

Generic
psychological
theories on how
sexual orientation is
determined



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What Causes Sexual Orientation Sexual orientation is a largely controversial subject in today's society. And in the topic of sexual orientation, there is a question that is always asked. " What causes or determines the sexual orientation of a human being, and can sexual orientation be changed? " There is no set answer to this because there are multiple theories and components that contribute to sexual orientation. Almost all theories fall under the ideology category because of all the different beliefs and ideas, but I will break down the concept of ideology into two separate groups: the ideas of psychological and biological sexuality.

These two portray valid arguments on how sexual orientation is determined, but no theory is more correct than the other. Each theory has its own argument that defines itself from other theories, and while each states their own view on how sexual orientation is determined, there is no way to change it because it is a part of who people are. Psychological theories once thought of sexual orientation as a psychological disorder thinking that one can change it.

When thinking about psychological theories of sexuality the one person that comes to mind is Sigmund Freud. Freud thought that homosexuality is completely normal amongst humans and that there were various levels of homosexuality that were affected by key factors at an early age. Part of this theory is that sexual orientation is believed to be like behavior; it is something that is taught or learned as the child grows up. If a child is brought up in a normal gender based setting then the child is perceived to be heterosexual as they get older (Friedrichs, 2007).

On the other hand, if a child is brought up in a more cross gender environment then there are more speculations to think the child is homosexual. One example is a child growing up in a predominantly female environment in which the father figure role is diminished or weak. Homosexuality is thought to be a developmental problem within a person. One had this to say, " Homosexuality is neither innate nor unchangeable nor a 'life-style choice' and changeable at will. The one with homosexual feelings, desires, and behavior is struggling as a result of a developmental problem" (Glense, 2005).

Biological theories imply that sexual orientation is derived from DNA or family history. And this theory says that the brain of a homosexual and the brain of a heterosexual are anatomically different (Reitman, 2008). And this leads to the statement that " People are born gay" and that there is nothing that can be done to change it. In that mindset it is also stated that sexual orientation is also depended on brain anatomy, and if a person is homosexual then it is because that's the way they think and how their brain is wired.

By saying that sexual orientation is affected by brain anatomy, people can also come to a conclusion that homosexual people perceive things differently and that's what sets them apart from heterosexuals. In my mind I can believe this theory because it makes sense that people are born gay and that they cannot choose their sexuality. Family history is said to play a part in sexual orientation (Francis, 2008). And that people think if a child has homosexual parents then the child will end up also a homosexual.

This is not always the case because a good majority of people who are homosexual have heterosexual parents. Studies have shown that homosexual people tend to be on the younger side of all their siblings and usually have multiple older brothers (Francis, 2008) Biological theories also suggest that since people are born wither straight or gay then there is a so called " gay gene" and that it has to do with the number of chromosomes and their DNA makeup (Friedrichs, 2007). Even though both theories do tend to contradict each other, neither one is more correct.

Both theories give information and beliefs which are important when considering how complex sexual orientation is. The psychological theories think that sexual orientation is environment based developmental problem. If a child grows up in an environment that seems to be opposite gender based then it is assumed that the child is homosexual as they get older. The biological theories have a different approach. They believe that sexual orientation is biological and that you were born that way and there is nothing that can be done to change it.

Sexual orientation was also said to differ by families because if the idea that if a child has homosexual parents then the child will end up also a homosexual. Statements that support this claim say that the brains of homosexuals and heterosexuals are indeed different, and that each brain thinks differently. Both theories are great contributors to the cause of trying to find out how sexual orientation is determined. But since there is no 100% reason, then I guess we will never really know why.