

Abstract

This paper deals with the role of American courts, specifically their decisions, regarding the rights and social status of LGBT people, which is an acronym standing for lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. The main finding is that court decisions in favor of LGBTs make lives of such people even more difficult, because authorities in states where such decisions are taken often try to circumvent these decisions using legislative powers. However, in the long term, it seems that courts manage to initiate debates about LGBT-related topics with various arguments that the American society is forced to consider. It appears that in such debates common sense prevails over prejudices and myths. One such myth that was widely accepted by society was that when a child lives with a homosexual in a common household, such child was going to become homosexual him- or herself. This paper also explores an analogy between current efforts of LGBT people to reach full equality and secure anti-discrimination measures for themselves and the struggle for civil rights of African-Americans. Both these groups have faced treatment which suggested that they are second-class citizens. One of the ways society expresses this second-class citizenry is by denying LGBTs access to the institution of marriage arguing it would be degraded or denigrated by letting same-sex couples in. Some states of the U.S. have tried to establish alternative institutions for same-sex couples such as registered partnership which usually offer the same benefits and protections different-sex couples have in marriage. Such institutions could, however, evoke the *separate but equal* doctrine which was allegedly designed to secure the same status for both whites and blacks, but of course, the reality was different.