ABSTRACT

Continuity and change – On being a sister of a transsexual person

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In an ongoing study the aim is to understand how individuals, close related to transsexuals are forced to adapt to an altered view of their relative. The sex change process for the transsexual person is often described as both a positive but also a negative process. It is positive in the sense of ‘coming out’ with a feeling of who I am, and negative when relations to friends, family, society and the medical investigation do not work in such a way that is comfortable or acceptable. The point of departure of the study is that the process can affect people in the immediate surroundings in different ways. In this paper it is discussed how a sister of a person who has identified himself as transsexual (ftm), constructs normalcy in an interview, primarily in relation to established norms in the society by identifying her concept of continuity, consistency and change. In this the gender issue is absent and a genderless personality is emphasised. An image of continuity arises. However, gender is in the same time ubiquitous, a problem for the sister is described in relation to the demand for authenticity and gender. Finally, to know about the transsexualism, the problem is solved and she constructs an image of consistency.