

Does homosexual
parenting have
negative effects?



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This research paper tries to review the same sex couples relationships regarding the role they play in parenthood and the effects both negative and positive that they likely would have on their children whether biological or adopted. It also reviews the society's perception of the gay men and the lesbian community and their rights to raise their children. A comparison of the effects of lesbian and the gay men parenting and that of heterosexual parenting will also be brought about in order to bring about the positive or negative side of homosexual parenting. This research paper will also review the results of the researches done on homosexual parenting, the arguments, the outcomes and conclusions.

Introduction

According to Bozett (1987), lesbians and gay men form families which are identical in appearance like those of non-gay families. Within the last couple of years in the gay and lesbian communities, there has been increased awareness of the fact that the possibility of being a parent is not ruled out by being gay. According to Drescher and Glazer (2001), traditionally, when one came out as lesbian or gay, it meant that one had to abandon any hope of ever becoming a parent or even to keep one's children if one had them already. However, with homosexuality in the open, more and more same sex couples are having new babies, are continuing to raise previous heterosexual relationships children and also are adopting children (Drescher & Glazer, 2001).

As a result, after coming out many gay men and lesbians are considering parenthood. Parenthood in the lesbian and gay men community may come

about from joining of a homosexual parent legally with a spouse of the opposite sex who may have one or more children who may be adopted or biological. On the other hand, children may be adopted by lesbians and gay men as single parents who may or may not have a lover who takes the stepparent role. Some of the gay men or lesbians may choose to provide foster care as a way of parenting. Lesbians on the other hand, can opt to become parents through alternative fertilization. Other ways for the homosexuals to become parents is where single or coupled gay men use a surrogate mother and also where a lesbian is inseminated by one or more than one gay man. And thereafter rear the offspring as if it were related to them biologically (Bozett, 1987).

According to Kurdek (2004), homosexual parenting is when gay men or lesbians become biological or non biological parents to one or more children. Despite the controversy surrounding marriage of the same couples recently, there has not been established a reliable number of estimates of lesbian and gay couples. According to an American survey data, 40-60 (%) of gay men and 45-80 (%) of lesbians are currently romantically involved. Because when one presents himself or herself to the public as part of a lesbian or gay couple is subjected to abuse, discrimination and even violence, these numbers are likely to be underestimated as many do not come out in the open (Kurdek, 2004).

Effects of homosexual parenting

According to Patterson (2000), the gay and lesbian's family lives have been a source of controversy for a long time. Due to the stigma attached to the

same sex identities, the lesbians and gay men who declare their identities risk their original family relationships. However, the gay men and lesbians have always succeeded in creating and to sustain family relationships despite the discrimination and prejudice (Patterson, 2000). According to studies, children who have been raised by lesbian mothers tend to conform to gender role behaviors and careers that are stereotypical. In a census conducted in US 2000, 33% of lesbian couple household and 22% of gay couple household reported at least an under 18 year child living in that home. By 2005, the number of children living in the same sex couple households were 270, 313 (Patterson, 2000).

In Stacey and Biblarz (2001) words, gay marriage today has become rampant in our society and many countries are endorsing for its legalization. It is therefore no surprise that family issues on lesbigay have turned into a rapidly growing industry in social science research. Such researches bear on family policies and marriage that predetermine the Western Culture's held convictions on parenthood sexuality, and gender. As opponents and advocates square off in cultural wars, legislatures, state and federal courts and in the electoral arena over efforts to extend equal rights to foster care, child custody, marriage, and adoption to nonheterosexuals, they heatedly debate the implications of a body investigating how the parents sexual orientation affects the children. The research body's findings are such that there are no differences notable between children brought up by heterosexual parents and those brought by gay and lesbian parents. They also find the same sex parents to be as effective and competent as heterosexual parents (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). According to most studies

conducted about homosexual parenting, outcome of children of the same sex parents is no better, nor worse than other children's in terms of self esteem, academic achievement, quality and warmth of family relationships, peer group relationships, or behavioral difficulties and no likelihood of being gay than other kids (Carpenter, 2007).

According to traditional opinions, homosexual parenting will have the following effects on their children

1. Provide an associate, a model and experiences which make a child engage in homosexual activities.
2. The probability of sexual victimization in childhood will increase.
3. Due to the disturbed behavioral and standards of the parents, the child will likely be psychologically and socially disturbed than other children who have been raised by straight parents (Homosexual parents, 2010).

However, in a 2002 AAP report on gay parenting, it found no meaningful differences of children who have been raised by same sex parents from those raised by heterosexual parents. The committee first assessed the adjustments, behavior, and attitudes of gay and lesbian parents and found more similarities than there were differences in the attitudes and parenting styles of gay and non gay fathers. At the same time, the lesbian mothers had the same scores in psychological adjustment, attitudes and self esteem toward child rearing with the heterosexual mothers. The second study looks at the sexual orientation and gender identity of children who have been raised by gay parents. The study reported that none of those children showed any confusion in gender identity, wished to be of the other sex or engaged in behavior of the cross gender. There were also no differences found in the boys or girls' preference of toys, activities, games, friendship or

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dressing code with the same sex parents in comparison with heterosexual parents, nor sexual attraction difference or identification of self as gay (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001).

The third area of study looked at the emotional and social development of children. It compared children who have been raised by divorced lesbians with those raised by divorced heterosexual mothers. There was no difference found in behavioral difficulties, quality of family relationships, peer group relationships, academic success, and personality measures. The study however, suggest one meaningful difference that children raised by lesbian parents are more likely to tolerate diversity and are likely to be more nurturing towards younger kids than those children raised by heterosexual parents (Hirsch & Sears, 2004).

Most of the researches conducted about gay parenting have the same conclusion that the suggestion that children raised by gay parents suffer has no base. The only significant difference as suggested by some evidence is that children raised by same sex parents are much freer in occupation and behavior explorations which are not hampered by traditional gender roles than children raised by heterosexual parents and thus a good thing (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001).

According to Stacey and Biblarz (2001), those who oppose to parental rights of lesbian and gay couples claim that children of these couples are at a higher risk of outcomes that are negative. Most psychological research however, concludes that the developmental outcomes of kids raised by same sex parents and those raised by heterosexual parents are no different

(Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). Several lawyers and activists who are struggling to defend adoption petitions and child custody by gay men and lesbians or attaining the marriage rights of the same gender have been successful on drawing on the research (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001).

In reference to Kurdek (2004), a comparison of both partners from cohabiting gay and lesbian couples with no children was done with those of married heterosexual couples with children. Of the 50 (%) comparisons, there were no differences between the heterosexual partners with the gay and lesbian partners. Differences were found on the 78 (%) comparisons, which indicated that the same sex couples functioned better than did the heterosexuals. According to Kurdek, since the same variables were used to predict the concurrent relationship stability and quality for both same sex parents and heterosexual parents, he concludes that there should be generalization across the heterosexual, gay and lesbian couples by those processes which regulate the functioning in relationships (Kurdek, 2004).

There are a few studies purport to establish characteristics of children raised by gay couple which are negative, these negative characteristics tend to however be discounted as they are associated with researchers and organizations that are anti gay. While there is a need for further study of gay parenting, it is much clear that there's no reason found by the objective researchers to accept the idea that children of gay parents need protection (Hirsch & Sears, 2004). According to Rekers (2004), the Arkansas regulation that denies foster parents' licenses to those adults behaving in a homosexual way has a rational basis from three reasons. These are:

From the inherent structure and nature of homosexually behaving adults' households, foster children are endangered as they are exposed to a substantial harmful stress levels that are far above heterosexual homes levels of stress. There is normally a high psychological disorder incidence in children entering foster care ranging from 29-96 (%); hence in the presence of adults with homosexual behavior in the foster home they are vulnerable to increased maladjustment and psychological harm (Hirsch & Sears, 2004).

Same sex relationships are substantially short lived and significantly less stable compared to a man and a woman marriage hence the rate of household transition is high in foster homes with same sex couples (Hirsch & Sears, 2004).

Foster children in homes with members behaving in a homosexual manner are deprived of the vitally needed positive child adjustment contributions which are due to the inherent nature of their foster homes and which are present only in heterosexual foster homes which are licensed. Some of these contributions are a father or a mother model, lack of a father or mother childbearing contributions, and lack of a wife -husband relationship model (Rekers, 2004).

According to Gerstmann (2004), it is clear that it has not been certainly established by the social science data that the lesbian or gay men households are not optimal environments for children to be raised. But this does not make it for the society to irrationally assume that the biological father and mother should raise a child for its best. According to Social science data, we should be cautious to assume that traditional families

compared to families of the same sex are better environments for raising children. Again, we actually cannot say that hypothesizing that children being raised by both a father and mother benefit is irrational (Gerstmann, 2004).

Conclusion

Lesbians and gay men form families which are identical in appearance like those of non-gay families. Within the last couple of years in the gay and lesbian communities, there has been increased awareness of the fact that the possibility of being a parent is not ruled out by being gay. Homosexual parenting is when gay men or lesbians become biological or non biological parents to one or more children. Despite the controversy surrounding marriage of the same couples recently, there has not been established a reliable number of estimates of lesbian and gay couples. This is because when one presents himself or herself to the public as part of a lesbian or gay couple is subjected to abuse, discrimination and even violence, these numbers are likely to be underestimated as many do not come out in the open.

Most of the researches conducted about gay parenting have the same conclusion that the suggestion that children raised by gay parents suffer has no base. The only significant difference as suggested by some evidence is that children raised by same sex parents are much freer in occupation and behavior explorations which are not hampered by traditional gender roles than children raised by heterosexual parents and thus a good thing. It is clear that it has not been certainly established by the social science data

that the lesbian or gay men households are not optimal environments for children to be raised. But this does not make it for the society to irrationally assume that the biological father and mother should raise a child for its best. According to Social science data, we should be cautious to assume that traditional families compared to families of the same sex are better environments for raising children.