

Are parental rights threatened in the West?

Societal organization will change fundamentally in many Western countries as the legal concept of sex/gender is transformed from an objectively observable bodily characteristic to a subjectively experienced identity. The Finnish government, among others, plans to enact “an act on the legal recognition of gender that respects people’s right to self-determination”. According to this act, “gender can be changed, upon application, by an adult who presents a reasoned account of his or her permanent experience of representing the other gender.” (<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/marin/government-programme/strengthening-the-rule-of-law>).

Once the legal concept of sex/gender is determined by individual selection, the natural family loses its independent foundation and becomes a juridical construct of the state. This enables the state to control and manipulate family relations and speech within the family. The state control becomes even stricter, once the right to determine one’s sex/gender is extended to children.

The driving force behind this change is an ideology that regards “the concept gender as an organizing principle of the overall social order in modern societies and all social institutions, including the economy, politics, religion, the military, education, and medicine, not just the family” (Lorber 448).

Transitioning as an identity and as a right

The expressed aim of the Finnish government is to limit the right to determine one’s gender to adults. There are various policymakers, however, who want to extend this right to children. In her statement to the Finnish Government on 21 January 2021, Elina Pekkarinen, the Ombudsman for Children, called for the strengthening of children's legal right to live according to their individual experience of gender.

Sonja Vahtera, the lawyer for the Ombudsman for Children accuses Finnish gender clinics for treating children’s desire to change their gender as a psychological and psychiatric problem rather than as an identity and a human right. She regards the pathologization of gender identity as one of the root causes of violations of human rights of gender minorities. (Vahtera; quoted by Peltonen 2021)

The Ombudsman for Children seems to subscribe to the new ideology, according to which, as Debra Soh (2020:174) it defines, “transitioning is no longer a medical consideration; it has become an identity. A cohort of younger millennials and Gen Z have become the test subjects of this ideology.”

Once legal transitioning based on subjective choice is regarded as a human right, parents opposed to their children’s transitioning are regarded as violating their children’s rights. The proponents of the new ideology want to subject such parents to effective legal sanctions. According to Pekkarinen, children must have effective means to bring to a competent authority all violations of their equality rights and the discrimination they experience while expressing their gender identity. From this perspective, parents trying to protect their children from the gender confusion spreading through social contagion will be considered a threat to

children's rights, rather than being valued as the concerned caregivers and primary educators of their own children.

If the Ombusman for Children were to consider the exponential growth in the number of gender dysphoric girls from the perspective of psychiatry or even that of social psychology, she might ask the government to commission a study on the causes for the phenomenon, as has been done in Sweden and Great Britain. However, she ignores this perspective. She does not focus on the problem that e.g. autistic, depressed and bullied girls suddenly start dreaming about double mastectomy and hormone treatments.

The perspective of the Council for Choices in Health Care (COHERE Finland) that works in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is different. According to its research-based recommendations, the primary care for young people suffering from gender dysphoria is psychosocial support. The perspective of COHERE Finland seems to discourage any legal challenge to parental rights in the name of children's right to self-determination.

Consequences for parental rights

To assess the consequences of enacting "an act on the legal recognition of gender that respects people's right to self-determination" and extending this right to children, it is appropriate to focus on the consequences of similar legal changes in other countries. One good example is Canada, where similar legislative changes were enacted in the past.

When Canada in 2017 passed Bill C16, the so-called "anti-discrimination," gender identity bill, the world-renowned psychology professor Jordan Peterson predicted that the enforced speech of the bill would lead to severe restrictions on citizens' freedom of expression.

Although Peterson's scenario was initially viewed with suspicion, it has been proven correct by recent events. Robert Hoogland, the father (C. D.) of a girl (A. B.) undergoing medical gender reassignment was arrested on March 16, 2021 for referring to his daughter as his daughter in his public statements in defiance of the Feb. 27, 2019 decision of the Supreme Court of British Columbia: "Attempting to persuade A. B. to abandon treatment for gender dysphoria; addressing A. B. by his birth name; referring to A. B. as a girl or with female pronouns whether to him directly or to third parties; shall be considered family violence."

Robert Hoogland has now been arrested and will be taken to court for committing "family violence" against his daughter for referring to her as his daughter. Peterson tweeted: "This could never happen, said those who called my stance against Bill C16 alarmist. I read the law and saw that it was, to the contrary, inevitable."

When the girl was 14 years old, a psychologist encouraged her to undergo gender reassignment and a paediatrician made the decision to give her male hormones against her father's will. The father tried to prevent the hormone treatments for fear that his daughter would later regret the permanent effects of the treatments such as deepening the voice and possible infertility. "What happens when the bubble explodes and the delusion ends ... She

can never go back to being a girl in the healthy body she should have had ... These kids don't understand. What kind of 13 year old is thinking about having a family and kids?"

Douglas Farrow, professor at McGill University, believes that the judges are committing violence against the girl (A. B.) by encouraging her mistaken belief that it would be possible to change gender. "The court's attempt to declare her chromosomes irrelevant is itself a form of violence against the family—this family and every family ... Neither AB herself, nor Bowden and Marzari JJ, can make a boy of a girl. AB's counsellors and doctors can't, either, however keen they may be to try."

State control of speech

According to Farrow, this case provides an exemplary insight into how the state can effectively control its citizens by changing the legal concept of sex/gender into one determined by subjective experience. The state is beginning to regulate speech even within the family.

Basing legal sex/gender on individual selection will restrict the citizens' freedom of speech and force them to act against obvious facts. The state forces citizens to treat some biological men as women and some biological women as men and compels people to say, what they do not believe, using words that they think wrong. Citizens become gradually accustomed to living in a society where reality does not depend on its own structure but on government decisions.

Conclusion

When the significance of the body is undermined and replaced by subjective experience, we lose our collective ability to distinguish between facts and falsehoods, between truth and error and "become defenceless against manipulation through blatant fictions and enforced lies" (Farrow 2020). The state can extend the reach of its propaganda, as it bypasses natural identities like biological motherhood and fatherhood, maleness and femaleness, and replaces them with juridical identities based on subjective experience.

The government forces people to live in terms of conceptions that are contrary to observed facts and ethical principles. "Once daughter and son, male and female are ratified in law and language as disembodied personal selections", we lose touch with physical reality and the words that are needed to describe that reality (McLaughlin 2019).

Professor Donna M. Hughes (2021) argues that fantasies or feelings are not a legitimate basis for human rights: "Every person is entitled to dignity, civil rights, and human rights. But rights are based on laws, truth, and scientific reality – the best they can be established – not fantasies or feelings."

Once the individual has the right to determine her legal gender based on her feelings, citizens are forced to live in an imaginary world, which results in the suffering of the most vulnerable members of society. "The American political left is increasingly diving headfirst into their own world of lies and fantasy and, unlike in the imaginary world of QAnon, real children are becoming actual victims. The trans-sex fantasy, the belief that a person can change his or her

sex, either from male to female or from female to male, is spreading largely unquestioned among the political left.” (Hughes 2021)

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