
Cuba debates constitutional reform: Although it is not the heart of the matter

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Marriage between people of the same sex and not only between man and woman, still promotes debates, together with other defining issues in the constitutional draft all Cubans are debating today.

In the last few days, at least via journalistic reports mainly from the TV, the topic of the marriage between people -without specifying man and woman- seems to be generating less criteria than at the beginning of the debates of the draft Constitution in which all Cubans are participating.

Nevertheless, in late August, PhD Mariela Castro, director of the National Center for Sex Education (Cenesex) stated her opinion on the social media about that article 68 of the draft Constitution, which defines marriage as the unity agreement between two people without clarifying their sex.

“Cuba has been criticized for falling to progress enough in its legislative agenda to protect the rights of LGBT people. The political will to move forward in these topics is expressed in the new constitutional draft. “Now, those who oppose our country vision try to mix up and feed prejudices and ignorance to sabotage this transcendental process. The draft constitution far exceeds the current document.

“Marriage is a right that cannot be denied to LGBT people, not only because it is discriminatory but also for its negative political consequences and contrary to the emancipating spirit of the Revolution. Obviously, our people need more information and arguments. We should be more active in the media. Let us not be wrong again, because ingenuities are paid with high prices”.

Thus warned on Facebook the also deputy to the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuban Parliament). And her message quickly went viral generating criteria for and against.

Among those endorsers of what Mariela said, Michel Mesa Pulido commented: “I know this a very strong issue for a purely macho society but let us give all the people the opportunity to unite with those they deem appropriate, the important thing is to be happy and to contribute to make this society greater, it does not matter whether marriage is equal or unequal, the human being is the important thing”.

For his part, Rafael Suárez Suárez recalled that “everything changes; earlier it was considered improper for a woman to work, to be a leader, for a man to collaborate in the household chores, for a woman to earn more money than a man, for a white man to marry a black woman. What should really exist is the right to choose, that they all can get married or not, because there may have gays who do not want to do it, but by choice, not by impediment, that law does not harm your rights at all, you marry whomever you wish, let others live their life with the same freedom as you live yours”.

The Cenesex director widened what this cybernaut said: “It was also deemed improper for women, dark skinned people, elderly people or with disabilities, sick people, countryside people or poor people to have the same rights. Marriage and family concepts were created according to dominant interests without respecting human realities much more varied than those imposed. As humanity progresses in the achievement of its rights, these concepts evolve and are more inclusive and fairer. No matter whether you like it or not, understand it or not, we are born with rights and states have the responsibility to protect them. That's the main role of the constitution and its reform”.

Everybody does not favor this type of unities, among them, José Luis Mosqueda, who clearly and concisely states his criterion: “...with all the respect that this staff deserves, I do not agree with the fact that two men or two women can marry, that was always deemed improper and I still deem it the same. Greetings”.

I find interesting the message posted on FB by Rogelio Collado, who considers that “one should not count on these prejudices when deciding on people's rights. I do not get tired repeating that if we had waited to eradicate racism and

chauvinism so the rights of black people and women were respected in Cuba, there would still exist schools for blacks and women wouldn't be strongly represented in all spheres of the national life. The constitutional process is very good, but I still believe that the topics relating to the human rights of any social group should not depend on the opinion of the majority, all the more so when it is about the rights of a so-called 'minority'. A lot has been done as regards sex education and respect for diversity in the last few years and that's commendable, but we should not be over-confident, prejudices are deeply rooted in our society".

Further ahead, the same forum member José Luis Mosqueda added new arguments: "We are not talking about the same topic, the rights of people, women, men, either black or white, to live together and to share those rights as it has been done in Cuba since the triumph of the Revolution is one thing, and another is that men marry men and women marry women, that is not natural, no matter who states it".

After thanking all the posted criteria, for and against, Mariela Castro pointed out as a summary: "In order to continue doing revolution and to achieve a fairer society, we should move forward in these topics. It is not fair that heterosexual couples can opt for marriage and that at the same time other couples are denied this right. Marriage has different ends; the weighing of its reproductive aim was imposed in the Middle Ages. Read on the evolution of family and marriage as social institutions".

On Monday, August 13, there kicked off in Cuba the popular consultation of the new draft Constitution, which includes transcendental newnesses, among them, in the bodies of higher leadership, such as the comeback of the figures of President of the Republic and Prime Minister, as well as the Council of State and the National Assembly of People's under the same direction.

This process of massive consultation will come to an end on November 15, and all criteria will be sent to the National Assembly for the drafting of the Magna Carta that will be subject to an approving referendum.

Translated by Jorge Mesa Benjamin / Cubasi Translation Staff
