

Understanding Diversity of Definitions for Gender for the Public Debate

Side Event OSCE - Warsaw, 6 October 2010, Opera Room
The Rev. Mario Bergner of Redeemed Lives, Inc. USA

- I. When addressing gender in the public square, we undoubtedly encounter multiplicity of ideas, ideologies and beliefs resulting in a multiplicity of definitions.
- A. Gender may be defined as a fact.
1. As a fact gender is defined biologically.
 2. On a job application, you may be asked for your gender and offered two choices, male or female.
 3. When gender is used to describe biological maleness or femaleness gender is a synonym for sex.
 - a) Wainer J. Nobelius author of Gender and Medicine 2004, University School of Rural Health, Traragon, Austrailia, writing about treating sexual and gender disorders, *“Sex is our biology, everything else is gender. If you know the condition is 100% biological it is a sex difference. Everything else must be considered a gender difference.”*
 - b) In his book, Sex and Gender, published in 1968, psychologist Robert Stoller wrote, *“One can speak of the male sex or the female sex, but one can also talk about masculinity and femininity and not necessarily be implying anything about anatomy or physiology.”*¹
- B. Gender may be defined as an ideology related to the fact of biology.
1. As an ideology gender may correspond to biological maleness or femaleness as it progresses into adulthood.
 2. One is born male or female but develops into his or her individual gender identity as a man or a woman.
 3. Defining the meaning of masculinity or femininity further expands our understanding of gender.
- C. Gender may be defined as an ideology based in a conceptual framework, as well as in a subjective and relative manner
1. Gender may be understood in a highly conceptual manner, such as in the psychology of CG Jung.

¹ Stoller, Robert, J., Sex and Gender, New York: Science House, 1968. (Preface p. ix)

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- a) For Jung, all people are either biologically male, female or something in between, such as in intersex born children.
 - b) However, for Jung all people have the presence of both masculinity and femininity within themselves and in varying degrees.
 - c) He identified *the inner feminine part of the male personality*² as the anima.
 - d) Likewise, he identified *the inner masculine part of female psychology*³ as the animus.
 - e) In doing so, he redefined “anima and animus” for his psychological system.
 - (1) Anima is the Latin term for soul not for femininity.
 - (2) Animus is the Latin term for spirit not for masculinity.
 - f) Dr. Jeffrey Satinover, an expert in Jungianism, writes, “*For Jung, the anima and animus were “archetypes”: predetermined, preexisting configurations of the personality that have a priori independence and autonomy within the overall personality.*”⁴
2. One view of gender is a person’s sense of self as a member of one’s sex and belonging to corresponding genders.
- a) *A person’s internal self-awareness of being either male or female, masculine or feminine, or something in between.* www.ftmguide.org/terminology.html
 - b) The degree to which a person identifies as male, female or some combination. It is the internal framework, constructed over time, which enables an individual to organize a self-concept and to perform socially in regards to their perceived sex and gender. www.share.uwa.edu.au/sexuality/sexuality_definitions
 - c) How one thinks of one’s own gender. A person may identify as male, female, transgender, or a number of other definitions.
3. The World Health Organization defines gender as the characteristic roles and responsibilities of women and man, boys and girls, which are socially constructed. Gender is

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² Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1993 (p. 46)

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Payne, Leanne, Crisis in Masculinity, Grand Rapids: Baker Book house, 1995. (p. 126)

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related to how we are perceived and expected to behave as men and women because of the way society is organized, not because of biological differences. WHO Gender and Health: Technical Paper 1998.

- D. The take away from the above definitions of gender identity is that we are dealing with subject matter that is highly imprecise, conceptual and ever changing.
- II. When addressing freedom in the area of gender identity, might it be helpful to acknowledge that definitions of healthy or unhealthy gender identity is subjective and influenced by various pluralistic definitions of morality and psychological health.
- A. Therefore I pose question, *“Should therapists and clergy be forced to guide people to adjust to a particular gender identity as defined by a government when doing so contravenes their religious convictions or professional convictions as psychotherapists?”*
1. Many Christian, Jewish and Islamic clerics could not in good conscience counsel a member of their religions to embrace a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender gender identity.
 2. Likewise many psychologists from Christian, Jewish and Islamic faith traditions could not in good conscience counsel a person to simply adjust to sexual attraction to both sexes and embrace a gender identity as a bisexual.
 3. Nor could these same psychologists in good conscience counsel a person with same-sex attractions to accept these attractions and embrace a gender identity as a gay male, lesbian woman or transgendered person.
- B. Governments should protect the rights of religious and non-religious people to seek out counseling to overcome unwanted bisexual attractions, unwanted same-sex attractions, unwanted impulses to cross dress, unwanted feelings of not belonging to one’s biological sex.
- C. Why should government only protect the gender identity rights of those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

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- D. What about those people for whom the above mentioned sexual attractions and gender identifications are not something they choose to live with?
1. The current climate in many western societies is to label them as self loathing, phobic and maladjusted.
 2. This is especially apparent in the case of men and women with unwanted same-sex attractions and the therapists who treat them.
 3. The International Federation for Therapeutic Choice (IFTC) the international branch of the National Association for the Research and Treatment of Homosexuality was recently founded (www.narth.com).
 - a) The IFTC was established because of international reports of increasingly aggressive opposition to the right of clients to seek treated for unwanted same-sex attractions.
 - b) Representatives in Canada, Germany, Ireland, UK, Israel, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland.
- E. Current research shows homosexuality can be changed.
1. In May 2001, at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Robert Spitzer, of Columbia University in New York City announced the findings of his study of over 200 people who had successfully overcome homosexuality and entered into heterosexual identification.
 - a) Dr. Spitzer's study was published in October 2003 in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 5 (pp. 403-417) *Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation*.
 - b) A therapist employing Dr. Spitzer's research as the basis for therapeutic care today would be accused of intolerance and even hate speech.
 2. Dr. Jeffrey Satinover in [Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth](#) (Baker 1995) documents the outcomes of fourteen psychologists and psychiatrists who have an area of expertise in treating homosexuality.
 - a) The success rates for these fourteen Doctors range from 37% on the low end to 82% on the high end.¹

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- b) Satinover concludes, "*All the existing evidence suggests strongly that homosexuality is quite changeable.* (p. 187)"
 2. He goes on to cite a 1984 Masters and Johnson program that reported a *five-year follow-up success rate of 65 percent.* (p. 187)
- F. There are many good books on the treatment of homosexuality written by psychologists.
1. Dr. James Nicolosi, Reparative Therapy for the Homosexual, 1991.
 2. Gerard Van Den Aardweg, On the Origins and Treatment of Homosexuality, 1986.
 3. Dr. Lawrence Hatterer, Changing Homosexuality in the Male, 1970.
- III. How does all the above information affect human rights?
- A. Overbroad hate speech laws are being applied in such a way as to limit the right to freedom of religion and conscience when applied to issues of gender identity.
 - B. Currently, psychological associations in both the United States and the United Kingdom, have declared that attempts by therapists to administer therapy to clients who seek to change unwanted same-sex attractions is considered harmful to the clients.
 - C. This is indirect opposition to a current study by Dr. Stanton Jones and Dr. Mark Yarhouse that there is no such evidence showing that providing therapy for changing unwanted sexual attractions is harmful. See Ex-Gays?: A Longitudinal Study of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation (InterVarsity Press, 2007)
- IV. Currently two Christian graduate students have been treated with discrimination and intolerance due to overbroad application of hate speech laws to issues of gender identity.
- A. In March of 2009, Julea Ward was expelled from the graduate counseling program at Eastern Michigan University for not affirming that homosexuality was morally acceptable.

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1. Miss Ward was assigned a potential client seeking assistance regarding a homosexual relationship.
 2. Miss Ward, recognizing her religious beliefs prevented her from affirming her clients search for assistance, asked her supervisor what she should do.
 3. Her supervisor advised her to reassign the potential client to different counselor.
 4. Miss Ward was then informed she could not stay in the Eastern Michigan University counseling program unless she agreed to undergo a remediation program.
 - a) The goal of this program was to change Miss Ward's belief system regarding homosexuality as a gender identity.
 - b) Additionally, it was expected that after completion of this program, Miss Ward was to acknowledge the error of her ways.
 - c) Miss Ward was expelled from the university.
 5. The expulsion of Miss Ward was upheld in court due to two university policies that were upheld in a district court.
 - a) One is a speech code at Eastern Michigan University, one of which prohibits discrimination against sexual orientation.
 - b) The other is a policy that states EMU's counseling department may discipline a student who shows a 'failure to tolerate different points of view.'
 6. In actuality, Miss Ward adhered to both these policies by seeking the guidance of her supervisor and reassigning the potential client so that he could receive the psychological care he was seeking that she in good conscience could not provide.
- B. In July of this year, 2010, Jennifer Keeton, a counseling student at Augusta State University in Augusta, Georgia, was told that her Christian beliefs are unethical and incompatible with the prevailing views of her counseling professions.
1. She was ordered to undergo a reeducation plan.
 2. This plan includes diversity sensitivity training.
 3. Each month, Miss Keeton is required to complete a report on hoe the 'remediation' assignments have influenced her beliefs so that faculty can decide the appropriateness of her continuation in the counseling program.

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4. This case is still open.
 5. But like Miss Ward, Miss Keeton is most likely facing expulsion from the university unless the reeducation plan she is currently in causes her to see the error of her ways.
- C. Such reeducations plans to change beliefs, particularly religious beliefs, have occurred in other places at other times.
- V. There are many men and women whose same-sex attractions are unwanted and not the content of their gender identity.
- A. In other words, they do not self identify as gay or lesbian.
 - B. For some people, unwanted same-sex attractions can, with proper pastoral care or psychological treatment, effectively be resisted and change.
 - C. By dismissing graduate psychology students who do not hold to popular and fixed views on gay and lesbian gender identity, the number of skilled psychologists equipped to help men and women with unwanted same sex attractions will be diminished.
- VI. Therefore the human rights of two groups of people are at stake.
- A. The rights of Christian graduate students in psychology to follow their Christian conscience are in danger.
 - B. The rights of people with unwanted same-sex attractions to receive treatment from therapists who hold to their same convictions are in danger.

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ⁱ ibid. p. 186.