

Impact of gay marriage essay sample

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



The issue of gay marriage has proved to be perhaps the most controversial issue in contemporary political and social debate, splitting the American public into supporters and opponents. The fact that these marriages have already been legalized elsewhere adds fuel to the debate focusing on central issues of definition of marriage, its purpose and role in society, and fundamental human rights. While a lot of controversies have centered on philosophical issues like gender theories and importance of gay rights, many debaters have also turned to evaluation of the consequences such a decision would have on society.

This leads to the question, what are the social, political, and economic implications of same-sex marriages? What consequences will their legalization have on the economic well-being, social situation and morals of the contemporary Americans? Out of a vast bulk of sources on the issue, three articles evaluate the issue from different viewpoints.

The first one, “ What Is Wrong with Gay Marriage”, by Stanley N. Kurtz, explores the effects on morality from the legalization of gay marriage.

Another one, “ The dollars and cents of gay marriage”, by David R. Francis, combines economic and social implications, offering a detailed analysis with the extensive use of statistical data. Finally, “ Straight Flight”, by John Derbyshire, explores the social implications of the legalisation, exploring the consequences for gay-straight relationship in the possible post-gay marriage world.

In “ What Is Wrong with Gay Marriage”, 2000, Stanley N. Kurtz evaluates the long-term impact on social norms and values that can potentially come from

the legalization of gay marriage. He resists equation of opposition to gay marriage to homophobia, drawing a line between legalization of same-sex marriage and denying homosexuals their rights. Examining the arguments in favor of same-sex marriages, he points to their inconsistencies. Thus, Andrew Sullivan who expressed support for same-sex marriage on the grounds that it will encourage fidelity and respectability, extending the bourgeois family models to same-sex couples, later abandoned his argument and began to insist the legalization should become a hallmark of a free society that allows anyone to marry.

Reverting to the old debate about the nature of marriage, its purpose and role in society, the author arrives at the conclusion that it is viable only in the form of a union between two people of different genders. The notion that same-sex marriage will have appeal to a large number of gays is, in Kurtz's opinion, fallacious, as radical gays admit that "homosexuality, and particularly male homosexuality, is by its very nature incompatible with the norms of traditional monogamous marriage" (35). Legalisation of same-sex marriage, in consequence, can lead to the proliferation of polyarmorist perspective, in which polygamy is permissible, and monogamous life is taken to be an anomaly.

The text is in low country. The author does use a few abstract terms such as "polyarmory" and "complementarity", each time explaining their meaning to the potentially unprepared audience. Kurtz (2000) provides plenty of details that portray the contemporary gay marriage debate and the whole existence of the concept of marriage. Thus, he points to the fact that "90

percent of married American women still take their husbands' surnames, while only 2 percent retain their maiden names alone" in arguing his case for marriage as an institution of pursuit and possession (35). The writer also gives a powerful portrayal of polyamorous couples' practices, demonstrating having done some research into the subject of depravity in modern American homes.

In "The dollars and cents of gay marriage", 2004, by David R. Francis, the effects of gay marriage are evaluated from a totally different perspective: the economic one. Disregarding the moral effects for the sake of dry figures, the author attempts to project what the economic life would look like in the US in case gay marriage is legalised. The author's intent is to support the idea of gay marriages by countering the arguments that it will be a serious strain on federal and local budgets.

Quoting different estimates and current statistics, he repudiates the notion that same-sex marriages will come at a substantial cost. The negative economic impact, Francis demonstrates, will be small. In contrast, local budgets on the state or municipal level can be even positive, as same-sex couples will be qualified as married because in this case they will lose right to means-tested assistance programs.

The federal government, too, will save on Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and Medicare, even if spending more on Social Security. Francis (2004) also objects to the arguments advanced by conservatives to same-sex marriages, including those by Matthew Spaulding, a Heritage Foundation analyst. Spaulding, citing trends in the Netherlands, insists that legalisation

of gay marriage will lead to “ fewer marriages of heterosexual couples, more out-of-wedlock births, and increased divorce”. This, in Francis’s mind, is a fallacious argument since it considers only short-term, but not long-term implications, and underrates the similarity of trends in all European nations, regardless of whether gay marriage has been legalised or not.

The text is in low country, with plenty of details drawn from various private and public entities. Data are collected from the Institute of Management and Administration in New York, Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a gay and lesbian rights group, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the research team from the University of Massachusetts.

The combination of different resources creates a detailed and presentable background to the article that makes it a useful resource of information. For instance, the report from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reveals unexpected figures for someone indoctrinated in the negatives of gay marriage: legalisation of this marriage can actually save the federal budget up to \$1 billion a year over 10 years. Juxtaposing social and economic implications, the author appeals to facts rather than feelings, in this way creating an impression of objectivity.

In the final article “ Straight Flight”, 2003, John Derbyshire portrays a different picture of the life “ after” the gay marriage is legalised. Equating the distinctions between homo- and heterosexuals to cultural differences between the white majority and the African American minority, he hypothesizes that legalisation of gay marriage will lead to “ straight flight”,

just like urbanisation of African American populations has led to the “white flight” as middle-class white Americans moved to the suburbs.

Derbyshire insists that straight, on the one hand, and gays and lesbians, on the other, have different behavioral patterns. In Derbyshire’s mind, the evidence for the possibility of the projected flight is “the plain fact that most people, given a choice, prefer not to be among those they perceive as radically different from themselves” – the so-called “freedom of association”. He also proceeds from the premise that the much-criticised homophobia is “so widespread and deep-rooted, it might very well be one of those universal features of human nature” (Derbyshire 2003).

The text is in low country, and the author implies a vivid analogy that demonstrates to the reader the gist of his argument. Thus, in comparing the “white flight” to the expected “gay flight”, Derbyshire clearly indicates what allows him to draw the analogy – difference in behavior patterns between distinct population groups observed in both cases.

He supports his argument by pointing out that long-time African American middle-class was also moving out of the cities in the course of the “white flight”, driven away by the striking difference in behavior demonstrated by the new urban Afro-American populations. Demonstrating these abstract sociological terms as marginalization, residential segregation or freedom of association with historical examples, the author brings out their significance, making them clear to an even unprepared audience.

The analysis of the content of these three articles leaves the reader with one immediate impression: the implications of gay marriage are so diverse and far-ranging that they need to be considered in their complexity. It is quite possible that society is here facing a situation full of trade-offs where one stands to lose on the swings in order to gain on the roundabouts.

Economically, the impact seems to be either minimal or positive, leading perhaps even to budget savings. In the social realm, the legalisation of gay marriage may indeed lead to further polarization of society instead of suppressing differences.

If the ‘straight flight’ predicted by John Derbyshire materializes, the consequences for social structure may be far-ranging. On the other hand, one needs to explore to what degree such legalisation can prove effective in overcoming marginalisation of homosexuals in society. Thus, it would be interesting to examine what implications gay marriage may have in professional sphere, hampering or facilitating interactions between straight and gay colleagues, affect cooperation in community life – in short, look beyond territorial distribution of population. Speaking of the effects on morals outlined in Kurtz’s essay, it would be interesting to examine to what degree polygamy and polyarmory are indeed connected to homosexuals, and whether the trends are seriously different between the two groups.

It would also be interesting to research whether this difference in attitudes could be expected to affect one group or another, answering the question: Will homosexual influence on heterosexuals indeed strengthen in case of gay marriage legalisation? Answering these and many other questions will indeed

prove informative as it will help to pinpoint more clearly the consequences of same-sex unions. Careful analysis of such implications will help the policy-makers make more informed decisions concerning the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

References

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