

## ADOLESCENCE, PARENTHOOD AND (HOMO)SEXUALITY

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Sloboda, Z. (2016). *Dospívání, rodičovství a (homo)sexualita [Adolescence, Parenthood and (Homo)Sexuality]*. Prague: Pasparta.

Recently, homosexuality is quite often spoken of (the author of the publication also presents the concept of non-heterosexuality), especially in relation to the possibility of bringing up children. It is, therefore, a very serious matter that echoes not only in the society, but also in the school environment already. It can be reasonably assumed that children of homosexual couples may be to some extent discriminated against by their classmates. This is only a presumption on the part of the reviewer who has pedagogical experience and who will gladly be wrong.

Immediately in the opening chapter, the author defines the ambitions he is setting out to achieve. *"The ambition of this publication is to present mainly social science knowledge and views on the topic of homosexuality, or non-heterosexuality applicable not only in sociology, but also in related fields such as media and cultural studies, social policy, social anthropology and other disciplines, such as education, psychology, social pedagogy and social work. The latter is primarily dealt with in the second part of the book which deals specifically with adolescence (in relation to coming out, school, and relationships) and parenting."* (p. 7)

This publication consists of four sub-chapters while we deliberately omit the necessary introduction. The chapter named *"On Sexuality, Women and Men"* presents an introduction to the whole issue by defining such terms as sexuality, sexual orientation, love, sexual behaviour and sexual identity. Another sub-chapter deals with notions of masculinity, femininity and gender. Subsequently, sexuality of men and women is closer specified. In relation to sexual behaviour, this chapter states that *"sexual behaviour is not actualized freely but above all (or mostly) under the conditions prescribed or permitted by the social environment."* (p. 22). The question remains to what extent this opinion is accurate in regard to mutual sexual activity in a relatively sealed and permanent partner couple where unimaginable combinations of sexual practices may occur. It is the reviewer's contention that such an environment is not interfered with (or even affected) by the surrounding social environment. The reason may be the fact that the external social environment may have no idea of such sexual behaviour, apart from the strongly intimate (private) nature of the matter.

Clarifying the term *"sexual identity"*, the author states that *"identification is the process which is mostly referred to as coming-out in the context of homosexuality... ...identity,*

then, should be a kind of product or target status of that identification process." (p. 23) In this part, the author characterizes the process of identification when "identity formation is very individual, depending on one's own, distinct experience that is as varied as people themselves are diverse" (p. 23). It would undoubtedly be good to consider (and note) that during development, change of identification may occur in some individuals. Undoubtedly, there are individuals in the society whose sexual identity or sexual orientation is not quite clearly pronounced.

The aforementioned issues form the base of the following chapter entitled "From Homosexuality to Diversity of Sexual Identities" (p. 35–70).

Among the concepts addressed and explained here belong e.g. LGBT, bisexuality, intersexuality, trans-identity, transgender, queer, etc. Yet, the most interesting topic is undoubtedly dealt with in sub-chapter on the so-called "third sex". The author discusses individual opinions on the "third sex" very conscientiously, offering a comprehensive presentation of views but not arriving on any "clear" definition himself. In any case, this is an interesting probe which has not yet been dealt with on an appropriate level in professional literature. Other interesting sub-chapters include a view of homosexuality in our cultural environment (p. 40) and a historical perspective. Among the greatest milestones of positive perception of homosexuality is its exemption from "crimes punished by death in the Criminal Code of Joseph II. 1787". Despite the positives mentioned, the issues of homosexuality only started entering public discourse in the 1980s. Highlights marking changes in the approach to sexual minorities are mainly the Registered Partnership Act (2006) and the establishment of a government advisory body, the "Committee for Sexual Minorities of the Government Council for Human Rights" (2009). The text presents some interesting data that illustrate (objectify) the perception of homosexual behaviour. For example, the experience of homosexual intercourse in comparison of data from 1998 and 2008 (p. 46) show that while the experience of homosexual intercourse among men declined, the trend is apparently opposite among women.

The next chapter, which deals with adolescence (p. 71–105) transfers the issues to the school environment. In any case, this is one of the most interesting chapters in the present publication. Some topics are presented (in this way) perhaps for the first time ever. One can fully agree with the author that this is a topic that will undoubtedly find its way to school if it has not done so at some schools already. These are such topics as social interaction and classroom climate, textbooks and school documents, inclusive rainbow school, and the like. All of these concepts are a matter of everyday encounter for the teachers, forcing them to react to them.

Similarly, the following chapter (the last one, named "Parenting") covers issues that are mostly "tactfully" avoided in school environment.

Many teachers do not want to talk about them as they are not close to them for a number of objective, but also subjective reasons. In addition, many teachers tend to avoid these topics, as already stated. The reviewer, who has been dedicated to this issue for many years, is fully aware of the fact that the view of some concepts will have to change (or rather expand), e.g. the notion of the nuclear family (p. 109). One can fully agree with

the author that the number of children from homo-parental families in the near future will undoubtedly increase.

At the end of the publication, there is a glossary (p. 152–160), which can help many inexperienced individuals to better understand the particular issues. Listed there are some entries of not very common concepts, for example biphobia, cis-identity, cis gender, cross-dressing, transphobia, and other. Although everyone immediately understands that the terms are closely tied with homosexuality, it is a good tool.

This publication is certainly a solid foundation not only for orientation in the issues relating to the issue of homosexuality themselves, but it will also allow workers dealing with primary prevention in elementary and secondary schools to design specific prevention programs and particular activities to counter homophobic attitude. As already stated in the introduction, the ranks of fellow pupils at each grade level will soon be joined by pupils from such environments. Overall, the publication *Adolescence, Parenthood and (Homo)Sexuality* by Sloboda is worth reading.

At the very end, one little utter footnote: The text often mentions the concept of gender and the like. The picture placed on the title page of the book features two (apparent) mothers with a little girl. I would suggest, in the context of equality, to also place here or on the back of the publication two men and a boy.

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