

Book Review

Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation

Available online at www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications

This report is a result of a rigorous literature review on sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE). The American Psychological Association assign a task force with three major tasks: '(1) Review and update the resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation; (2) Generate a report and discussion on SOCE; (3) Inform APA's response to group that promote treatments to change social orientation' (p. 1). In my opinion, the task force has successfully analyzed and reviewed various research on the issue of whether sexual orientation can be changed or otherwise. However, the conclusion at the end will only widen the gap on whether an individual sexual orientation needs or can be changed.

The book contains nine chapters. The first chapter contains introduction where the team laying the foundation on the current debates especially on the impact of religion on people's life. In addition, the team provide some definitions (e.g. sexual stigma) for initial clarification.

In second chapter, the team provides a brief history of sexual orientation change efforts. They found that there is a decline of SOCE since the removal of homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). However, studies on SOCE has increased in the last decade especially from those who held strong religious and political beliefs.

In third chapter, the team provides a systematic review of research on the efficacy of SOCE. Interestingly, they found major methodological flaws in most studies on SOCE. These flaws might reduce its internal validity and provide little basis for 'concluding whether SOCE could have any effect on sexual orientation' (p. 34). Hence, this offers a direction for future research which

could reduce the gap between the two main school of thoughts.

In the fourth chapter, the team provides another systematic review on the efficacy of SOCE focusing on the outcomes. Similarly, there are limited research on SOCE which could show indication of the prevalence of harmful outcomes among people who have undergone effort to change their sexual orientation. Thus, the team found little evidence on the safety of SOCE. The lack of research on the safety of SOCE raise a serious concern which need to be addressed accordingly.

In the fifth chapter, the team examines research on adults who undergo sexual orientation change efforts. They found that the majority of the participants are predominantly well-educated white men who held strong religious beliefs. In addition, the participants are those who endorse SOCE in the first place. The team argue that there are lack of research on non-Christian individuals and other minority groups. This might be due to the fact that people with less religious belief tend to accept their sexual orientation compared to those with strong religious belief who attempt to integrate their faith and sexual orientation.

In the sixth chapter, the team offers an appropriate application of affirmative therapeutic interventions for adults who seek SOCE. This chapter is one the strengths of this report as it shows key solutions to those who seek SOCE or health professionals or researchers dealing with SOCE. Nevertheless, the solution might create another debate especially from the other groups with strong religious beliefs.

In the seventh chapter, the team elaborate ethical concerns and decision making in psy-