Traditional Marriage vs. Non-Traditional Marriages

The Effects Non-Traditional Marriages Have on Society and Families

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20 years old

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It was the summer before my seventh grade year when my mom’s “friend’s”
daughter, Amanda
d, and I discovered our moms’ undisclosed lifestyle. Amanda being
about 15 years of age and a freshman in high school and myself starting middle school
were not only confused but angered at what we found out about our mothers. Granted, we
were snooping when we found the letters and other “evidence” which led us to believe
what our mothers were hiding from us- however, we are their kids, don’t we have the
right to know? At least that was my opinion at such a naïve age. Shortly after school
started Amanda and I learned quickly that we were not the only ones who knew about our
mom’s secret lives; apparently word spreads fast in a small Wisconsin farm town. Here I
was starting the 7th grade and the whole school knew my mother was a lesbian. I suffered
from many months of teasing until my father, who is in the army, learned of this
knowledge and took me to live with him. Shortly after I moved in with my dad he
remarried, which was hard for me because “that’s not my mom,” as I had no problem
telling her throughout my teen years. Even as an adult when I tell people my mom is a
homosexual, I get weird looks, awkward silences, and unnecessary comments such as
“Wow- is your mom hot?!"

Eight countries in the world and two states in the United States allow gay
marriages. In order to get married in a homosexual marriage in these places, normally
they require some sort of residency requirement (Striof S. & Striof B.). According to
some legal experts these marriages have to be recognized by the United States, however
it is still controversial. Many other countries and states allow registered partnerships, but
contrary to popular belief registered partnerships and gay marriages are not the same
thing. A registered partnership is when the homosexual couple is given most of the same

\[ ^a \text{All names have been changed to protect privacy.} \]
benefits as a married couple but is not legally married. Canada is one of the eight countries that permit gay marriage, which is no surprise since Canada is very tolerant towards a lot of subjects. Given that Canada is very tolerant towards many situations, gay marriage has not posed much of a problem for Canada. On the other hand, the fact that gay marriage is allowed in Canada poses many problems for the United States. The first of which and most important are many legal issues involving adoptions, child custody, and property. This controversial topic also causes many debates in the United States on the legalization of gay marriage, and quite frankly I think that this is partly because Canada legalized it before the United States, and Canada shares a border with the United States therefore gay couples will go out of their way to go to Canada to get married because their host country does not authorize it (Schneider B.)

Spain legalized gay marriage in 2005, which has affected their society majorly. To begin with, not only has gay marriage been approved in Spain, which used to be known as a conservative country, but they are also allowing gay couples to adopt children. Personally I think the only good thing about this law is that they are only allowing gay married couples to adopt children from Spain, in an attempt to avoid any legality issues. Another societal issue that has happened since Spain approved gay marriage is, elementary school curriculum has changed in order to let children as young as ten years old learn about various types of families, including gay marriages. Alejandro Tiana, the general secretary for education in Spain, stated that it is necessary to teach children about these types of families, emphasizing the fact that these relationships are normal as well. Much of the population was against gay marriage in the first place, however many of the parents of children being taught this felt that it was their
responsibility to teach their children. The government does not feel like it is solely the parents responsibility, therefore, they have made it to where the school teaches controversial topics such as this. Shortly after the homosexual law was passed, Spain’s government also passed laws accepting embryonic stem cell research along with relaxing the divorce laws. I can not help but to wonder if the fact that Spain now accepts homosexual marriage is influencing the government to be less conservative on other topics, such as embryonic stem cell research (http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2006/jul/06071701.html). A year after Spain legalized same sex marriage the divorce rate sky rocketed making it the country in Europe with the largest divorce rate. In 2006 (the year after gay marriage was approved) the divorce rate was up 51% from the previous year. That year there was more than 151,817 divorces, which means once every 3.7 minutes a divorce happens (http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=9468).

Gay marriage is also a controversial topic in regards to children as well. Homosexual people are allowed to raise children without an opposite gender partner and they have the right to adopt children. Gay activists have been trying for years to get gay marriage approved. Gay activists think that this is the best thing since sliced bread, but have they been thinking about the children and what’s best for them? (Pragger, D.) As a psychology major and a child of a homosexual as well, I am here to tell you that it is not easy for a child, nor is it fair. I feel it is important for a child to grow up with a mother and a father especially in such critical years like their middle school years when they are just figuring out who they really are (Teti, R.). Many reasons exist that support my
opinion that gay marriage is not fair for a child and that a traditional marriage needs to be
sacred.

Growing up, my father always taught me that premarital sex is wrong, I think that
this mildly popular opinion shows children that a person from the opposite gender is not
an object and they are people and have feelings as well. This proves that marriage is
supposed to be treasured and not something to be taken lightly. I also feel like a
traditional marriage teaches children about compromise, respect, and equality.
Compromise in the effect that people give up certain things to benefit the family, such as
when I was in high school my father would give up “time with the boys,” in order to see
me cheer for a football game. Respect because the mother and father should show respect
towards each other and the children, therefore teaching it to them. Finally, equality, a
traditional marriage shows children that each gender has exclusive traits that bring
different qualities to the table, so to speak, as well as showing the children that both sexes
are created with the same dignity (Teti, R.). Sure, in a homosexual marriage you may see
compromise and respect, but a traditional marriage is where the children are taught about
the most important trait of equality.

On the terms of a traditional marriage, where does a step family fall into this?
Step parents are perfectly capable of providing care for the children; however step
families are rarely as close as the biological family. Children of step families fall into this
dilemma of who to love, do they love the step parent or the real parent? Young children
do not quite understand that loving both the parent and step parent can happen, therefore
sending them into a whirl wind of bad behavior or depression in a way to subconsciously
fix the problems between the biological parents. Step daughters in a step mother family
also have a hard time adjusting to the new family. An example of their difficulty is that they tend to harbor resentment towards the woman, and teenage step daughters feel like they need to fight for the attention/affection of the father. An adult step daughter in a step mother household has only a 20% chance of being close with heir step mother. Step mothers are not always wicked as the typical stereotype states, nevertheless in a study by a Princeton economist it was found that typically step mothers do not invest the same amount of time/energy into the step children as they do with their own children. Step-children in a step-mother household are less likely to have sufficient health care, proper education, and adequate money for food, which is also supported in the study done by the Princeton economist. A lot of step daughters do not even view their step parent as an actual parent. The above facts prove that a traditional marriage with biological parents benefits children the most out of all the other options (Zensmeister, K.).

Being a child of a gay mother, not only did I have to deal with ignorant people (adults and children alike) making fun of my family and I, I also had to deal with the fact that while my father was deployed in Korea, I did not have a father to help raise me. I did have another woman, Roxanne, my mother’s “life partner,” who tried to help my mom in raising me; it is just not the same. As one can see from not only my story but from my examples as well, same sex marriage and step families are not conducive to the rearing of a child. The preservation of the traditional marriage is crucial, as well as teaching children about that and letting them see traditional marriages as an example.
Sources


