



Heteronormative consensus in the Norwegian same-sex adoption debate?

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Abstract: This article investigates the Norwegian newspaper debate (1998-2002) on the right of homosexual couples to adopt children. It identifies two patterns of meaning within which both anti-adoption and pro-adoption sides of the debate were located: 1) the nuclear family as reference point; and 2) a focus on innate qualities. Parallel to a continuous liberalization of sexualities in Norway we seem to witness a consensus on heteronormativity in Norway on both sides of the debate as the basic axiom in public discussions on homosexuality and adoption. In this article, we explore the nature of the heteronormative arguments and the reason for their appearance in this particular debate. The two patterns of meaning reproduce a perception of lesbians and gays as either a worthy or unworthy minority. These findings may be seen as reflecting fundamental positions regarding the Norwegian modernization project, where both sides of the debate see homosexuality as a central symbol. State feminism may also have played the role of reinforcing gender categories and thereby served as an important condition of possibility for contemporary heteronormativity.

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