

**PROCREATIVE POSSIBILITIES: ANALYZING THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL
DIMENSIONS OF QUEER COUPLES RAISING CHILDREN**Bawa, Simmin¹¹Head of Department, Philosophy and Assistant Professor, Jai Hind College, MumbaiJani, Jesha²²TYBA student Philosophy-Psychology, Jai Hind College, MumbaiNisar, Shalini³³TYBA student Philosophy-Psychology, Jai Hind College, Mumbai**Abstract**

Families are what matters the most, so how do queer families handle their roles? This research paper addresses the metaphysical aspects of queer couples raising children, going against traditional family roles. It also examines the ethics of parenthood, the associated moral considerations when queer couples decide to become parents and questions how responsibilities are perceived in queer households. It examines the ethical, social and legal implications of Aided Reproductive Technologies (ART) and adoption policies. Queer people have existed for centuries although these types of families are rather modern concepts. "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) parents raise well-adjusted children" ¹. The study endeavors to explore conventional beliefs about gender, sexuality, and the nuclear family by referencing feminist, queer, and intersectional theories. We wish to understand what prejudices are held against the children of these queer couples and how they handle such issues. In particular, the research focuses on the duties and ethical issues of persons who abandon past relationships or familial commitments to form queer families. It also explores the philosophical and ethical aspects of moving from a heterosexual lifestyle to a queer one. And in abandoning these responsibilities how these individuals disrupt the conventional family structures. It also looks at the positive ways in which such parenting can impact our societies and fundamentally change the way we look at diversity, equality and justice. In a changing society where traditional ideas of family are being reinvented,

¹ Farr, Rachel H., et al. "How Do LGBTQ+ Parents Raise Well-Adjusted, Resilient, and Thriving Children?" *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 31, no. 6, 2022, pp. 526-535, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214221121295>.

this research is crucial. It offers a thorough philosophical examination that can improve social fairness, guide public policy, and advance a more accepting conception of parenthood and family variety. Through an analysis of modern discussions and case studies, this paper seeks to enhance the understanding of family and parenthood to be more inclusive in the 21st century.

Keywords: Queer, Sexuality, Family, Parenthood, Ethics, Couples, Prejudice, Traditional, Modern, Roles, Relationships

INTRODUCTION

Families have long been the cornerstone of civilization, influencing both people and entire cultures. They are essential to people's growth and the smooth operation of communities because they offer emotional support, socialization, and a sense of belonging. But there's a big change happening to the traditional idea of family, especially with the rise of queer families. This study paper explores the ethical issues and questions surrounding conventional family norms, and explores the metaphysical implications of queer couples raising children. These families face legal obstacles and societal prejudices as they adjust to parenthood, especially in light of adoption laws and assisted reproductive technologies (ART). It aims to comprehend the discrimination LGBTQ parents' children must deal with and how these families handle these problems. It also looks at the responsibilities and ethical dilemmas faced by those who leave behind prior relationships or family ties in order to create LGBT families and challenge established family structures. Additionally, this study explores the beneficial effects gay parenting has on society, promoting a more inclusive conception of justice, equality, and diversity. This paper offers a thorough philosophical analysis that attempts to improve social justice, guide public policy, and foster a more inclusive view of family variety in a society where traditional family concepts are being redefined. The research aims to expand our understanding of family and parenthood in the twenty-first century and make it more inclusive and equitable for all through an examination of current issues and case studies.

ETHICS OF PARENTHOOD

What is a parent? A parent is a person who assumes the duty of bringing up a kid until they reach adulthood., who is primarily responsible to cater to the child's emotional and physical needs. All parents have legal rights and responsibilities that they need to fulfill and that is known as 'parental

responsibility'. This responsibility starts from birth till the child is 18 years of age. Parental responsibility includes, providing a home for the child, protecting them from any harm, guiding the child, giving them an education, providing for their medical needs, catering to their emotional needs and much more. According to Freeman, "The principle of parental responsibility requires that individuals should desist from having children unless certain minimum conditions can be satisfied. Responsible parents want their children to have good and fulfilling lives"². According to the notion of parental responsibility, Freeman goes on, the very young and the very elderly shouldn't become parents. Similarly, no one should have children unless they can ensure that their children have a decent life, which includes having access to clean water, good food, shelter, healthcare, and education. In addition, in the case of split parents, the parent lacking parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring the child's financial needs are met. A parent can now make decisions on behalf of their child as long as they assume and carry out this obligation. Consequently, no one, not even the state, has the authority to determine what is right or wrong for a particular person; only a parent has this authority. "A parent can choose for his child, and exclude others from the making of these choices, only in the service of and thus constrained by a duty to care for the child. It is in the first instance because a dependent child must have decisions made for it that a designated parent is entitled to make those decisions."³

We then need to talk about the awareness of reproductive rights. "Reproductive rights are about the legal right to contraception, abortion, fertility treatment, reproductive health, and access to information about one's reproductive body. Reproductive rights secure people's freedom to decide about their body's capacities to (not) reproduce."⁴ The decision-making authority over when, how, and whether to have children belongs to the woman. Regrettably, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding reproductive health, fertility treatments, and contraception in India. Due to this lack of awareness people then are unable to take up their parental responsibilities because they are

² *Parenthood and Procreation (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*. 31 Mar. 2021, plato.stanford.edu/entries/parenthood/#:~:text=Legal%2C%20social%2C%20and%20biological%20parenthood,moral%20parental%20rights%20and%20responsibilities.

³ *Parenthood and Procreation (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*. 31 Mar. 2021, plato.stanford.edu/entries/parenthood/#:~:text=Legal%2C%20social%2C%20and%20biological%20parenthood,moral%20parental%20rights%20and%20responsibilities.

⁴ Schurr, Carolin, and Elisabeth Militz. "Reproductive Rights." *Elsevier eBooks*, 2020, pp. 435–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-102295-5.10234-3>.

oblivious of the responsibilities. In turn this results in people not being ethical parents and fulfilling their roles.

There are different types of parents. There are biological parents, genetic parents (sperm or egg donors), gestational parents (surrogate parents) and social parents. This is a complication brought about by modern reproductive technology, that there can be more than just biological parents. Biological parents are usually separated from social parents, who are thought to be the child's carers and raisers. Adoptive parents use donated gametes to raise children created through third-party conception, even though they are not biological parents. Biological parents are not always social parents because they can donate gametes, place their children for adoption, or serve as gestational carriers. Friends who are raising kids together, grandparents, or a community that raises kids are a few examples of when the community may not acknowledge these parents, they are called social parents. Social parents in that sense are essentially adoptive parents or foster parents. Adoptive and foster care have a lot of ethical challenges. The adoption and child welfare procedures that present the greatest ethical challenge are those that involve upending family structures in the alleged "best interest" of the child. Even the increase of adoptions from third world countries comes with various complications. According to Mtown, "One of the most recent and infamous cases was that of Sherin Mathews, a three year old girl from India who had developmental disabilities. Sherin died in October of last year from allegedly choking on milk that she was being forced to drink, though her adoptive father has made various claims about the circumstances of her death. The three-year-old was missing for a period of time but was found in a culvert. The international community was in an uproar after this crime came to light, and India quickly adopted legislation to reduce foreign adoption."⁵

These raise questions about the rights of children and who really gets to choose the best for the child. Following World War I, children's rights were acknowledged with the 1924 passage of the Geneva Declaration. With the UN's approval of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, the process of recognizing children's rights continues. Keeping in mind that, as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child needs special safeguards and care, including

⁵ Mtown, Author. *Orphan Fever: The Dark Side of International Adoption* – UAB Institute for Human Rights Blog. 13 Mar. 2018, sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2018/03/13/orphan-fever-the-dark-side-of-international-adoption.

appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth, due to his physical and mental immaturity". Human rights include rights for children. They are made up of fundamental freedoms and essential human rights.

The vital task of caring and growing a child—making sure their physical, emotional, and educational needs are satisfied until they reach adulthood—falls to parents. It is the parents' responsibility to provide these rights to their child. It is upon them to fulfill their duties for bearing new life on earth and to be ethical parents. It entails providing for a child's basic needs and upholding their rights. With the development of reproductive technology, parenting has taken on diverse forms in the contemporary era, including biological, genetic, gestational, and social parenting, everyone with an own set of implications. The moral ramifications of adoption and foster care highlight how important it is to prioritize the child's best interests and further complicate the position of the parent. All things considered, good parenting is essential to ensuring that kids develop into secure, well-rounded adults who are backed by a system of rights and obligations.

ETHICAL, SOCIAL, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF ART AND ADOPTION

Infertility is treated as a health problem worldwide. With the help of modern technologies, infertile couples can receive treatment to increase fertility or get help in conceiving a child with the help of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). ART techniques involve the manipulation of egg, sperm or embryos to increase the chances of a successful pregnancy. In addition to providing an option for infertile couples, assisted reproductive technology (ART) can predict the delivery of a child who may have inherited genetic abnormalities even in cases when the parents are fertile. ART can also help queer couples to have children. Lesbian couples need to use sperm donation to achieve pregnancy. When it comes time to become parents, transgender individuals try to maintain their fertility by storing or retrieving eggs or sperm and modifying their hormone medication. Assisted Reproductive Technologies are used differently in building families for Queer couples and straight couples in terms of whose sperm or eggs are used to conceive the child. Similar to ART, even adoption is a great way to have a child. It is a good way for children in need of a family to have families. But a lot of people think adoption as the last resort for making their families. Adoption influences societal norms by demonstrating that families can be formed in a multitude of ways. It helps break down stereotypes and biases, fostering a culture that values emotional bonds over biological connections. This has significant ramifications for social policies and attitudes in

the society, promoting a wider understanding of what it means to be a family. When it comes to adoption, LGBT people frequently experience discrimination and scrutiny. However, as attitudes in society change, we are witnessing an increasing number of these people become effective adoptive parents. Their experiences serve as evidence that conventional family structures are not the only places where someone may love and raise a child.

Philosophers have proposed altering the definition of family to include more than two legal and social parents in light of the growing usage of ART and gamete donation, as well as the acceptance of same-sex marriage and changing attitudes towards polyamory. Social justice, environmental effect, and child welfare are the main drivers of this reevaluation.

Adoption, beyond its emotional aspects, is deeply embedded in legal frameworks. This procedure recognizes society's acceptance of many routes to parenting, including those taken by single people and same-sex couples, and formalizes the parent-child bond by giving the same rights and obligations as a biological link. For many, parenthood is a dream, and adoption provides a route to fulfillment for those unable to have biological children. In India, adoption is primarily governed by two legislations: The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, and The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Unfortunately, neither of these laws contains provisions for adoption by LGBTQ couples, which undermines the purpose of decriminalizing homosexuality by restricting the rights and civil liberties of the LGBTQ community. Parental rights and paternity problems without formal agreement are important legal considerations, particularly for lesbian moms who use Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID) and their partners. To preserve their parental rights and navigate ART, LGBTQ people need knowledgeable legal assistance.

Many adoption agencies prohibit queer couples from adopting together but allow individual homosexuals to adopt, resulting in only one legal parent despite both raising the child. "Anand Grover, a senior lawyer and prominent HIV and LGBTQ+ rights activist, noted that since LGBTQ+ individuals cannot marry, they resort to adopting in one partner's name."⁶ He advocates for exploring pacts or recognized agreements for those who do not wish to marry. Second-parent adoption is a crucial mechanism for LGBTQ+ couples to ensure both are legally recognized as

⁶ Mehta, T., and T. Mehta. "Where Are India's Queer Parents? Having a Family Is Not Even an Option for Many Indians." *ThePrint*, 20 Feb. 2021, <https://theprint.in/opinion/where-are-indias-queer-parents/608267/>.

parents, protecting their rights in case of divorce.

Globally, the legal status of LGBTQ+ adoption varies, with some countries allowing queer couples to adopt, others permitting adoption by individuals, and some disallowing it entirely. In India, neither the law nor society accommodates the parenthood rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

“In 2015, Maneka Gandhi, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, relaxed adoption rules to allow single men and women to adopt. However, some NGOs, like the Missionaries of Charity, opposed this decision and temporarily halted adoption operations, fearing single adoptive parents might be gay or lesbian.”⁷ While social biases against LGBTQ+ adoption are rapidly changing worldwide, legal frameworks lag behind. As such, it is imperative that LGBT couples take the appropriate legal actions to guarantee that they are acknowledged as intended parents. The rights and obligations that come with being a parent are part of being a legal parent. Despite the ART bill not aligning with it, one of India’s oldest and leading fertility clinics has dedicated an entire page on their website to "same-sex parenting." According to polls conducted in the US, the majority of same-sex couples are raising their biological children, with adoption making up a smaller portion of the total.

CONSEQUENCES OF HORMONE THERAPY

What makes us essentially male or female? It is the amount of estrogen and testosterone in one's body. The amount of estrogen or testosterone in one's body is what makes someone look male or female. Both genders carry both hormones although at different levels. According to Reactions- males carry approximately 10 times more testosterone than females and can produce testosterone in their testes 20 times faster than women can in their ovaries.⁸ Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is essentially going through a second puberty.

While hormone levels may peak during the first year of treatment, physical changes might not show up for another two to three years. Hormone replacement treatment (HRT) may be desired by someone who wants to feel more in line with how their body feels. As a queer person you may want your body to show more obvious sex characteristics to the sex you identify with. Friction arises between the gender that transgender people identify with and their biological sex. People

⁷ Mehta, T., and T. Mehta. "Where Are India's Queer Parents? Having a Family Is Not Even an Option for Many Indians." *ThePrint*, 20 Feb. 2021, <https://theprint.in/opinion/where-are-indias-queer-parents/608267/>.

⁸ ---. "Hormones and Gender Transition." *YouTube*, 8 June 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5knvmy1Z3s.

who were assigned female at birth but identify as men are known as transgender men, and people who were assigned male at birth but identify as women are known as transgender women. Gender dysphoria or persistent gender incongruence may be the determining factor for a patient's eligibility for transgender hormone therapy.

Transgender hormone therapy, also known as gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) or hormone replacement therapy (HRT), is a type of hormone therapy in which people who identify as transgender or who are gender nonconforming are given sex hormones and other hormonal medications in an effort to better align their secondary sexual characteristics with their gender identity. Depending on whether feminization or masculinization is the intended outcome of the treatment, this sort of hormone therapy is administered in one of two ways:

- Masculinizing hormone therapy: this treatment uses androgens and sometimes antiestrogens to treat transgender men or transmasculine individuals.
- Feminizing hormone therapy, which uses estrogens with or without antiandrogens, is for transgender women or transfeminine individuals.

As per Unger, Cécile A - "Both the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the Endocrine Society have created transgender-specific guidelines to help serve as a framework for providers caring for gender minority patients. These guidelines are mostly based on clinical experience from experts in the field. Guidelines for hormone therapy in transgender men are mostly extrapolations from recommendations that currently exist for the treatment of hypogonadal natal men and estrogen therapy for transgender women is loosely based on treatments used for postmenopausal women."⁹ They mention that before beginning hormone therapy, all patients were advised to take a "real life test," according to previous standards. Prior to beginning cross-sex hormone therapy, patients were obliged to live as their self-affirmed gender full-time for a certain amount of time, typically 12 months. The suggestion was made to aid sufferers in their social adjustment. But both associations have acknowledged that this step is unrealistic for a lot of patients because social transition can be extremely difficult if a person's physical appearance and their self-affirmed gender are not in sync. Therefore, the amended

⁹ Unger, Cécile A. "Hormone Therapy for Transgender Patients." *Translational Andrology and Urology*, vol. 5, no. 6, Dec. 2016, pp. 877–84. <https://doi.org/10.21037/tau.2016.09.04>.

guidelines do not call for this stage; instead, the societies advise patients to transition simultaneously with medical therapy and socialization.

WPATH advises that a referral from a licensed mental health professional is required unless the prescribing practitioner is qualified to conduct this type of evaluation. The following factors determine a patient's eligibility for therapy: (I) a mental health professional with expertise in the field must diagnose and treat persistent, well-documented gender dysphoria (the condition in which an individual feels that their emotional and psychological identity as male or female is opposite to their biological sex); (II) the age of majority; (III) the capacity to make an informed decision and provide consent for treatment; and (IV) excellent management of major coexisting mental and/or medical disorders.

The following physical side effects might be anticipated three months after starting testosterone therapy: increased body and facial hair, skin changes and increased acne, changes in the distribution of fat and muscle mass, and an increase in libido. Additionally, the cessation of menses, or amenorrhea, can be anticipated. Increased clitoral size, atrophy of the vaginal epithelium, and a deeper voice are among the latter symptoms. Androgenic interaction with skin's pilosebaceous units can also cause male pattern hair loss over time. Following the initiation of estrogen, the following changes are anticipated: increased body fat, slower growth of facial and body hair, decreased testicular size, and erectile dysfunction. Breast growth is also expected. It can take up to 18 to 24 months for these changes to manifest, and the degree of those changes and the interval between their maximums vary amongst patients.

We must look at the psychological and social influences hormone therapy can have on a person. One essential aspect of human existence that influences interpersonal connections and people's ability to relate to others is psychosocial functioning. Well-being, self-mastery, and interpersonal functioning are the three main categories of psychosocial functioning. It has been demonstrated that improved psychosocial functioning in these three areas is linked to better social experiences, such as more fulfilling friendships and romantic relationships, which may lessen social isolation and loneliness over the course of a person's lifetime. Worryingly, accumulating evidence points toward impairments in psychosocial functioning and greater negative experiences in social relationships among transgender people relative to cisgender populations, likely driven in part by

experiences of stigma and invalidation.¹⁰ In perhaps the starkest example of how poor psychosocial functioning and negative experiences in social relationships may affect transgender people, suicide rates are substantially elevated in this group relative to cisgender people. Approximately one in three transgender people attempt suicide in their lifetime, and past work has linked this risk in part to disruption in their social life.¹¹

Looking at stories of people who have gone through HRT gives us a better understanding of what they are feeling and going through. In The Oregonian- transgender Oregonians were asked to share their most horrific health care experiences.¹² Chloe Flora said that she had not been to the dentist in 4-5 years and it was just not worth the stress and a very uncomfortable experience. A third of Oregonians say they avoid going to the hospital when they are ill because of past experiences. Many transgender people believe they were misled by their doctors or that they were the victims of a harsh medical experiment.

Walt Heyer shares his story of becoming a woman for 8 years before detransitioning.¹³ Heyer was born in 1940 to Charles and Mary Heyer in Los Angeles. His grandma "Mamie" sewed him a purple outfit when he was little. His father slapped him once his parents found out and began to monitor all of his visits. He would be sexually abused by his uncle. Walt Heyer had gender reassignment surgery following what he called a false diagnosis of gender dysphoria. He then lived for eight years as Laura Jensen until detransitioning. Because of his experience, he now supports the belief that transgender people often feel regret after transitioning, and that what they really need is 'psychiatric or psychological help.' Heyer claimed that "being cross-dressed, being disciplined with a hardwood floor plank, and being sexually molested" were the causes of his gender problems. The goal of this viewpoint is to further the discussion on gender identity and the

¹⁰ Doyle, David Matthew, et al. "A Systematic Review of Psychosocial Functioning Changes After Gender-affirming Hormone Therapy Among Transgender People." *Nature Human Behaviour*, vol. 7, no. 8, May 2023, pp. 1320–31. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01605-w>.

¹¹ Doyle, David Matthew, et al. "A Systematic Review of Psychosocial Functioning Changes After Gender-affirming Hormone Therapy Among Transgender People." *Nature Human Behaviour*, vol. 7, no. 8, May 2023, pp. 1320–31. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01605-w>.

¹² ---. "Transgender Health Care Horror Stories." *YouTube*, 14 May 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvRYamafT0c.

¹³ Daily Wire+. "I Became Transgender. Here's Why I Regret It." *YouTube*, 31 Aug. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbXyyq1333l.

difficulties associated with changing one's gender. The speaker's personal experience highlights the importance of support systems, mental health treatments, and making educated decisions while identifying and expressing one's gender identity.

WHAT IMPACT IT HAS ON THEIR CHILDREN

It's fascinating to think about how a child's mental health is affected by having gay parents. The de-medicalization of homosexuality by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 occurred nearly half a century ago. According to recent estimates, over 4.5% of adult Americans, or over 11.3 million people, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer—LGBTQ (Conron, 2019). Presently, over 27% of LGBTQ people have children below 18 years (between 2 and 3.7 million) (Gates, 2015). Due to their sexual orientation, these parents deal with particular stresses, like discrimination, unfavorable comments from friends and family, and restrictive laws. Parents who identify as gender or sexual minorities expect rejection—not just from themselves, but also from their kids, which adds another layer of stress to the stress that all parents endure. The family systems theory asserts that stress experienced by parents has a direct impact on the mental health of their offspring due to spillover effects. Children of same-sex parents have statistically considerably greater emotional issues than children of different-sex parents, according to various research by Paul Sullins (2015a, 2015b, 2017) and the study by Reczek et al. (2017) utilizing large representative samples. Nevertheless, the family structure in a particular year could only be captured as a cross-sectional snapshot by these large representative investigations. They were unable to discriminate between children whose parental circumstances had changed over time as a result of separation, the coming out of a parent, or other circumstances, and children who were raised by same-sex parents from birth. After a gay parent separate from a different-sex partner, many children live with a same-sex couple; as a result, they were not raised by same-sex parents from birth. This is a significant limitation as, according to McLanahan et al. (2013), situations like parental separation may have a detrimental impact on mental health outcomes on their own. Living with same-sex parents may therefore be incorrectly associated with a negative coefficient in research based on cross-sectional data (Mazrekaj et al.; 2020).¹⁴ Although as a result of confronting and overcoming cultural stereotypes, children often acquire strong coping mechanisms and resilience.

Over more than 30 years of research, children raised by queer parents have shown resilience in

social, psychological, and sexual health despite facing economic and legal disparities and social stigma. These children are often subjected to laws, social policies, and disapproving attitudes that create social distance and challenge the stability of their families and their optimal social and psychological development. The primary concerns for these children include social stigma and discrimination. They may experience teasing, bullying, or exclusion by peers due to their parents' sexual orientation. Additionally, these children might internalize homophobia because of the negative societal norms against LGBTQ+ individuals. The societal expectations of gender roles and traditional family structures can also negatively impact these children, creating pressure to conform and causing confusion and conflict. Despite these challenges, there are positive aspects as well. Children of queer couples often display high levels of social competence. Their exposure to diverse family dynamics and different family structures fosters immense empathy and tolerance. These children demonstrate resilience and strengths in various aspects of social development, frequently exhibiting high levels of social competence and emotional well-being. While children of queer parents are well-adjusted and socially competent, they still face discrimination and stigma for circumstances beyond their control, even when their family structures are legally recognized. These children raised by queer parents often exhibit a greater degree of open-mindedness and tolerance compared to their peers. This openness is largely attributed to the diverse perspectives and inclusive environments they are exposed to from a young age. By challenging traditional conventions and assumptions, queer families give their kids a more expansive perspective on what it means to be a family and to be in love. These children are raised in households where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated, fostering an environment that encourages them to be more accepting of differences in others. Children raised by queer parents often develop enhanced critical thinking skills as they navigate and question societal norms and stereotypes. This critical thinking is nurtured through their early exposure to diverse family structures and experiences that challenge traditional expectations. These kids are often pushed to challenge social norms and gain a more complex perspective on gender, sexuality, and family relationships. Studies have consistently shown that children of queer parents are more likely to support LGBTQ+ rights and demonstrate inclusive behaviors. For example, research conducted by the American Psychological Association found that children raised by same-sex parents are as well-adjusted as their peers and tend to have

more positive attitudes toward diversity and inclusion (APA, 2005).¹⁴ One significant factor contributing to the open-mindedness of children with queer parents is the constant exposure to discussions about equality, identity, and inclusivity. Queer parents often have personal experiences with discrimination and bias, which they use as teaching moments for their children. Moreover, the inclusive nature of queer families means that children are often part of diverse social networks. This exposure helps children understand and respect differences, making them more empathetic and less likely to harbor prejudices.

In addition to these social benefits, the supportive and nurturing environment typical of queer households contributes to the overall well-being and resilience of these children. Queer parents often strive to create safe spaces for their children to express themselves freely, fostering a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. The children's attitudes towards others reflect their positive upbringing, as they are more inclined to cherish and promote equality and diversity in their communities. One significant positive aspect is that children in queer families often become adept at identifying and challenging prejudiced views. A notable example is Zach Wahls, who, as a teenager, publicly addressed the Iowa House of Representatives about his experience being raised by two mothers.¹⁵ His well-reasoned and nuanced defense of his family contributed to changing public attitudes and advancing LGBTQ+ rights. These kids also frequently pick up the skill of approaching issues from several angles. The exposure to varied viewpoints within their family structure enables them to evaluate issues critically and empathetically. For instance, children of queer parents might participate in discussions about gender and sexuality with peers, contributing insights that challenge prevailing stereotypes and encourage inclusive attitudes.

Results of a long-term investigation into the sexual orientation of adults who grew up in lesbian households are given. First seen at age 9.5 years on average, twenty-five children of lesbian mothers were compared to a control group of twenty-one offspring of heterosexual single mothers at age 23.5 years on average. Standardized interviews were used to gather information on gender role behavior and family characteristics from the mothers and their children in the original study, as well as sexual orientation from the young adults in the follow-up study. Even while those from

¹⁴ "Lesbian and Gay Parenting." *American Psychological Association*, www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/parenting.

¹⁵ Iowa State University. "Understanding How Students Learn (Part 1)." *YouTube*, 21 Feb. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4tOzTeul8Y.

lesbian families were more likely to experiment with same-sex relationships—especially if their early family setting was one of acceptance and openness towards lesbian and gay relationships—the majority of youngsters raised in lesbian households identified as heterosexual.

In conclusion, children raised by queer parents benefit from an upbringing that prioritizes open-mindedness, tolerance, and inclusivity. The diverse perspectives and inclusive practices inherent in queer families help shape children who are empathetic, socially aware, and committed to equality. This unique upbringing not only benefits the children themselves but also contributes to a more inclusive and accepting society.

MOVING FROM A HETEROSEXUAL LIFE TO A QUEER ONE

The personal journey of identity exploration for queer individuals is often a complex process. Things like self-discovery, acceptance and understanding are involved throughout this process.

The process of changing one's gender is highly private, unique, and individualized. This journey is different for each person, shaped by their experiences, environment, and internal reflections. Queer individuals may encounter prejudice, discrimination, and a lack of understanding from society. These obstacles can impact mental health and well-being. The personal journey and identity exploration for queer individuals involve a complex interplay of self-discovery, acceptance, and expression.

For parents who identified as transgender, coming out was a difficult process because of concerns about the possible negative effects on their cisgender children; specifically, that the children might be tormented by their friends at school and that the parents might be stigmatized by others at the school gates.

Navigating the path of identity exploration and self-discovery is filled with emotional and psychological challenges for queers. Some of the challenges are as follows:

Deep introspection is frequently the first step on the path to identity questioning and coming out. This period of time is characterized by intense confusion and uncertainty as people struggle with emotions that go against both personal and cultural standards. It might be lonely to go through this important stage of self-discovery, especially if you don't have the support or empathy of others. A big and difficult step towards self-acceptance is coming out, which entails vulnerability and running the danger of breaking up with somebody or getting backlash. When someone comes out, they have to re-establish ties with friends and family, who might require some time to comprehend

and accept their identity, and negotiate new social dynamics. Renegotiation can be tense and cause a rift in relationships. Discovering new social circles—such as LGBTQ+ communities and support groups—where they feel welcomed and encouraged gives them a sense of community, but it also calls for flexibility and candor. Many find great qualities and resilience despite these obstacles. They get resilience training, strengthen their sense of self, and create networks of support that validate who they are. Counseling and therapy provide important support by assisting people in managing their stress and anxiety and processing their emotions. In the end, even though this identity research process is difficult, it promotes personal development and increased self-awareness.

Often identity exploration for queers involves experimenting, this usually includes adopting new pronouns, exploring various aspects of sexuality and gender or changes in appearance. Someone could, for instance, experiment with different haircuts, outfit looks, or social positions to see what suits them the best. The journey of identity exploration is not without its challenges. While this journey can be marked by challenges, it also offers opportunities for profound personal growth and connection. Few examples of self-discovery and identity exploration are as follows:

Alex, a 28-year-old software engineer, began questioning their gender identity during their teenage years.¹⁶ Growing up in a conservative environment, they struggled with traditional expectations of masculinity, leading to feelings of confusion and isolation. It was not until college that Alex encountered the concept of non-binary identities through LGBTQ+ groups on campus, providing the language and framework needed to understand their feelings and begin their journey of self-discovery. Coming to terms with being non-binary, Alex faced significant challenges, particularly from their family who had difficulty understanding and accepting their identity. However, finding a supportive community on campus played a crucial role in their acceptance journey. After Alex joined a non-binary support group, they got to know people who had gone through similar things. The group gave them a secure place to express themselves without fear of being judged and gave them a lot of emotional support. Alex started experimenting with diverse gender expression through interactions with their support group. They adopted gender-neutral attire, used they/them

¹⁶ Jordan, A. (2023, July 5). Navigating Identity: A Transgender, Non-Binary Person's journey. *Medium*. https://medium.com/@Alex_Jordan/navigating-identity-a-transgender-non-binary-persons-journey-a873de966479

pronouns, and experimented with other haircuts that felt more real. These changes helped Alex feel more comfortable and confident, leading them to become an advocate for non-binary visibility by participating in campus events and workshops. A therapist who assisted Alex in developing coping mechanisms to handle stress and negotiate challenging conversations was crucial to their mental health, even in the face of strong opposition from certain family members and peers who were unable to embrace their identity. Their close friends and the college community's constant support added to their resiliency.

LGBTQ+ organizations offer a safe and accepting space for people to connect with others who have faced similar challenges and experiences. These organizations provide a safe space for individuals to be themselves without fear of judgment, which makes them feel less alone and more a part of the community. Support groups in these communities, such as those facilitated by PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), offer LGBTQ+ individuals' safe spaces to discuss their experiences, receive emotional support, and get insightful guidance from professionals and other community members.¹⁷

Advocacy groups are essential in promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance and rights because they advocate for policies, educate the public, and run public awareness campaigns. They provide services like crisis intervention, instructional materials, and legal support. An important American organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ equality and educates the public on identity, coming out, and healthcare is the Human Rights Campaign (HRC).¹⁸ Additionally, forums and chat rooms facilitate interaction, and hotlines offer instant assistance to individuals in trouble. Online resources and hotlines also provide crucial support.

Now we should look at how queer people transitioning into a new life really impacts them having children. With the stressors of adulthood, these individuals are already transitioning from a heterosexual individual to a queer individual, this adds extra stress and chaos into one's life. What kind of parents do these people produce with all these conditions when they become parents? Given that research so far has been conducted on a small population and is largely positive in saying that they make good parents. When research supports any type of debate there are a large

¹⁷ PFLAG National. "Homepage - PFLAG." *PFLAG*, 16 Feb. 2024, <https://pflag.org/>.

¹⁸ Human Rights Campaign. "Human Rights Campaign." *Human Rights Campaign*, n.d., <https://www.hrc.org/>.

set of pros and cons that can be looked at. One may question the lack of opposition on such a topic. When persons who have broken up with their families or who have left prior unions establish LGBTQ families, there is a complex interaction of duties and ethical issues. It might be morally difficult to quit a previous relationship or family commitment, especially if it includes breaking promises, abandoning children, or upsetting all those that are dependent. Such choices might have moral ramifications that include feelings of guilt, social condemnation, and the moral need to strike a balance between one's commitments and the need of personal authenticity. There would be severe psychological and emotional effects on the family if a guy left his wife and kids to become a member of and supporter of the LGBTQ+ community. If a child is told to start calling his father 'mom' after years of knowing them as a father figure it will be extremely hard for the child to do so.

Assume you are married, have a house, two little daughters, and a husband. Then, because your husband finds out he is gay he leaves you. That was Rosa Manriquez's experience:

One morning he came home, and he told me, "I can't do this anymore," and he abandoned the family. And I found things like pictures and love letters and the like. And at that point, for me, the face of "gay" was Enrique. And I really hated him. And it followed that I hated anyone who was gay. ... And I honestly agreed that anyone who was gay should go to hell. I was upset because my heart had been broken. I was abandoned with two little daughters, two infants. I had debt just all the way through the roof.¹⁹

Her two daughters went on to indicate that they were lesbians as well, and when they came to their mother with this knowledge, they assumed that she would reject them since they felt that their father had abandoned them. Because of the suffering their father had caused them after coming out of the closet, they gave the impression that they were that way.

Crucial obligations like preserving relationships, looking out for their well-being, and offering stability must be weighed against the person's need for authenticity. Feelings of abandonment and betrayal arise towards this person due to the close relationship and level of commitment involved. In order to cooperatively address the needs and well-being of the affected children, it can be helpful

¹⁹ "Hellmann's Cold Chicken Curry Salad | Hellmann's." *YouTube*, uploaded by Hellmann's, 23 Apr. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Fu40z2OO8o&t=276s.

to maintain open communication with an ex-spouse and co-parent regarding the changes in family dynamics. People still owe obligations to their former partners' children even in the case of newly formed LGBTQ+ households. This includes giving them money, being there for them emotionally, and getting involved in their daily lives. People owe it to their ex-partners to show respect, understanding the emotional toll the breakup has taken on them. This entails being understanding, offering assistance during the transition, and making an effort to keep cordial connections wherever feasible. Ethical considerations, encompassing the well of all individuals involved, ought to guide the development of new queer families. This entails creating a welcoming, encouraging, and affectionate atmosphere for both new partners and any kids. To provide equal rights and protections, LGBT families require adjustments to the legal and policy frameworks. This includes dealing with matters pertaining to inheritance, child support, and custody.

The concern is about the life these individuals have already created and committed to, and how their existing relations could be affected. So, while they are free to express their need for personal authenticity they must keep in mind their parental responsibilities, respect for former partners and what they have been through. Taking accountability for one's actions is necessary to reduce the number of dependents who suffer harm.

CHANGES IN DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE

Significant progress has been made in the areas of justice, equality, and diversity for LGBT couples with children in recent years. These modifications are a reflection of larger social movements and changing legal systems that seek to guarantee more fair and inclusive treatment. There has been a small but noticeable movement worldwide to acknowledge and defend the rights of LGBT families. Laws permitting same-sex marriage and child adoption have been put into place in a number of states, Canada, and the Netherlands.

On August 5, 2021, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) changed their policy for children born abroad to married parents, and if one of them is a U.S. Citizen and shares a biological relation with that parent is eligible for the issuance of Consular Report of Birth Abroad by the State Department. Initially, children from same-sex married couples were categorized as

“born out of wed-lock” and hence not eligible for U.S. Citizenship.²⁰

Indians’ national child rights body said “allowing adoption to gay couples endangers children”.²¹ Arguments about legalizing same-sex marriage are presently raging in India, but many are also questioning if this would pave the way for parents who identify as queer. The Chief Justice of India, even after not fully agreeing to the rights of “marriage” to queer people, has issued directions to several authorities to protect the queer community from the discriminations they go through. “Queerness is neither urban nor elite”, noted the CJI, highlighting a person can be queer regardless of their background, whether they live in a village, small town or urban areas or their caste or their economic status.²² CJI was against the guidelines prohibiting unmarried couples, including queer couples from adopting. He noted this as an additional discrimination against queer couples. The CJI has directed to form a community that should include experts that can adhere to the needs of the queer community, and it should conduct consultations among the queer community.

With the evolution of social attitudes towards LGBT families, there is now more acceptance and support. Racial justice, environmental justice, and LGBT liberation are all intertwined, as seen by events like the Pride Without Prejudice march and lobbying from groups like Brave Space Alliance. The media's increasing portrayal of LGBTQ families has greatly aided in normalizing and embracing a variety of family configurations. The rights of LGBT families have advanced due in large part to shifting social perceptions. There is a growing perception that the battle for LGBTQ+ rights is a component of the larger movement for social and environmental justice.

CONCLUSION

Raising children as a queer person is a complex affair that involves both special problems and rewarding opportunities. The fortitude and determination of queer parents frequently result in the formation of loving and supportive family situations, despite the fact that legal barriers and societal

²⁰ Immigration Equality. "Foreign-Born Children of Same-Sex Couples." *Immigration Equality*, <https://immigrationequality.org/legal/legal-help/couples-and-families/foreign-born-children-of-same-sex-couples/>.

²¹ India Today. "Same-Sex Marriage Case: Why Is National Child Rights Panel Opposing Gay Adoption?" India Today, 20 Apr. 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/newsmo/video/same-sex-marriage-case-why-is-national-child-rights-panel-opposing-gay-adoption-2362412-2023-04-20>.

²² "Queer Couples Have Right to Civil Union and Adoption, Says CJI in Same-Sex Marriage Verdict." *India Today*, 18 Oct. 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/law/story/queer-couples-have-right-to-civil-union-and-adoption-says-cji-in-same-sex-marriage-verdict-2450554-2023-10-18>.

prejudices can provide serious challenges. To foster a society where LGBT families can thrive without facing discrimination, it is imperative to have laws that are inclusive, supportive communities, and increased public knowledge. To better understand and support the varied experiences of queer parents and to ensure that all families, whatever their structure, receive the respect and attention they deserve, more research and activism are required.

The changing face of parenthood reflects difficult legal and ethical issues, in the context of adoption and assisted reproductive technology (ART). Traditionally, being a parent entails meeting your child's needs and creating a safe atmosphere. Ethical issues underscore the idea that individuals should only become parents if they can support their offspring. While various adoption patterns and contemporary reproductive technology present new avenues for family formation, they also bring up moral questions regarding children's rights and adoption motivations.

Responsible parenthood depends on having access to reproductive rights, such as those related to abortion, contraception, and reproductive health information. Legal frameworks, especially with relation to LGBTQ+ rights in adoption and ART, can lag behind cultural changes despite gains. Legal and policy changes are necessary to guarantee that everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, has fair access to and adoption of reproductive technology as society attitudes shift.

A crucial component of gender transition is hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which matches physical traits to gender identity. Although it improves psychosocial well-being, cautious management is required. Patients' experiences with HRT emphasize the need of receiving all-encompassing care. Although they may encounter discrimination from society, children of LGBT parents frequently show resilience and flexibility. They usually have greater empathy and open minds, which makes society more inclusive.

In conclusion, juggling legal, social, and ethical issues is necessary when navigating parenthood ethics in the era of ART and varied family configurations. Promoting well-being and acceptance in a changing society requires ongoing support for varied families and advocacy for fair legislation.

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Received on Aug 09, 2024

Accepted on Sep 06, 2024

Published on Oct 01, 2024

Procreative Possibilities: Analyzing The Philosophical And Ethical Dimensions Of Queer Couples Raising Children

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