

EARLY SOCIALIZATION AND FAMILIAL STRUCTURE DURING THE BABY BOOM. SEX

EDUCATION AS FAMILIAL EDUCATION IN FRANCE (1930-1960)

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My communication focuses on sex education that is considered in France as one of the vectors of parenthood's standard. It comes across indeed as highly influenced by a family referential. This family referential has persisted from the beginning of the 20th up to the late 1960s. The global representation and the interpretation framework of the stakes around sex education is the family. This is what I mean by family referential.

Sex education concerns the family affairs since sexuality has inexorably been associated with procreation, at least up to the 1960s. This intricacy between sexuality and procreation is essential for understanding the link between sex education and preparation to family life. By realising to what extent sexual issues and especially the implications of sexuality are poorly known, sex education has progressively come across as a central device in preparing adolescent and young adults and to family life.

But the modalities of such education do not make consensus. Also, public authorities find it hard to impose it. From the early 1900s to the 1960s, sex education was, essentially, in the hands of diverse associations who intervened with adolescents and young adults. These associations diffused around them codes, norms, values on family and the way of being parents.

I would like to show you that sex education contributes to building a parental vocation. It makes adolescents of both sexes become aware of the fact of "becoming a parent" is quite natural and turns maternity and paternity in a means to finding one's true self. It repeated, while producing them, a number of "natural dispositions" to becoming a parent. Besides, sex education prescribes ideal configurations on the basis of criteria such as the age when getting married, the age at the birth of the first child, the size of the family, its economic balance. It contributes to the making of a parental awareness.

I want to show that the diversity of the speakers, the oppositions to family planning particularly strong in France might lead to a plurality of the goals and of the norms conveyed. In reality, a relative consensus on the meaning of being a parent could be noted. The family referential, widely shared, was based on a consensual representation of the mission of the husband and wife. "Conscious", "voluntary" maternity occupied an essential place in the debates. Sexuality education was a preparation to marriage and family life, to the responsibilities implied by maternity and paternity. Through a set of normalising recommendations, the aim of sex education since the early decades of the 20th century was to promote family. Sex education was a preparation to marriage, to family life at least up to the 1980s. This was the French model of sex education. Parenthood largely prevailed over conjugality. Such was not the case in Great-Britain or in Germany for example where conjugality is more present and earlier. The weight of the demographic issues and of the catholic movements accounted for that French singularity.

One can wonder whether, the golden age of family, during the *baby boom* years, was not born out of these injunctions and of these family models which had been hammered home in devices carried by various groups, while still agreeing on a number of points. At that time, a model of ideal family, with two possibly three children at the most, was formed. The link between early socialisation and the familial structure should be enlightened.