

A Critical Review on Relations between Heterosexual Parents and Their Homosexual Sons/Daughters

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Abstract: This study aimed to discuss relationships in families where there are homosexual children through a literature review of books, theses, dissertations, and scientific articles. It has been observed that Judeo-Christian precepts are the basis of the homophobia that sustains the violence that most of them live, but this violence is seen as a kind of correction that would bring the child to heteronormativity. There are three types of families dealing with youth homosexual: disintegrated, where conflicts increase after leaving the closet, feelings of shame, and rejection of the youth are very present. Ambivalent families, where parents have conflicting reactions in the family, regarding the sexual orientation of the youth and the love they feel for their child. Also, integrated families, where shame is little present, and there is an improvement in relationships after leaving the child's closet.

Keywords: Family Relations; Homosexuality; Homophobia; Violence.

Date of Submission: 07-09-2019

Date of Acceptance: 23-09-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

The family is a crucial field in the global development of a person. When the subject is family dynamics, some conventional aspects are observed in the history of a large number of homosexuals (SCHULMAN, 2009). With this research, we hope to contribute to the discussion about family relationships from the difference in sexual orientation, taking a critical look at the impact that the family has on the development of a person of orientation that diverges from the hetero norm. Today, sexual and gender diversity brings together many theoretical and empirical studies, especially among the humanities that investigate the social impact of diversity. Such repercussions point to a context that still discriminates against homosexuals and puts them on the fringes of society (COSTA et al., 2015).

We start from the point where the terms child/children is being used to represent youth, young adults, or adolescents as synonymous to sons and daughters, NOT young kids. Assuming that the diversity of sexual orientation has always existed, the political moment of our country (Brazil) and the belief that all forms of violence and exclusion should be addressed, based on critical dialogue, the question is: How does literature present the dynamic relationship of young homosexuals in their families?

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

According to Claude Lévi-Strauss (1987), the family is the place where the norms of filiation and kinship develop, where elementary systems are built. The purpose of which is to link individuals between themselves and society. It constitutes social reality being a set of individuals linked together, either by covenant (marriage) or affiliation, but exceptionally by adoption (kinship) and living under one roof (cohabitation). Its function is to provide a first contact with social rules, produce and reproduce cultural roles for individuals, to be a socializing agent (UZIEL, 2002; MARTINS, 2015; MARTINS-SILVA et al., 2012).

We also present the concept of homosexuality, which is a natural expression of human sexuality, not something new in the affective-sexual behavior of humanity. Its manifestation dates back to the dawn of human civilization (BORGES, 2009).

Related Works

For the composition of this essay, we can cite some research that was crucial to the answer to the proposed problem, all being from the last five years.

- Adolescenteshomossexuais e as relaçõescomseusfamiliares: um enfoque da fenomenologia social. PHD Theses ofNelyDayse Santos da Mata, fromPrograma de PósGraduaçãoemCuidadoemSaúde da USP, 2016.
- Aspectospsicossociais da homophobia intrafamiliar e saúde de jovenslésbicas e gays. Articleof PERUCCHI, J.; BRANDAO, B. C.; VIEIRA, H. I. S., published in journal EstudosemPsicologia, vol.19, n.1, p.67-76, 2014.
- Família e orientação sexual: dificuldadesnaaceitação da homossexualidademasculina. Article of SILVA, M. M. L. et al published in journalTemasempsicologia, vol.23, n.3, p. 677-692, 2015.

Methodologically, this study is characterized by being a non-systematic literature review of argumentative narrative nature, which is the analysis of the literature in the interpretation and personal critical analysis of the author (ROTHER, 2007). Due to problems with descriptors, we chose to use free time configuration literature consulted in books, theses, dissertations and scientific articles and included works as they fit the text construction and responded to the proposed objective.

III. RESULT

The historical condemnations of homosexuality arising from Judeo-Christian (and even scientific) religious influences still portray a scene of exclusion and violence within families. "I prefer a dead son to a gay son," or "I prefer a whore daughter than a dyke" (MOTT, 2001). Religion and its interpretations of homosexuality are often maintainers of negative meanings that hinder changes necessary for its acceptance and legitimacy, giving the connotation of sin to homosexuality and attributing it to attitudes of promiscuity (SILVA et al., 2015).

Schulman (2009) says the family is the refuge of the cruelty of culture, but if it is the source of cruelty, the broader society will be the refuge for the violated person. However, if family and society are sources of cruelty, where will the young homosexual take refuge? For other social minorities, the family is the primary support in facing global discrimination, but in the case of homosexuals, it is in their own homes that oppression and discrimination are most present and make them feel stronger.

Relatives of blacks, Jews, Indians and/or other minorities stimulate the affirmation of the cultural, ethnic traits of their particular group in their children, which will contribute to the development of their identity and self-esteem throughout their development, causing the child to be proud to belong to that group. For gays and lesbians, the reality is the opposite. The frames of rejection and psychic/physical violence, allied to public embarrassment begin within the home itself. The family, allied with other groups with social power, work together to repress the so-called "deviation." Unfortunately, some segments of society consider homosexuals to be anti-family (FRAZÃO; ROSÁRIO, 2008; MOTT, 2000).

The family, as a social institution demarcated by the binarism male/female from heteronormativity, most of the time does not have the necessary tools to deal with a homosexual child, having difficulty accepting the child for not meeting the male or female ideal of our culture. According to Bourdieu (2010), it is the family that most strongly reproduces male domination and vision. Concerning the homosexual child, the family organization goes through its invisibility and exclusion. Suddenly, the child comes to be seen as putting at risk the project of family preservation within the molds consecrated by tradition and "good morals" and moral values (SANTOS et al., 2007).

Parents play scenes of violence against their children that reflect latent homophobia. Most parents see their children as extensions of themselves and desire happiness in all areas of their lives. However, when a son tells his parents he is homosexual, a war begins in the family. Parents and children change their roles. It is necessary to understand that most parents' understanding of sexuality is linked to biological sex, hence heteronormativity. This difficulty may also be related to the fact that parents themselves are not comfortable or able to deal with their fears related to more intimate subjects. These fears are related to the breaking of expectations that these family members have for the social destinies of their children (SOLIVA; SILVA JUNIOR, 2014).

The shock of fathers and mothers, when faced with a homosexual child, is almost inevitable. When the child reveals his homoerotic orientation, frustration grips his parents and "all hopes they had carefully nurtured

disappear. Parents look for whom to blame, and some believe it is just a passing phase (HAUER; GUIMARAES, 2015).

It is very common for parents to try to find a reason for their homosexuality by trying to formulate linear explanations. Parents begin to blame themselves for believing that they did not give their child a quality education, so that they could not rid him of so much rejected homosexuality, or else transfer their frustrated feelings out of the house, blaming and blaming their friends, and other extra family groups by "child diversion" (MULLER, 2000).

The feeling of shame towards society is observed because it accuses parents of failed parenting. The dreams of the parents of a heterosexual child are broken, and when the children come out of the closet, parents usually enter it (FRAZÃO; ROSÁRIO, 2008).

Parents' reactions to their children's disclosure about homosexual orientation are diverse, depending on the types of ties between them and their children, on the feelings affect family members, on the relationship between siblings, on their commitment to their children. Religious assumptions, social morality, tradition, ethics, and values of respect for human rights, autonomy, and individual decisions, are, among other aspects.

Many homosexuals feel that parents already know if their sexuality and this notion can be true since parents usually know their children very well. However, due to ignorance, not knowing how to deal with the situation or because knowing it is necessary to take a position, many parents and family members do not mention the subject until it is inevitable (COSTA et al., 2015).

Initiatives about revealing sexual orientation are difficult for homosexuals. Few homosexuals achieve the maturity of self-acceptance and reveal their sexual orientation to family members (PALMA; LEVANDOWSKI, 2008). Due to rejection and discrimination in the social environment, schools, families, social institutions, it is difficult for a teenager to assume that he/she is not heterosexual, and when they do so in front of the family, it is difficult to find a welcoming environment and respect (PERUCCHI et al., 2014).

The emotional storm caused by a "double life", the emergence of a love relationship, the process of identity formation, the therapeutic process and destructive motives (affronts, desire to induce guilt, confrontation or alienation) are some of the motivating processes for revelation of homosexuality to the family (FRAZÃO; ROSÁRIO, 2008).

According to Viana (2007) the most critical barrier for a homosexual who wants to "get out of the closet" is the family, because this is the first group we are part of and the where we learn almost everything about what is right and what is wrong, and this is the group that reinforces the idea that homosexuality is reprehensible. The closet represents something that marks the lives of gays and lesbians. With each meeting with a new person, new cabinets are built, which demand new schemes and demands for secrecy or exposure. Thus, even people who claim to be homosexuals are few who do not find themselves in the closet with someone who is in any way relevant to them (PERUCCHI et al., 2014).

Talking about homosexuality is painful for families. Many parents believe that it will not exist in their family. According to Muller (2000), the position of parents regarding their child's disclosure will show whether they are interested in their child or concerned only about themselves.

Although it considers that the family space is one of the shelter and protection of individuals, as a condition for this inclusion, there is a requirement that the attitude of its members is compatible with the heterosexual hegemonic model. Thus, if its members deviate from such rules, the family becomes available to violent mechanisms, whether physical or psychological, in an attempt to rebuke them and to frame them in the hetero norm. Thus, with homosexual children, it is clear that the family does not act as a protector and promoter of health and dignity, but as a device for reiterating the heterosexual norm through various forms of violence (PERUCCHI et al., 2014).

Palma and Levandowski (2008), point out that the reaction of parents when revealing the sexual orientation of their daughters is diverse, being: nervousness, shock, aggression, lack of words to describe what they were feeling and guilt and that few families accept and live well with a homosexual child, general nonconformity. Most of the time, the revelation of homosexuality leads to a family crisis (FRAZÃO; ROSÁRIO, 2008).

In the family group, the crisis is seen as a vital threat, an alarm in the group, a moment full of possibilities for resignification. In many cases, there is an emotional distance between homosexual parents and children, as the conflicts between parents' internalized homophobia and their love for their children make parents feel detached from their children's lives. As gay men feel welcomed, loved, and protected by their families, the social problems brought about by homosexuality become less challenging to deal with (PALMA; LEVANDOWSKI, 2008). The way homosexuals are treated in their families directly influences the quality of life they will have from then on. The harmony of children with their parents makes young homosexuals suffer much less from depression.

There are two main experiences that most homosexuals share in common: "assuming", a process of personal interrogation as opposed to social expectation, there is nothing like it in heterosexual life, the next is that the massive majority of homosexuals at some point in their lives was downgraded by their family precisely because of their homosexuality (SCHULMAN, 2009).

Pictures of violence against homosexuals within the family are common, but this violence is not seen as deprivation of rights, but as a correction that would lead the child "back to heterosexuality." Families use intense violence against homosexuals in the name of "love and protection," provided with religious concepts (COSTA et al., 2012).

To comply with the premises of heteronormativity, families invest heavily and unconsciously so that their sons and daughters become heterosexual and match the gender performances corresponding to their biological sex. Families are more concerned with "tolerating" homosexuals, that is, living without conflict, keeping them in a less valuable position, where they are punished within their family structure (SCHULMAN, 2009). In general, in the face of homosexuality of children, what happens at best is a "liberal homophobia" based on the myth of "choice of private life", and this is where an exclusionary logic is revealed: the experience of homoeroticism is not seen as legitimate, but tolerated (TOLEDO; TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013).

Homophobia situations in the family context are constituted by devices with psychosocial effects: subjective mechanisms that maintain silence and impotence in the face of not only physical but, above all, symbolic violence, through which the heterosexual norm submits young gay men and lesbians to biopolitical strategies to control their bodies. When the family does not take a violent stance in an attempt to repress the expression of the child's homoerotic experiences, they often use a form of silence, invisibility of such practices (PERUCCHI et al., 2014).

In their families, many homosexuals find it difficult not only to recognize and accept their condition as a person, but also in relation to their marital status. When homosexual unions are not recognized, partners are seen as just "roommates," or "that friend with whom you share the apartment," people who have a stable relationship are treated as single, remaining overly vigilant about themselves and their partner, and often the partner is excluded from family events. The non-recognition of their relationships, one of the primary forms of violence experienced by homosexuals in their families, becomes a barrier in cases of violence in their affective relationships (TOLEDO; TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013).

Homophobia in the family context is a device that causes the break in the bond and separation between these young people and their relatives, often leading to the departure or expulsion from their parents' house (MATA, 2016).

Silva (et al., 2015) concluded in his research that the construction of the meaning of homosexuality in the family of origin occurs, most of the time, through a prejudiced and stereotyped conception, always reinforced by religious beliefs, gender roles, and concepts of health and disease, generating a feeling of fear in children, when expressing their sexual orientation towards their own family and society, thus characterizing a discriminatory and abusive family relationship.

The lack of acceptance and respectful attitude, acceptance of the child's way of being, ends up sharpening problems of adjustment and self-esteem in the individual, as it enhances the damage caused by social discrimination suffered in macrosocial spaces, such as school and work (SANTOS et al., 2007).

Much more worrying are the consequences of these aggressions in the social relations of children, where the reproduction of this situation of violence can be observed in their affective-sexual relations. If they suffer violence in intimacy, they are forced to hide it for fear of further weakening family ties, or for fear of being expelled from home (COSTA, et al., 2012).

Perucchi (et al., 2014) says that everyday constructions of gender identity generated within the dominant social order produce anti-homosexual violence, having as impacts, coercive, corrective and punitive practices, operated through violation of rights and / or of crimes, veiled or explicit, or simply, by daily violence. In her research, the author found that while homophobic family violence does not culminate in the expulsion or leaving the home of parents, it occurs in the daily relationships of homosexual children. When they remain in the coexistence of a heteronormative home, being heterosexual ensures privileged positions or, often, positions of survival and nonviolence, being homosexual, not. Ordinary situations of discrimination are anchored in the privileges of their heterosexual relatives in family exchanges. Privileges that are not even recognized by the perpetrators of violence and often by young people in situations of family violence as privileges. On the other hand, if young people live in a family environment that provides security and means to cope with adversity, they will be better able to experience homosexuality functionally, with a good quality of life and a proper development of self-esteem.

Schulman (2009) explains that since gays are usually alone in his family, they become perfect scapegoats, because within this group, no one is like him or identifies with him, so the homosexual becomes the depositary of all Resentments and family deficiencies, moreover, no one sees what really happens, because homophobia and exclusion are disguised as "moral values." Worsening the situation, this "weaker" ends up

absorbing guilt and family feelings, feeling the black sheep of the family, as if he were the sick himself. It is evident that the elected scapegoat is not the family problem, at least not the only one. This is a family protection mechanism that stops looking at itself, focusing its eyes on the "problem subject." This "problematic" ends up becoming the protective agent of the family, where the same, being the inadequate within the family, ends up being used to maintain the family balance.

When not welcomed by the family, or when the homosexual is required to remain in the closet, often the weight of this destabilization and non-recognition makes many homosexuals move away from their families of origin. Thus, lesbians and gays who reveal their homosexuality have to create a new family reference. It is common, for example, that homosexuals form external families of friends when rejected by their families of origin. Often, many homosexuals move away from their relatives by gaining their material independence, but many remain attached to their family by an illusion of "natural" love bonds, but in reality they are financial and domination bonds overlaid by consenting family homophobia, which requires the homosexual member to annul himself (TOLEDO; TEIXEIRA-FILHO, 2013).

The authors Herdt and Koff (2002) surveyed the family relationships in which there are cases of gay children, their research typifying family relationships in the process of "leaving the closet" of children and also their relationships after that. There are three types of families:

Disintegrated Families: In this family typology, relationships are close and complicated, in addition to situations of conflict before the disclosure of sexual orientation of the child, these conflicts tend to increase after the disclosure of homosexuality, feelings of shame and rejection by sexual orientation of the child. Children are well present factors as well as rejection of the child partner is found. Parents feel unsuccessful in raising and educating their children and are unable to project a future for their gay son.

Ambivalent Families: This family typology presents ambivalent reactions regarding revealing their child's sexual orientation to other people and family members because a feeling of inner shame motivates them. Communication in this positive family group and recognition of the child's sexual orientation happens. Although there is a small relationship with the child's partner, this relationship usually generates conflict, and another present factor is the uncertainties regarding the child's future.

In Integrated Families, however, feelings of shame are rarely present, and the secret is considered unnecessary, and more a burden. With the disclosure of the sexual orientation of the child, there is an improvement in family relationships, and the acceptance of it is evident. In this family typology, conflicts generate closeness rather than withdrawal. In addition to recognizing a child's sexual orientation, the family usually finds a unique and exclusively positive contribution from the gay child, and there is an involvement with the homosexual movement, unlike the other family typologies mentioned above. Regarding the partner, the inclusion of the partner is explicit, and the future of the child is viewed positively.

IV. CONCLUSION

Overall, in our findings, the family relationships in which homosexuals are subjected are, for the most part, relationships based on violence. What is still observed is the condemnation and exclusion of homosexuals based on assumptions of the Christian Jewish religions, on machismo and patriarchalism. It is noteworthy that many families find unique ways of dealing with a homosexual child within the home, either through direct exclusion, indirect exclusion, or even inclusion. The family undergoes reorganization upon learning of the presence of a homosexual within the family. This dynamic will directly influence the formation of the child's identity, and marks will be left on their subjectivity. Even though most of the time, they are in troubled relationships, the family can also be a source of protection and security for the homosexual. In short, child homosexuality can strengthen family ties or weaken them further.

The family as a protective cultural institution fails too much with homosexuals. In the name of morals, homosexuals are held in low positions, and the hope that their child will become heterosexual are maintained. Failure to recognize a child as homosexual generates suffering, illness, and sometimes can lead to suicide. Lack of information coupled with parental prejudice about sexuality creates a division in the family. The conflict between how parents feel about their child and homophobia weakens relationships within the home and ultimately drives various forms of violence. Unfortunately, it is common for many young homosexuals to be raped in various ways within the home.

We conclude that violence recurs in family dynamics among young gay men and their parents. Homosexuals are exposed to violent relationships almost as a norm. We hope to be able to contribute to change this situation by building this knowledge.

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IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with SI. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Daniel Cerdeira de Souza. "A Critical Review on Relations between Heterosexual Parents and Their Homosexual Sons/Daughters." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 24 no. 09, 2019, pp. 01-06.