**This is a weakness because** it suggests that the father’s role as a secondary attachment figure is not important.

**This is a problem because** it means psychologists cannot easily answer the question of what the role of the father is. The findings from research being inconsistent means that firm conclusions cannot be drawn.

**This is a strength as** it confirms that such difference between mothers and fathers in the role of rearing children can be down to an individual’s nature but also their experiences of nurture.

**For example,** as mentioned previously, Grossman’s study found that fathers as a secondary attachment figure have an important role in their children’s upbringing. However other studies such as **MacCallum and Golombok (2004)** have found that children growing up in single or same-sex parent families do not develop any differently from those in two parent heterosexual families.

**For example,** research into the role of the father in attachment is confusing because different researchers are interested in different research questions. Some researchers are interested in understanding the role fathers have as secondary attachment figures, whereas others are more concerned with the father’s role as a primary attachment figure. The former have tended to see fathers behaving differently from mothers and having a distinct role. The latter have tended to find that fathers can take on a ‘maternal’ role.

**For example,** the fact that fathers tend not to become the primary attachment figure could simply be down to the result of traditional gender roles, in which women are expected to be more caring and nurturing than men. On the other hand, it could be that female hormones (oestrogen) create higher levels of nurturing and therefore women are biologically pre-disposed to be the primary attachment figure.