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The Journal of Socio-Economics

Volume 37, Issue 2, April 2008, Pages 481-501

Financial affairs? Money management in same-sex relationships

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2006.12.034>

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Abstract

The present paper offers a qualitative analysis of how 22 co-habiting same-sex couples manage and think about their finances. Results show that partial-pooling and independent management are the most popular systems with emphasis placed on egalitarianism and devising a fair money management strategy. Significant income disparities between most partners necessitated the adoption of a system of proportional contributions to joint expenses. Despite attempts to equalise outcomes, an underlying norm of equality (characterised by equal contributions) paradoxically (re)produced the status and control of the higher earner in most cases. A degree of financial autonomy was an important ideal highlighting a valuing of co-independence rather than financial "merging" for lesbian and gay couples.



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JEL classification

A13; B54; D13

Keywords

Same-sex; Household; Money management; Qualitative

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Maree Burns is now the co-ordinator of the Eating Difficulties Education Network in Auckland, New Zealand. She recently completed ESRC-funded research on money management in same-sex relationships with Carole Burgoyne and Victoria Clarke at the University of Exeter. Maree has also published several articles on discourses of the "eating disorder" bulimia. She is currently co-editing two books: *Critical Feminist Perspectives on Eating Dis/Orders* (Routledge & Psychology Press) and *Critical Bodies: Representations, Practices and Identities of Weight and Body Management* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Carole Burgoyne is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Exeter. She is on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Economic Psychology* and the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, and is guest-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Social Economics* on the topic of "The Economics of Women's Work".

the *Journal of Socio-Economics* (on the topic of the Household Economy). With colleagues at Exeter, she is currently working on a number of funded qualitative and quantitative research projects investigating money, legal and commitment issues in married, cohabiting, and same-sex couples.

Victoria Clarke is a senior lecturer and member of the Critical Psychology Research Group in the School of Psychology at the University of the West of England. She has published a number of papers on the social construction of lesbian parenting. She has also published two books (both with Elizabeth Peel) – *Out in Psychology* (Wiley) and *LGB Psychologies* (Harrington Park Press) – and conducted ESRC funded research on same-sex relationships (with Carole Burgoyne and Maree Burns). She is currently co-authoring a textbook on LGBTQI Psychologies (Cambridge University Press).

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