Selling Lesbians and Postgay Politics: Media Industry and Lesbian-Parented Families in Film and Television

Abstract

Lesbian-parented families are increasingly represented in popular media. This study investigates media industry’s role in these representations through examination of industry figures and industry discourse surrounding specific media texts from 2000 to present. Industrial constructions of the audience as well as discourse surrounding motivations for producing and disseminating these texts are analyzed. Findings indicate that the media industry tends to imagine an oversimplified and binary audience for representations of lesbian-parented families: either gay (specialized) or straight (mainstream). Members of the industry involved in the texts tended to cite motivations that were either driven by marketing and profits, soft political progress through visibility, hard political progress through pushing for change, or a belief that the text existed in a post-gay era in which no politics were necessary. In light of the looming socio-political controversies surrounding LGBT families, the implications involved in the industry motivations (especially post-gay claims) are discussed.