

Same-sex and different-sex cohabiting couple relationship stability

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Abstract

Relationship stability is a key indicator of well-being, but research based in the U.S. has been limited to different-sex couples. The 2008 SIPP Panel provides an untapped data resource to analyze relationship stability of same-sex cohabiting, different-sex cohabiting and different-sex married couples. The advantages of the SIPP data include the recent, nationally representative, and longitudinal data collection, ample sample of same-sex cohabitators, and respondent and partner socioeconomic characteristics. We evaluate whether same-sex cohabiting couples experience greater instability relative to their different-sex counterparts and determine whether this is associated with their less extensive investment in relationship-specific capital, children, and their lower levels of homogamy. These hypotheses are tested with consideration of the more advantaged sociodemographic standing of same-sex couples. The findings will contribute to a growing literature on health and well-being of same-sex couples and contribute to broader understandings of family life.