"HIS OWN GOOD": A THEORETICAL DEFENSE OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Mikel L. Gajkowski, [Brenda Lyshaug]
Department of Political Science

On the issue of homosexual marriage, government must resist the temptation of religious tyranny and approach the same-sex debate through sincere and judicious methodology. In political terms, what is gay marriage? Amid the sludge of this hot-button debate, I suggest it is a civil right. A review of the fundamental moral issues that marked the 1950s debate of interracial marriage reveals striking semblance to the subject. In response, traditionalists may attempt to distinguish gay rights from civil rights but any concrete argument remains contingent upon narrowly defined religious standards, which government must shun. Hence the question becomes one of duty — precisely what should a morally-grounded government legislate? In researching the writings of J.S. Mill and other political theorists, one finds that government exists to protect personal freedom and prevent individuals from harming one another. Further exploration of this concept of "harm" substantiates that gay marriage (a socially innocuous practice) fails this test, while government restrictions on a singular faction of citizens prove perilous to the concept of American democracy. The rich intellectual history of the past tells us the present is troubled. Same-sex marriage demands egalitarian consideration to ensure our nation's noblest virtues are not trampled in passionate prejudice.