

Review of: "Biological Parenthood and Reproductive Technologies"

Stephen Page

Potential competing interests: I am a non-biological father through surrogacy.

I agree with the other reviewers that while there is an important point of view being put forward, it is more appropriate in its current form for a newspaper article than for a scientific paper. The article skips between "I" and "we", and has assumptions about a certain course to take, but without the evidentiary basis for that assumption being laid out clearly.

A clear pathway through and structure of the article would be helpful.

The assumption about biological parenthood reinforcing patriarchy misses some of the key elements of reproductive technologies. As examples, gay couples and single men will necessarily need an egg donor in order to reproduce. Similarly, single women, single transmen and lesbian couples will seek to reproduce using their own eggs and sperm from a donor. It is common to see gay couples becoming parents through surrogacy where two children are born. Each child has a genetic connection with one of the fathers- but each child has a genetic connection with each other as siblings, through one egg donor.

Similarly, it is common to see lesbian couples have a child each, using the same sperm donor. Again, each child has a genetic connection with the respective birth mother, and each child has a genetic sibling connection with the other, through the same sperm donor.

Isn't it arguable in those scenarios that what the intended parents are seeking to do is to reinforce the sense of family, both for themselves and their children, when these families have been discriminated against?

Is the author suggesting that in these examples there is reinforcement and entrenchment of the patriarchy?

Intended parents through ART are often very concerned about the implications for the child of the genetic connection, or lack of genetic connection.

On occasion, lesbian couples will have a child born to one of them but with the sperm donor being a relative of the other, for example, the other's brother. This is done so that the child has a genetic connection with both families, and therefore a sense of belonging and acceptance. Again, is this an example of reinforcement and entrenchment of the patriarchy?