

Porche, Michelle, and Diane Purvin. 2008. "Never In Our Lifetime': Legal Marriage for Same-Sex Couples in Long-Term Relationships." *Family Relations* 57:144-159.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The authors argue that the various supports, such as legal commitments, and constraints, like stress related to homophobia, within a long-term, same-sex relationship holds significant influence over partners deciding to last in their relationship and enter a legal marriage.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Linked Lives: The interdependence of individuals in interpersonal relationships in which experiences such as discrimination or support are shared and influence each other.
- Stage-Sequential Models of Sexual Identity Development: describes the progression from recognition of same-sex attractions, to confusion and experimentation, to self-identification, and finally commitment for individuals exploring their sexual orientation.
- Legal Proxies for Marriage: documents such as powers of attorney, wills, and healthcare proxies that same-sex couples used before marriage was legally accessible to protect each other's rights and express long-term commitment. Civil unions became one of these.

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. Fundamental components of a same-sex relationships lasting successfully derive from, but are not limited to, having children together, establishment of legally binding agreements as a proxy to marriage, joint home ownership, and monogamy.
2. Participants who came out at an adolescent age, due to entering a relationship, are likely to experience less distress and higher levels of self-esteem, improving the quality of their relationships. This contrasts with participants who came out during adulthood, as there is more fear surrounding judgement and loss of social circles.
3. Purchasing a home together as a same-sex couple, with no legal option of marriage, sealed a stronger form of legal commitment to each other. It also required the couples to be visibly out.
4. Young couples see marriage as symbolic, while older couples were more skeptical about what marriage meant because it was not an option for most of their adult lives.
5. Couples distinguished between their personal commitment and the public/legal recognition of marriage. Some feared that formalizing their relationships would commercialize something that had previously been deeply personal and not needing external validation.

KEY QUOTE: "Being out has been documented as key maintenance behavior in gay and lesbian relationships, unique to same-sex couples in addition to other behaviors in common with heterosexual couples (Haas & Stafford, 1998), reflecting an important aspect of linked lives for this population." (146)

QUESTION: How would the results of the study have been different if it had included more couples of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those couples who are facing intersectional marginalization (e.g., LGBTQ+ couples of colors or low-income couples)?