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DYNAMICS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER FORMATION DURING A PERSON'S LIFE

Abstract. The article defines such basic concepts as: gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and also presents the concept of gradual dynamics of gender self-determination during life, which explains the naturalness of a possible change in a person's sexual orientation with age.

Keywords: gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity.

The phenomenon of human sexuality became the subject of prominent scientific research only in the twentieth century. Thanks to the courage and perseverance of A. Kinsey, W. Masters, W. Johnson, Z. Freud, along with many others, overcame great resistance in order to speak truth to power in a close-minded and largely hypocritical society, and because of their bravery, science has made enormous strides toward understanding concepts integral to humanity.

The relevance of gender and sexual orientation issues is becoming especially significant now, when the number and gender of sexual partners, the choice of gender, and their gender, are increasingly recognized as a private matter for each individual or couple. The legalization of all types of love has contributed directly to a departure from the traditional pursuit of sexual partnership solely for the purpose of reproduction in our societies [1, p. 288]. Let's define some of the most important concepts for further consideration of our topic.

Assigned sex is currently defined as a biological determination of a person as a man or a woman, based upon their having a certain set of chromosomes which dictates the physical constitution and type of sexual apparatus the individual develops for the purpose of reproductive function.

Gender (as known as gender roles) – sets of socio-cultural and behavioral characteristics and expectations that determine the personal, social, and legal status of a man or woman determined by their com-

munities. The term “gender” was introduced into the scientific language by the American sexologist John Money in 1955, using it in his works devoted to the study of transgender and intersex people [2]. Using this term, John Money proposed to separate the biological sex of a person from their gender identity, which, according to Money, a person could change during his life, regardless of gender.

Gender identity is defined, for the purposes of this article, as the subject's personal sense of belonging to a particular gender [3].

Sexual orientation is the subject's sexual attraction to a partner who embodies certain desirable characteristics. Currently, in addition to the long-recognized homo -, hetero-, and bisexual types of orientation, there are many others in which the decisive factor is not the gender of the partner, but other characteristics (for example, attitude, behavior complex, and character) [4].

Based on the totality of research data, it has now been revealed that gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation are interrelated, but do not determine each other. A revolutionary step in confirming this was made by Alfred Kinsey, who devoted many years to the study of sexuality, and his revolutionary spectrum of sexual inclination commonly referred to as the “Kinsey Scale”. The Kinsey Scale is a numerical score assigned based on a combination of psychological and behavioral components of attraction decided upon by individuals when choosing sexual partners

and is still used as a tool for measuring where one's sexual identity falls within the greater spectrum. The Kinsey scale allowed us to identify high variability in the sexual orientation of people of different ages and its fluidity during a person's life. He did not identify clear patterns of these changes, however, according to his data, in childhood, many people had homosexual contacts with their peers, which in most cases remained episodic, and then later in adulthood, a large percentage of respondents recognized their bisexuality [1]. From our point of view, changing a person's sexual orientation and gender identity during life is not only possible but increasingly the norm. We have identified several age periods in the context of gender identity and sexual orientation:

- The first one is infancy (from birth to 1.5 years), the point of reference when the child has neither one nor the other;

- The second is the period of younger childhood (from 1.5 to 8 years). According to most experts, during this period, the primary consciousness of one's gender identity is formed. The scope and content of gender identity change with age. Based on observations of others and their own life experience, the child creates a gender image that usually coincides with the gender assigned to them at birth;

- The third is the puberty period (from 9 to 17 years), in which gender informs gender identity and how that identity is expressed behaviorally. This is largely due to the influence of the teenager's peer group. During this time period, sexual desire begins

to form. According to Kinsey reports, adolescents often try same-sex sexual contact, due to greater compatibility, mutual understanding, and the density of communication with peers of their sex;

- The fourth is the period of the first maturity (from 18 to 35 years), during which a person maximally implements his reproductive program under the influence of instincts and the pressure of societal expectations;

- The fifth is the period of a second maturity (from 36 to 60 years) when the subject frees himself from the stereotypical expectations imposed by society and looks for their individual path. This period is most sensitive to gender and sexual orientation changes, which may or may not be related;

- The sixth is old age (after 60 years) when a person is most often self-determined with gender and sexuality, the importance of this self-determination gives way to reflection and summing up life results. During this period, changes in gender and sexual identity are somewhat less common.

For clarity, we have shown the ratio of gender identity and sexual orientation on the graph for each age period.

If we place these graphs on a time vector and connect them, we will get possible variants of changes in gender identity and sexual orientation during a person's life in the form of a three-dimensional curve that smoothly changes its shape, which shows the dynamics and variability of the indicators we have chosen (figures 1–6).

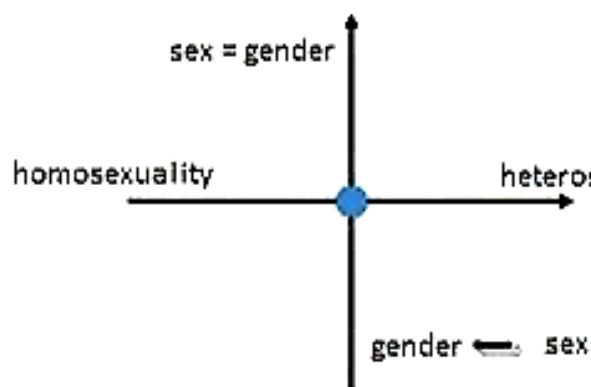
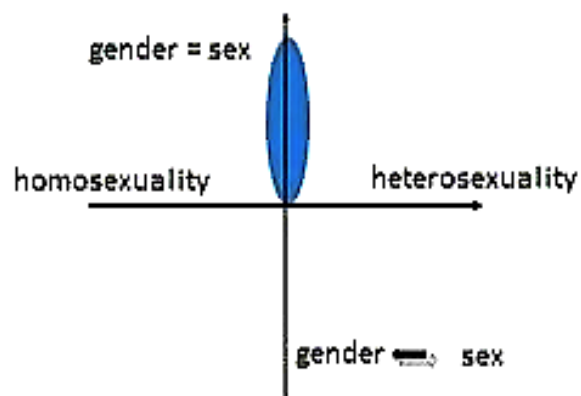


Figure 1. Infancy Figure



2. Early childhood

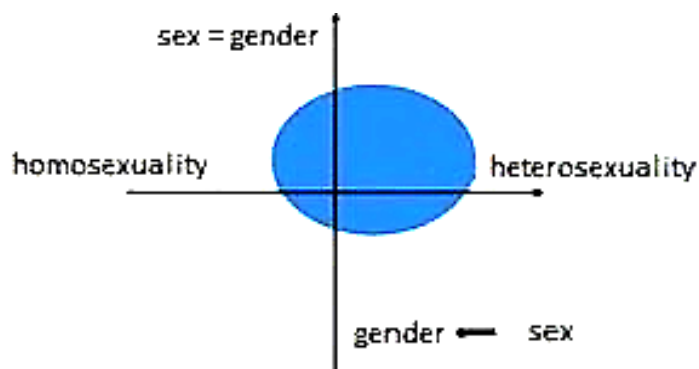


Figure 3. Pubertad Figure

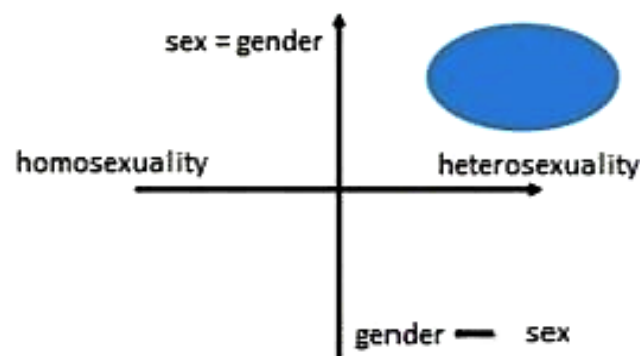


Figure 4. First maturity

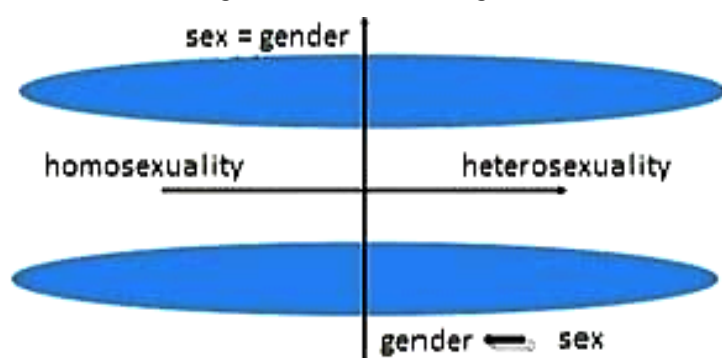


Figure 5. Second maturity



Figure 6. Old age

Thus, based on the long-term work of A. Kinsey and his followers posited that a dynamic change in gender self-determination and sexual orientation during a person's life occurs under the influence of

numerous factors of both the external environment and internal personal changes, and rather than being an anomaly as previously believed, is rather a variant of the norm.

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