

AN APPROACH TO THE DECISION MAKING OF HOMOSEXUAL FATHERHOOD/MOTHERHOOD IN THE PRESENT CATALAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Introduction

The aim of this contribution is to show the psychological motivations and the factors that help or delay the decision making process of homosexual people when analysing their possibility of becoming fathers or mothers.

Fatherhood and motherhood is for homosexual people, related directly to the actual level of homophobia in their social environment. However, those who are dedicated to their therapy know that the desire of fatherhood/motherhood is intimal and personal and because of that, a significant number of homosexual people got married and formed heterosexual families, just to comply with their fatherhood/motherhood desires, under strong homophobic social environments.

The approval in 2005 by the Spanish Government of relevant changes in the Civil Legislation, which allowed the marriages by same sex couples, and simultaneously, the issue of a Regional Government of Catalonia Act, opening the possibility of adopting children by homosexual couples, is going to provide significant changes in the social scenario and the objectives and plans of life for homosexual people. Such projects of life were impossible to be developed in the past, as self-acceptance of homosexuality meant an explicit rejection to fatherhood/motherhood.

However, these changes are being produced very slowly. The social changes by which homosexual people became "normal" from "transgressive! Or even "criminal" has been done progresively, step by step, even overcoming different obstacles, since the middle of the 20th century until now. For some part of the society, these changes had been too fast, difficult to assimilate or even to accept; for the other, this process was slow and painful. And for many people coming from other countries, the assimilation of such a social change is still pending.

Methodology

The field work for this contribution was carried out in two different stages: The first, a number of interviews recorded in videos with several people that have always lived in Catalonia; the second, a questionnaire about marriage, faterhood and motherhood was posed to a two different group of gay people: one of Spanish-born and grown up individuals and the other of Latin Americans born in different countries who immigrated to Spain in the last three years.

The questionnaire includes 12 questions, some of them are multiple-answer and the rest are open; the first five questions are envisaged to explore the relationship status of the individuals and their opinion about marriage and

gay couples in general. The other seven questions are about their motivation and feelings regarding children, fatherhood and motherhood.

The questionnaires were given to 15 Spanish-born (6 men and 9 women) and 15 Latin American (5 men and 10 women) The ages varied from 28 and 40 years.

The interviews were made to people in certain way linked to the Casal Lambda, all of them having finished their coming out process. These people is different from the ones that filled the questionnaires. No personal data (name, age, address) were taken in the interviews. One of the individuals did not give permission to show his face. Two of the interview wer recorded only in audio devices.

The interviews show people in different circumstances: a female couple who had given birth to a son by means of artificial insemination, a single male who studies the pros and cons of giving his sperma, a single male willing to adpot a child, a couple of women who could not be biological mothers due to problems of health, and the point of view of a doctor in pediatrics.

Conclusions

This contribution shows how “normally” the homosexual people interviewed in Barcelona give their opinion on their fatherhood/motherhood, once the Spanish and Catalan Legislation, perhaps the world’s most advanced in this matter, have reached a complete equality of the civil rights.

The achievement of these civil rights has been gradual. People born and brought up in Spain better assimilated the social changes and are seeing without stress the perspective of being married and father or mather.

In contrast, the Latin American individuals, who were born and grew up in significantly more homophobic environments, show in their answers a certain degree of anxiety for being considered normal people as soon as possible. Possibly in further studies, the differences between European Spanish-born and Latin American-born people will be reduced or totally disappear.

These observations are indicators to be considered during the counselling work on Latin American homosexual individuals in their coming out process.

However, no significant diferences were detected in the groups of women from both origins; this could be explained by the relevance of sexism (so-called “machismo”) in male individuals.

We are aware that the sample is relatively small, but this should not significantly affect the reliability of the results and the conclusions.

The author also recommends to carry out complementary studies and investigations with other propfessionals (sociologists, anthropologists) which could include the effects of specific sociological factors, such as social integration, economical and laboral aspects.

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