

Family Background and the Meanings of Economic Autonomy for Black Lesbian Women

Autonomy in Black Lesbian Relationships

Moore interviewed Black lesbian women of various socioeconomic backgrounds to examine how economic independence affects relationship satisfaction. She emphasized the vital importance of financial autonomy for Black women, noting that egalitarian viewpoints were communicated but not always practiced in lesbian households.

Low-Income Background: Women from low-income families prioritized financial independence as a way to both ensure equal division of un/paid family labor and **personal survival**, particularly in the context of abusive relationships.

Middle-Class Background: Though both partners may not need a career for survival, middle-class lesbian families prioritize **mutual interdependence** and **self-sufficiency** in pursuit of **self-actualization** within their careers.

Working-Class Background: For working-class women, childhood family dynamics modeled for them the need for individual income, **financial independence to protect them from poverty**, and psychological assistance from their partner.

Terms to Know:

- **Self-definition:** the power to describe & name oneself rather than being defined by a dominant group
- **Egalitarian:** equal division of power & responsibility
- **Self-Actualization:** fulfilling one's creative or occupational potential once basic needs are met

"...Black women concentrated their platform on how to reduce the gender inequality they believed was connected to other inequalities based on race and socioeconomic disadvantage" (p. 171).

As frequently discussed in Black feminist thought, these women's standpoints are influenced by family experiences and their social positionality.



Citation: