

SEXUAL IDENTITY AND DISTURBANCES, CULTURE AND LAW

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Abstract: As Sexual identity is an ongoing psychodynamic process established mainly before adolescence in human psychological development. Before it is well established “firmly”, there may be some confusing stages. One may have no clear ideation of one’s sexual or gender identity. It is called “*Gender Identity Turmoil*”. It may change during that period of lifetime or after psychiatric therapy, usually in adolescence. And that is a change of leading one to a public acceptable role. After adolescence, it is more difficult to change along with time.

Keywords: Sexual identity; Gender Identity Turmoil; Homosexuality; Transgender; Gender Dysphoria (Gender Identity Disorder); Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS).

1. Introduction

The main factors affects sexual identity process are: biological, psychological, social, cultural as well as legal ones. There may produce few variances during the process. *Homosexuality*, *Transgender*, *Gender Dysphoria* (*Gender Identity Disorder*) are some of them. *Homosexuality* refers to a person’s overt behavior, sexual orientation, and sense of personal or social identity to sex. They prefer to interact sexually with the same biological sex ones mainly. The American Psychiatric Association eliminated from the formal diagnostic category in 1973 and officially removed it from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1980. It is considered to be pathological unless provoking marked anxiety and poor adjustment. In the International Classification of Disease 10th edition recently writes “Sexual orientation alone is not to be regarded as a disorder”. Though whether this variances or disturbances are viewed as “abnormality” still remains debating. *Transgender*

(*Transsexualism*) is another variance becomes a problem. It refers to gender identity, or gender expression, differs from their assigned biological sex (1990s). It is described as transsexualism if they desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another. (David Oliver Cauldwell 1949, Harry Benjamin 1966) Gender Identity Disorder was included in the DSM-IV and changed to Gender Dysphoria in the DSM 5. It is defined mainly as marked incongruence between expressed gender and assigned biological gender for more than 6 months associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning, or with a significantly increased risk of suffering, such as distress or disability. No matter they are viewed as abnormal or not. The biological assigned sex is normal in terms of physical conditions. If it is changed medically or surgically, it raised an ethical as well as legal issues in the changing of non-pathological organ(s) probably secondary to psychological problems. Further social, cultural as well as legal rearrangements are need. Therefore, detailed assessment and possible psychodynamic treatment is necessary before the physical therapy, e.g. hormonal therapy, *Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)*, etc. The process of assessment is suggested as below.