchard et al. 1998; Hughes 2000; Pritchard et al.

2000). This need is not bound with Iso-Ahola's (1980) construct of escaping. Rather, in the context of gay tourism, it refers to a need to avoid the pressures of living in a heteronormative society in which heterosexuality is assumed as the norm (Perlesz et al. 2006). As Waitt and Markwell (2006, 5) remark, travel is a 'mechanism to escape the literal straitjacket of the everyday "closet".' For Cox (2002), holidays are journeys to the gay self, during which tourists are less interested in gazing at the 'other' than themselves. Hughes (2006, 56) posits that the need to escape heteronormativity depends on the level of 'gayness', namely, the extent to which gays and lesbians accept and deal with their own sexuality. Thus, closeted gays are more commonly driven by a need to escape the pressures of the heteronormative world than those who do not conceal, and/or effectively manage their sexuality.

Whether same-sex parented families are, along with other factors, also motivated by a search for gay identity and to escape heteronormativity, and whether sexuality plays a part in their travel motivations are issues worth investigating. It could be, for instance, that for these families, the parents' sexuality (and the meaning and significance they may assign to it) may impact not only on family travel motivations but also the importance ascribed to family holidays themselves. In addition to the motivations that relate to parents' sexuality, these families might be influenced by family dynamics, bonds and structure. To gain greater understanding of why same-sex parented families to go on holidays, it is therefore important to explore family tourism research.

Family travel motivations

As previously indicated, literature on family travel motivation emphasises more 'conventional' family configurations. As for individuals, a desire to escape the pressures of everyday life and a search for relaxation are common motivations for family holidays (Blichfeldt 2007; Shaw, Havitz, and Delemere 2008). The literature on family travel

motivations traditionally revolves around three main themes: togetherness, family bonds and social interaction.

Togetherness is consistently associated with family holidays (Carr 2011; Kluin and Lehto 2012; Schänzel 2012). However, it is important to clarify togetherness is not simply a desire to spend time together but a response to an anxiety which Daly (2004, 9) terms 'time famine.' This refers to a lack of family time in densely structured and busy lifestyles (Southall 2012), which family members are keen to recover when together (Epp, Schau, and Price 2011). It is conjectured that what families perceive and/or define as a need to spend time together could in reality refer to the above cited desire to escape routine. In other words, what is verbalised as a need for family time could actually be related to a wish to shun the pressures of daily life, both as individuals and as a family unit. Similarly, Carr (2011, 26) argues togetherness can be an expression of guilt by parents who believe they should spend more time with their children, a notion he calls 'good parent.'

Constructing and reinforcing family bonds are also significant drivers for family holidays. In this way, family connections are strengthened by the physical and emotional closeness that families enjoy when away (Shaw, Havitz, and Delemere 2008). This closeness not only reinforces family cohesion but also enhances, and in turn is enhanced by, family adaptability and intra communication (Olson 2000) thereby strengthening the group structure. Bonding supports family roots and provides a sense of identity (Carr 2011). Memories play a very important part in assuring the maintenance of family bonds (Shaw, Havitz, and Delemere 2008) as they ground a family in its past and preserve its future thereby perpetuating family history (Epp and Price 2008). The memories holidays create are thus central to bond formation, and protection and maintenance of the family unit.

Whilst families travel to spend time together, they also look for social interaction (Crompton 1979; Kluin and Lehto 2012). This paradox is explained by Bowen and Clarke's

(2009, 169) theory of opposing forces, according to which families are preserved by three pairs of forces: 'stability and change, structure and variety, and familiarity and novelty.' If, on the one hand, being together relates to stability, structure and familiarity, on the other hand, interacting with others allows for change, variety and novelty. In this sense, children play a decisive role in facilitating social interactions on holiday (Carr 2006; 2011) and are often the ones who initiate it (Crompton 1979). Likewise, parents encourage children to play with others as a fundamental part of socialisation (Rugh 2008).

Family travel motivations are not a homogeneous construct, but composed of many layers, which often eclipse individual needs and desires (Decrop 2006; Kluin and Lehto 2012). For example, parents often perceive holidays as a way of introducing children to physical activities (Carr 2011), education (Rugh 2008; Yeoman et al. 2012) and heritage (Poria, Reichel, and Biran 2006), which might not necessarily be a child's stated need. In this sense, children themselves might be motivations for parents to go on holiday (Carr 2011). Parents may also be more interested in relaxing and enhancing family relationships, while children may be more concerned with having fun and socialising with other children (Schänzel 2012). Children's motivations and needs may also be impacted upon by their age. For instance, younger children look for excitement and demand more energy and time from their parents (Milkie et al. 2004). As they grow, children become more prone to be influenced by advertisements and word of mouth recommendations, which may significantly impact on their motivations (Carr 2011). Adolescents are more vocal about their needs (Carr 2006) and are often more likely to be dissatisfied with family trips as they may find their age-related needs are not adequately met (Schänzel 2012).

Mothers and fathers may also perceive holiday experiences differently and, thus, be motivated by diverse factors. Carr (2006) argues that fathers are motivated by the excitement of leisure and recreation with their children. Conversely, mothers may be more interested in

less energetic activities (Schänzel 2012) as, due to an ethic of care, they are expected to perform caregiving duties even on holiday (Decrop 2006; Bowen and Clarke 2009; Berdychevsky, Gibson and Poria 2013). Such (2006, 193 - 194) posits that fathers' motivations relate to 'being there with' their children whereas mothers' motivations are concerned with 'being there for' them.

As noted previously, research tends to give prominence to the traditional 'mother-father-children' structure. The above mentioned differences between fathers and mothers' travel motivations are no exception to this rule, with tourism academia focusing on families parented by heterosexuals. To gain a greater understanding of what motivates same-sex parented families to go on holiday, it might be worthwhile to investigate whether there are any significant differences between gay fathers and lesbian mothers in terms of parenthood and the relationship with their children. In this sense, there is an overwhelming gap in research comparing lesbian and gay parenting. Most of the comparative research involving same-sex parented families contrasts them to heterosexual ones (see for instance Golombok and Tasker 1996; Patterson 2002; Biblarz and Savci 2010). The very scarce scholarship on the theme indicates more similarities than differences between the ways lesbians and gays have and raise their children (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Yet, lesbian mothers were found to be more prone to have children due to social pressures than gay fathers (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001). Gay fathers are more commonly committed to full-time employment (Biblarz and Stacey 2010), and, thus, spend less time with their children than lesbian mothers. Gay men also challenge gender stereotypes more often than lesbian mothers as they refute preconceived ideas of masculinity more commonly than lesbians dispute femininity (Stacey 2006). Biblarz and Stacey (2010, 17) conclude women are better parents and, thus, families parented by lesbians are more likely to have a "double dose of caretaking, communication, and intimacy".

How, if at all, these differences inform the choices gay and lesbian parents make when deciding on their holidays should be further scrutinised.

It is therefore not clear how travel motivations are conceptualised within lesbian and gay parented families. For instance, does sexuality impact on their motivations? Are these families, along with other variables, motivated by parents' need to escape heteronormativity and/or desire to seek gay identity? If so, how do these needs intersect with the family's travel motivations? Do the travel motivations of gay fathers differ from those of lesbian mothers? These questions prompt further investigation into same-sex parented families' holiday motivations, and how they link to destination choice. The following section examines the latter in more detail.

Destination choice

Literature on destination choice mostly assumes human behaviour is logical and rational (see Decrop 2006; Moutinho 1987) and is divided between choice-set models and the decision-making process. Choice-set models are grounded in an assumption that people evaluate and eliminate options as they go through the linear stages of decision-making (Um and Crompton 1990). As such they ignore the potential for spontaneity that characterises decisions, particularly when holiday choices are involved (Smallman and Moore 2010). Holiday decision-making does not necessarily follow a linear approach (Tversky and Kahneman 1986), it may not always be about problem-solving (Blichfeldt 2007) and the process may sometimes involve adding options rather than discarding them (Decrop 2010).

Process-based models focus on the steps of the decision-making process. They either emphasise the chronology of decisions (see Moutinho 1987), the variables that intercede and

interfere in the process (see Mayo and Jarvis 1981) or sub-decisions, namely those that follow destination choice, such as the ones that take place during the trip (see Fesenmaier and Jeng 2000). Because these models have been considered too generic, thereby lacking applicability, recent models tend to amalgamate aspects of both choice set and process models. For instance, Lye et al.'s (2005) model acknowledges the interplay between a tourist's values and objectives, and refers to decision waves, thereby highlighting the fluidity of decision-making.

As with motivation studies, decision-making research tends to focus on individual rather than family choice. This ought to be redressed because, Obrador (2012) argues, families are at the core of tourism decision-making. Family choices also involve negotiation and concession (Decrop 2006), which, apart from a few notable exceptions (see for example Nichols and Snepenger 1988; Bronner and de Hoog 2008) tourism academia has so far failed to grasp. Therefore, to understand same-sex parented families' holiday decisions, a review of the literature on family destination choice is crucial. Moreover, because these families may also have their choices shaped or impacted upon by the parents' sexuality, an overview of gay and lesbian destination choice is equally important.

Destination choice of lesbians and gay men

Destination choice stems first and foremost from travel motivations (Moscardo et al. 1996). As is the case of travel motivations, the holiday destination choices of gay men and lesbians may thus be influenced by a need to escape heteronormativity and be themselves (Scholey 2002). Consequently, they may choose destinations perceived as gay friendly or gay centred (Hughes 2006). However, destination avoidance also plays a fundamental part in the holiday decision of gay men and lesbians (Hughes 2002). Destination avoidance is traditionally associated with travel constraints and perceived risk. The former refers to factors that restrict destination choice or cause holidays to be cancelled (McGuiggan 2001). Hughes

(2002) and Want (2002) report gay men's travel choices are constrained by the presence of other tourists, with single gay men avoiding destinations and accommodation perceived as child-friendly. Clift and Forrest (1999) suggest these people feel uncomfortable interacting with straight-parented families. If gay men avoid child-friendly destinations when single, then it is important to explore whether their destination choices, as well as those of lesbians, are affected when they go on holiday as part of a family unit.

Destination avoidance also relates to perceived risk, or tourists' perception of the likelihood of loss or peril (Bowen and Clarke 2009). Risks may limit holiday choice if they are considered to threaten personal safety (Sönmez and Graefe 1998). As Brunt, Mawby, and Humbly (2000) put it, a destination is not chosen for being safe but avoided for being unsafe. In his work on LGBT tourism, Hughes (2002; 2006) concluded gay men and lesbians choose the least risky destination. During the decision-making process, places perceived as homophobic (hostile or unfriendly to gay men and lesbians) may be systematically ruled out (Rapp 2010). These risks may affect not only the destination choices of gay men and lesbians but also their behaviour while on holiday, impacting on their feeling of safety and impairing social interaction with locals and other tourists (Poria 2006a). They can also cause anxiety if forced to come out to strangers. In tourism, this may include 'check in phobia', namely the lesbian or gay couple's anxiety for having to ask for a double bed in a hotel when registering on arrival (Hughes 2006, 81).

Travel-related risks need not be real. Rather, it is the perception of risk that actually impacts on destination avoidance (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; Sönmez and Graefe 1998; Hughes 2002; Kozak, Crotts, and Law 2007). As subjective constructs, perceived risks may be influenced by gender. Scholarly findings indicate women perceive themselves as more prone to risk than men (Lepp and Gibson 2003; Kozak, Crotts, and Law 2007). Therefore, safety is a more important concern for women than it is for men when choosing their holiday

destinations (Brownell and Walsh 2008). This can impact not only on their holiday decisions but also on their planning and organisation of tourist activities (Wilson and Little 2008). Such findings are echoed in literature about lesbian and gay leisure choices, with Skeggs (1999) affirming lesbians feel more vulnerable than gay men even when going to gay-friendly destinations since the gay space is predominantly masculine. Conversely, gay men were specifically found to feel unsafe in the presence of other people's children (Poria 2006a). Thus, investigating whether men and women (and gays and lesbians) have diverse risk perceptions and how, if at all, this impacts on their travel choices is an important question that might yield valuable information about same-sex parented families' holiday decisions.

Family decision-making and destination choice

Tourism research into family decision-making has tended to focus on marketing to a single decision-maker (see for instance Kang and Hsu 2004; Kozak 2010). However, holiday decisions are jointly made by partners in a couple (Jenkins 1980; Kang and Hsu 2004; Kozak 2010). The term 'joint decision', nevertheless, is vague as it can refer to partners participating in decision-making together, or feeling they have an equal, hence, balanced, say in the final decision. Further, joint decisions may be perceived differently by each partner; for instance, one may believe the couple have similar decision powers, while acquiescing to the other's will (Pahl 1990).

Moreover, tourism marketing is mostly targeted at adults (Carr 2006). Nevertheless, understanding whether and how children influence family decisions with respect to travel destination choices could be of value to tourism scholars but also, and especially, to marketers and practitioners. Scholarly findings concerning children's influence in family decision-making in tourism have varied considerably. Earlier studies concluded children have little impact on the process (see for instance Jenkins 1979; Fodness 1992). More current research,

on the other hand, perceives children as more influential in the choice of not only the family's travel destination but also other decisions such as the choice of accommodation and holiday activities (Kang and Hsu 2004; Decrop 2006; Thomson, Laing and McKee 2007). In this sense, Decrop (2006) clarifies children may not have decision-making powers but they clearly affect parental choice. The mechanisms through which children's influence takes place may range from information search to formation of coalitions with other family members (Thomson, Laing and McKee 2007). For Carr (2011), rather than discussing whether the children's influence exists or not, theorists would better understand how it changes as they grow. Following this line of reasoning, Schänzel, Yeoman, and Backer (2012) call for a methodological approach that is not limited to the parents' stance and also encompasses the viewpoint of children.

Studies of family decision-making suffer from another significant flaw; they discuss the family from a heteronormative standpoint. Many use terms such as 'husbands', 'wives' or 'spouses' (Bohlmann and Qualls 2001; Kang and Hsu 2005; Kozak 2010), which, in view of the changes the family as an institution has undergone, may be inadequate, especially when same-sex parented families are concerned. Further, this approach, which often equates husbands with key income earners and wives with caregivers, is premised on stereotypical and increasingly obsolete gender roles, which may not be applicable or may manifest differently in lesbian and gay parented families (Clarke and Peel 2007).

Part of the literature on family holiday choices views decision-making using family life stages, a construct found in Wells and Gubar's (1966) oft-cited work. These are defined as key junctures in a family's history, such as the birth of children, the empty nest, or the death of a partner. Family lifecycle theory assumes families at the same stage in their history adopt similar lifestyles and consumption practices. While Wells and Gubar's (1966) taxonomy may have been relevant when first devised, it does not capture the diversity of

modern day family structures (Bojanic 2011). For instance, a family with a child raised by two same-sex couples (in other words, four parents) may not have been contemplated by Wells and Gubar (1966), and thus family lifecycles as a framework to understand gay parented families should be viewed with much caution.

Power relations are also significant in research on family decision-making. Decrop (2006) argues that families whose power is centralised with the parents are less likely to involve all members in holiday decisions. Bowen and Clarke (2009) classify families as socio- and concept-oriented. In the former, children learn to respect (and not challenge) parental authority; in the latter, children are encouraged to participate actively in holiday decision-making. Scholarship on same-sex parented families claims they exhibit a more balanced distribution of power and are egalitarian in terms of task division than those parented by heterosexuals (Patterson 2002; Biblarz and Savci 2010). To what extent this is accurate and whether this alleged power balance within same-sex parented families affects their holiday decisions merits scrutiny.

Family destination choices have also been examined through the lens of destination avoidance, which, as previously stated, is bound up with travel constraints and perceived risk. McGuiggan (2001) claims children can be a travel constraint since their presence may cause holiday plans to be modified or cancelled, a view endorsed by Decrop (2006). In addition, families with children have fewer destination choice options and have holiday times restricted or altered to reflect the school calendar (Page and Connell 2009). The holiday choices of a family are also affected by their perception of risk. In this sense, if a child's safety becomes the main concern for a family on holiday, it thus limits destination choice (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; Simpson and Siguaaw 2008). This may be particularly relevant for same-sex parented families since their destination choices might be restricted by a potential fear of discrimination and/or an anxiety to protect their children. Therefore, the destination choice of

lesbian and gay parented families is likely influenced both by the parents' sexuality and the presence of children. However, it is still not clear whether, or how, these factors intersect. For instance, are these aspects conflated and, as a consequence, family choices narrowed? These questions are important not only because they may shape holiday decisions but also because they influence the travel patterns of families, in particular how parents negotiate their sexuality and/or the presence of children on holiday.

Gay parented families' mechanisms to manage sexuality in public spaces

If, as Gabb (2005, 426) states, 'individuals' conformity is established through the marginalisation of all "other-ness", then, in order to feel like they are part of a group, individuals may discriminate against those perceived as different. If heterosexuality is considered the norm, then 'abnormal' sexualities are marginalised (Nathanson 2007). Indeed, homophobia, 'the fear and loathing of those identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual accompanied by feelings of anxiety, disgust, aversion, anger and hostility' (Perlesz et al. 2006, 183) is a type of discrimination that affects the lives of many gay men and lesbians. Some may develop feelings of internalised homonegativity, namely, the perception and acceptance that being gay is negative (Reilly and Rudd 2006), or shame, which encapsulates a range of emotions such as humiliation, inferiority (Greene and Britton 2013) or even self-hatred (Irvine 2009).

In addition to challenges encountered by all families, lesbian and gay parents may be affected by discrimination and/or the fear of discrimination, which may also have an impact on their children. Research shows children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers bear more similarities than differences to those brought up by heterosexuals (Golombok and Tasker 1996; Golombok and Badger 2010). However, children of same-sex couples were found to be

more prone to bullying in school (Ray and Gregory 2001; Stacey and Biblarz 2001), emotional stress due to discrimination (Lambert 2005) and homophobia in general (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009).

The public arena may magnify feelings of marginalisation. However, it is true that gays and lesbians may find support in particular environments. Poria (2006b), for instance, found in his research with Israeli lesbians that the tourist space may be reassuring for them since it is often equated with anonymity. Nonetheless, gay spaces, whether at home, or in bars away from the heterosexual gaze, are more commonly private (Gabb 2005). Everyday public spaces, such as workplaces or supermarkets, are predominantly heteronormative (Valentine 1996; Skeggs 1999; Waitt, Markwell, and Gorman-Murray 2008). Many lesbians and gay men experience insecurity in the public sphere (Skeggs 1999; Pritchard et al. 2000), which can inhibit their consumption practices, such as hotel experiences for instance (Poria 2006a). It can also limit public displays of affection with partners (Valentine 1996), with some attempting to 'pass as straight' to lessen their alternative sexuality (Woodruffe-Burton and Bairstow 2013). Negotiating sexuality in the public arena may be even more complex for gay and lesbian parents. While parents may find it easier to 'blend' in the social arena as their offspring facilitates the 'straight look', the presence of children may increase parental anxiety because it 'affects how parents manage their sexual-parental identity and the ways that families are (re)presented in public/private space' (Gabb 2005, 420). For instance, children may unwittingly disclose their parents' sexuality or simply enhance their visibility thus adding to feelings of insecurity (Gianino 2008). Lesbian and gay couples' public anxiety may be further complicated as parents may have to navigate their sexuality differently depending on the ages of the children. For example, the elder children may be aware of the parents' sexual orientation whereas younger ones may not (Demo and Allen 1996).

If most everyday public spaces are dominated by heteronormative presumptions, tourism and leisure spaces are no different. Rather than simply being physical locales, tourism spaces are social constructions where identities are negotiated (Pritchard et al. 2000), and most holiday sites are characterised by a fluidity of the separation between the public and private arenas (Perlesz et al. 2006). Tourists share common areas, like swimming pools and beaches, for considerable amounts of time, causing spatial and social boundaries to blur. This, it is conjectured, may enhance same-sex parented families' visibility. As a result, interacting with straight parented families may be daunting, but could also present empowerment opportunities. As previously reported, social interaction is a key travel motivation for families (Crompton 1979; Kluin and Lehto 2012), but fear of discrimination can generate insecurity and/or shame for lesbians and gay men in social situations.

Given this apparent tension between the need for social interaction and the anxiety it may generate, further questions emerge: how do lesbian and gay parented families navigate their sexuality while on holiday? Is social interaction impaired by the insecurities caused by heteronormative holiday spaces? Or do holidays enable same-sex parented families to openly express pride in their sexuality? Is this pride affected by or does it conflate with other types of pride, such as that of the family as a unit?

Conclusions for future research on same-sex parented family holiday choices

As indicated, tourism studies have predominantly focused on individual decision-making, which has failed to address the group perspective, in particular that of the family unit. Moreover, the scant literature on family tourism has emphasised a heteronormative model, mostly composed of mother, father and children, with stereotypical gender roles. As a consequence, families parented by gay men and lesbians have been largely neglected by

tourism research, particularly with regard to their travel motivations and destination choices. Through a critical review of the literature, this paper has identified several knowledge gaps, which open avenues for further research. Such gaps are now discussed under the following four areas: travel motivations, destination choices, family decision-making, and strategies for managing sexuality in public spaces.

Travel motivations are fluid concepts that cannot be entirely encapsulated by rational paradigms; they may be impacted by subjective factors, which include sexuality. Thus, it is worth researching whether, and how, parents' sexuality affects the travel motivations of same-sex parented families. Some gay and lesbian parents might for instance prioritise their own travel needs to the detriment of the family, whereas others consider their own desires less important. Understanding how individual travel motivations impact upon the family unit should also be scrutinised further, because (lesbian) mothers and (gay) fathers may be motivated by diverse aspects. Furthermore, children of lesbian or gay parents may, in addition to other factors, be motivated by a need to escape the heteronormative world as they may themselves be victims of homophobia. Finally, family holidays may add to the children's life quality as they may enhance both family and child identity as well as reinforce and preserve parent-child relationship, thereby helping forge a defence mechanism against discrimination. Whether and how all of this comes into play on the motivations of the family to go on holiday is worth being investigated.

Likewise, destination choices of lesbian and gay parented families might be swayed by parents' sexuality. The literature notes that childless gay men avoid family-friendly destinations, and that many lesbians and gay men visit gay-centric places such as Lesbos and Gran Canaria. However, when later travelling as part of a family unit, to what extent does their previous travel experience impact their current and future holiday choices? Research also indicates lesbians and gays avoid homophobic destinations. Likewise, holiday choice

may be restricted because parents seek to protect children from less gay-friendly destinations. How the risks associated with the parents' sexuality impact on the children, and whether these affect holiday choices is therefore worthy of scrutiny. Finally, scholars have suggested children can act as travel constraints. Research should be conducted to explore the veracity of this claim, because children can also act as the driving force for holidays rather than a restriction.

Additionally, destination choice models have so far failed to grasp the complexities of family decisions. Similarly, the traditional framework of the family lifecycle model is unable to effectively address same-sex parented families. As such, new conceptualisations of gay parented families' holiday decision-making are required. Holiday-related decisions often demand negotiation. In this sense, the literature reports lesbian and gay parented families are characterised by equality in power distribution, which might suggest children are vocal about their needs and wants. Investigating whether this holds true and how this impacts on family holiday choices is another topic that deserves further academic attention. Moreover, children's participation in decision-making processes would be better understood if their perspectives were taken into consideration, especially in view of the fact that their influence may vary with age. Thus, research into the children's viewpoint is warranted.

Heteronormativity is prevalent in most public spaces, which may generate tension for gay men and lesbians. Children may heighten gay parents' visibility and inadvertently disclose their sexuality on holiday. More scholarly attention should thus be given to whether and how the presence of children affects the ways parents navigate their sexuality in everyday public spaces. For example, for some parents, their children can reinforce insecurity and apprehensiveness, and even amplify feelings of shame. On the other hand, lesbian and gay parents may be reassured by a belief they mirror heteronormative paradigms of family and therefore 'blend in' more easily at a travel destination. Further complexities stem from the

fluid disjuncture between public and private holiday spheres, and so an investigation into the mechanisms they adopt to navigate their sexuality on holiday should be explored in more depth. Furthermore, social interaction is an important tourism driver for families. Whether heteronormative holiday spaces affect their interaction with others also merits investigation as these may influence decisions on destination and accommodation choices as well as travel companions.

Finally, tourism research in general, and theory on travel motivations and destination choices in particular, have been traditionally driven by quantitative approaches, which emphasised the importance of generalizability. However, due to the ethical sensitivity of researching families and their children, quantitative research methods are inadequate in seeking insightful understanding of how parents and children negotiate their holiday decisions. Therefore qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or travel diaries of families are recommended. Such approaches will not only yield rich data on how sexuality intersects with destination choice and motivations, but also enable deep exploration of the power dynamics operating within and among same-sex parented families. Moreover, qualitative research approaches are better at uncovering the nuances associated with managing sexuality in heteronormative holiday spaces.

In conclusion, this paper reveals the need for further empirical research on same-sex parented family tourism. Such proposed research will fill the gaps in academic knowledge about family travel and gay and lesbian tourism. For instance, it offers contributions about family and children's travel motivations, their holiday experiences, and the role of sexuality in holiday decisions and the host-guest encounter. As it addresses themes such as public spaces and family decision-making, it also has implications for other spheres of academia, such as geography and psychology. Further research will also provide invaluable

opportunities for the tourism and hospitality industries to develop new products and refine services and operations to better cater for same-sex parented families. Finally, this research could have very relevant social implications. In addition to an understanding of and giving a voice to lesbian and gay parented families, such research would stretch the limited parameters that currently define the family. It is argued here that amplifying the definition of the family may widen societal perceptions of and attitudes towards lesbian and gay parented families. This may in turn lead to a reduction in their marginalisation thereby contributing to wider social justice and equality.

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