Independent Women: Equality in African-American Lesbian Relationships

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The familial expectations that women with same-sex partners have for one another are not well understood. Where there is research, it largely references the experiences of white, middle- and upper-income lesbians who tend to develop relationships with feminist goals. This chapter presents results from a three-year, mixed-methods study of households headed by gay women of color to explore how family background and other life experiences influence subjective feelings of equality in lesbian relationships. I find that African-American women place a high value on economic independence and see self-sufficiency as much more important than the distribution of household chores when determining their satisfaction with the level of fairness in their relationships. Social class and family background influence why self-sufficiency is the more important measure of relationship satisfaction. For those who grew up in extreme poverty, economic independence protects them against homelessness and other negative conditions they may have experienced in childhood. Women raised in working-class families encourage economic independence because they tend to see everyone in the household as having an equal responsibility to bring in financial resources in order for the family to get ahead. Respondents in both of these income groups also value economic self-sufficiency because it gives them the resources necessary to escape unstable or unhealthy relationships. Women raised in middle-class families tend to view economic independence as important in their relationships because they have seen how the presence or absence of their own mother’s employment facilitated or hindered her personal growth and self-actualization. Middle- and upper-middle-class black women view employment as a means

toward self-fulfillment and activity necessary for upward mobility and leadership in larger society. I show how experiences around race, class, and family background importantly influence the expectations women have for their partners in intimate relationships.

Researchers on lesbian and gay populations have tended to generalize the experiences of lesbian practice and gay sexuality from past research on white, middle-class, feminist women. But alternative histories and experiences of women from other racial and socioeconomic groups offer new information on the relationship between race, class, gender, and homosexual relationships. The present study covers three years in the lives of a population of gay women who are not often visible in public life—lesbians of color who are creating families. In this article, I offer an examination of the ways black gay women evaluate the concept of equality or egalitarianism in same-sex unions.

This research is drawn from a forthcoming book project titled Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women, which argues that previously formed identification statuses such as those based on race or class influence how individuals perceive and enact later group memberships like those based on sexuality. It does this through the analysis of a group of women who, because of year of birth, geographic location, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics, came of age during periods of heavy racial segregation and entered into their gay identities with firmly entrenched black racial identities. The larger project from which this essay is drawn suggests there is value in analyzing the ways past experiences in families of origin influence the expectations individuals have for their own relationships, regardless of sexual preference.

In this essay, I examine the concept of equality in lesbian relationships by looking closely at the two primary aspects of egalitarianism: equal responsibility for paid work and housework. Past studies of lesbian households have emphasized the egalitarian nature of these couples vis-à-vis their division of family labor, which includes household chores such as cooking and cleaning, as well as child care and supervision. This body of literature has had little to say about the other aspect of egalitarianism: how lesbian couples distribute paid work, evaluate its importance in their relationship, and construct ideologies about economic independence. These studies have also tended to understate the experiences of women of color, working-class, and poor women. In this work, I examine the relative importance of both components of egalitarianism for black lesbians, looking at differences across socioeconomic background as one explanation for how women come to make decisions about what they value in their relationships.
There are several reasons why African-American women are the focus of this study.

**Equity in Lesbian Relations, African-American Gay Women and Men**

African-American gay women and men have been overlooked in the study of gay and lesbian relations. However, research has shown that gay and lesbian African-American women and men face unique challenges due to their race and sexual orientation. This study aims to address these challenges by examining the experiences of African-American gay women and men in the context of their social and cultural environments.

**An Equitable Division of Household Labor**

Egalitarianism: Economic Independence and Autonomy

Since the 1970s, research has focused on the division of household labor between same-sex couples, highlighting the lack of research on the experiences of African-American gay women and men in this context.
Independent Women's Equality in African-American Lesbian Relationships

Egalitarian Attitudes

Invisible Families: Study and Assessing

Studies have shown that the majority of respondents view the
egalitarian relationship as beneficial and healthy. However, some
timid African-American lesbian relationships may experience
some challenges due to societal and cultural factors. It is important
to continue to study and assess these relationships to better
clear up misconceptions and promote understanding. 

Moore of the Invisible Family study, a group of 100 women who identify as lesbian,
share their personal experiences.

Utah Family...
Independent Women's Equity in African American Lesbian Relationships

Myron R. Moore
and taking on the fresh, new responsibilities and challenges of household management. The woman is still considered an important member of the household, and her presence is integral to the household's operation.

In addition to her domestic responsibilities, many women in households work in other capacities as well. They may work part-time or full-time in various capacities, such as domestic help, nannies, or personal assistants. These women contribute significantly to the economic well-being of the household.

In the broader community, many women also take on leadership roles. They may serve in leadership positions in community organizations, actively participate in community activities, and contribute to the social and economic development of the community. These roles are essential in shaping the community's future and improving the lives of its members.

Middle-class women often hold positions of leadership in society. They can be seen working for social causes, volunteering their time, and using their influence to promote the well-being of their families and communities. Their contributions are invaluable in shaping the future of society.

In conclusion, the role of women in households and communities is multifaceted. They contribute significantly to the economic and social well-being of households and communities, and their leadership roles are essential in shaping the future of society.
Independent Women in African-American Lesbian Relationships

The study of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships is an important area of research in the field of gender studies. This study builds on previous research that has explored the experiences of independent women in same-sex relationships. The study aims to contribute to our understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that independent women in African-American lesbian relationships face.

Independent women in African-American lesbian relationships often face unique challenges due to their sexual orientation and race. Discrimination, stigma, and societal pressures can make it difficult for independent women to be open about their relationships. This study seeks to shed light on the experiences of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships and to provide insights into the factors that influence their lives.

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology, which allows for a deeper exploration of the experiences of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships. In-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships. The interviews were conducted in a confidential setting to ensure the privacy and safety of the participants.

The study found that independent women in African-American lesbian relationships face unique challenges due to their sexual orientation and race. Discrimination, stigma, and societal pressures can make it difficult for independent women to be open about their relationships. However, the study also found that independent women in African-American lesbian relationships are resilient and resourceful. They have developed strategies to overcome the challenges they face and to build supportive relationships with each other.

The study highlights the importance of understanding the experiences of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships. This understanding can help to inform policies and programs that support the needs of this population. It can also help to promote greater awareness and acceptance of the unique challenges faced by independent women in African-American lesbian relationships.

In conclusion, the study of independent women in African-American lesbian relationships is an important area of research. This study provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that independent women in African-American lesbian relationships face. It highlights the importance of understanding the experiences of this population and the need for greater awareness and acceptance of the unique challenges faced by independent women in African-American lesbian relationships.
In this study, the authors bring into focus Lefebvre's theory of everyday life. They argue that the experiences of African-American women are influenced by the intersections of race, gender, and class. The authors explore how these factors shape the everyday life of women and how they navigate these intersections to maintain their sense of self and identity.

The authors highlight the importance of understanding the lived experiences of women in order to fully comprehend their struggles and achievements. They argue that the experiences of African-American women are characterized by a strong sense of community and a commitment to helping others. However, this community is often fragmented by economic, political, and social forces. The authors discuss the ways in which these forces shape the everyday life of women and how they navigate these challenges.

The authors also argue that the experiences of African-American women are shaped by their participation in various social and political movements. They discuss the ways in which these movements have empowered women and how they have contributed to the development of a strong sense of identity and community.

The authors conclude that a deeper understanding of the experiences of African-American women is essential for the development of effective policies and interventions that address the needs of these women. They argue that a more nuanced understanding of these experiences is essential for the development of effective interventions that address the needs of African-American women.
Chapter 3: The Immigration Kalidoscope: Knowing the Immigrant Family

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4. See, for example, Czarniawska and Wiśniewski (2002).
7. See Brown and Willson (2002).
34. See Glickman (1989).
42. See Glickman (1989).
43. See Glickman (1989).
44. See Glickman (1989).
47. See Glickman (1989).
52. See Glickman (1989).
60. See Glickman (1989).