43 - BETWEEN DANCE, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HOMOSEXUALITY: FAMILY RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION/ METHODOLOGY

Dancing, by having your own body as main instrument, is very attached in gender and sexuality matters. Therefore, in the last years, lots of projects were made with this in mind. This research aims to describe the family relations of four physical education professionals, admittedly homosexuals, and which work with dance.

First of all, we decides to report case by case, aiming to provide a better understanding of the relation between parents, homosexual sons and dance.

After all the descriptions, we crossed the statements in a way to obtain similarities between the answers. We chose to do a purposive sample. So, we relied on the stories of four ballet dancers/teachers that nowadays recognize themselves as homosexuals, have majors in physical education and work with dance.

The methodological reference was based on qualitative approach. As the proposal isn't limited to only one case, but to a set of preselected dance teachers/ballet dancers, the chosen procedure for data collection was the multiple case study. The research was conducted through a semi-structured thematic interview. To process the data we used the content analysis technique (BARDIN, 2010), and the replication approach suggested by Yin (2010).

The four professional who participated in this research were Carlos, Taylor, Ted and Jack. Carlos started his studies in ballroom dancing in 1999, in Porto Alegre. Nowadays he is a jazz and ballroom dancing teacher, and is majoring in physical education. Taylor is an administrator, teacher, choreographer, ballet dancer and director of an art center in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. Ted has experience with school, group and gym dancing. Furthermore, he's a choreographer and assistant teacher of the dance class of Centro de Arte of UFPel. Jack is a professional ballet dancer and the director of Centro de Arte of Porto Alegre.

CARLOS (Born in 1988)

Carlos told his family about his sexual orientation in 2003. The ballet dancer revealed that he was slowly telling his parents about homosexuality. The main reason for this decision was to loosen up the news' impact to his family. Even recognizing as a homosexual, he entitled himself as a bisexual instead. Only later he revealed himself as a gay. However, even nowadays his father prefers to avoid this matter. More than that, he (his father), in the beginning, worried about Carlos' professional future, because he believed that the financial issues about that professions weren't favorable.

For Carlos' mother, it was easier. Divorced and in a new relationship, he was able to count with his mother's new partner, as he has a homosexual son. Carlos said he has a great relation with his mother and also told that all his family knows about his sexual orientation. In the beginning, by the way, the family associated his homosexuality to the fact he wanted to dance ballet. However, he tells that he was gay even before he wanted to dance. But he recognizes that the dance made the sexual acceptance easier.

He recalls that when he was doing ballroom dancing everything was ok, but when he decided to start classic ballet classes he didn't find his parents' support. Only his sister supported him. He believes that this situation happened because she's inside the generation that supports topics that once were considered taboos, like homosexuality. That's why she and her boyfriend – Carlos's brother-in-law – never had any sexuality related issues.

TAYLOR (Born in 1965)

During all his live, Taylor studied at public schools. Got a majoring in physical education in Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel) in 1991, and is a specialist in sports training. Apart from that, he's also an administrator, teacher, choreographer, ballet dancer and director of an art center in the capital.

Taylor's relationship with his father didn't have much interaction between them, due to his parents being divorced when he was young. His relationship with his mother was always good, as she was always there for him. His relatives were the first to know about his sexual orientation, assumed when Taylor got into college.

The family's accept process about Taylor's sexuality was relatively successful, but with some concerns in that time, like AIDS, that arose in the 80's, and the promiscuity issue that was, and still is, related to homosexual relations.

Em determinado momento da entrevista Taylor fala da relação de intimidade com sua família. Essa relação foi essencial para que ele falasse sobre sua orientação sexual. Conta que sofreu preconceitos, mas acreditava que estas situações eram aceitáveis para o contexto da época.

In some moment of the interview, Taylor spoke about his privacy relation with his family. That relation was essential for him to speak about his sexual orientation. He told he suffered negative prejudgment, but he believed those situations were acceptable in that time.

Taylor also states that, in the beginning, he didn't have any support for dance, because he came from a family with lots of old traditions, and they were expecting him to go through law school. When it came to dancing, he stated that his family had shown concerns about the financial issue.

TED (Born in 1975)

Ted's relationship with his father, about the sexual orientation respect matter, is troubled. According to him, his father knows, but “pretends that doesn't know”. Ted still remembers that sometimes his father made unpleasant jokes about his sexuality. The choice of teaching as a career, initially, was a concern by Ted's family. However, today he's a college professor and considers himself well paid for the job.

Ted only admitted his sexuality when he entered his master's degree course, and states that wasn't easy to tell to the family, due to their resistance, especially from his father. He told he had a “double life”, between the dance (where he admitted)

and his family (which he didn't tell about his sexual orientation yet). In the familiar context he even introduced them to some girlfriends he had. More than that, he also tells it was hard to explain to the family, which attended catholic churches. “I felt ashamed in that time, I used to hide myself. I felt dirty, ashamed, about that sinful thing.”(Ted)

His sister's approval, in the beginning, was also tough. However, nowadays, his relationship with her is good. But Ted points that the best relationship ever was with his mother. And he recollects that he saw in this friend a way to allege his sexual identity. It was through them that he discovered the “gay world”, went to his' first party, and saw there was affective relations and not only promiscuous.

Currently, Ted's family attends spiritualism centers and he declared that this fact contributed for everyone's comprehension about homosexuality. The family found in faith some explanation to the sexual orientation.

JACK (Born in 1971)

Jack's father relation with dance never was close. He enjoyed his son's career for a short time, because when he really started to accept the dance as a part of Jack's life, in the year of 2004, he passed away due to heart problems.

The ballet dancer didn't get to talk about his sexual orientation with his father, and stated:

> “He saw me when I started [to dance] and never more. After all this time he cried, even because I was already dancing in a different way. I understand his side, because that wasn't what he wished. All of a sudden, he was realizing about it [Jack's sexual orientation] officially. I don't recall if when I was a boy, and young, I used to do 'strange' things. I was always around. All the parties in my street were held in my house, so everybody knew each other. I was always close to my dad. (Jack)”.

We understood, with Jack's talk, that his father didn't allow him to dance. He made sure to let his relatives perceive his sexual orientation by themselves. He also stated that he didn't suffer any kind of prejudgment by his family, instead, they had shown a lot of worry, mostly by his parents, when they discovered his sexual orientation.

Crossing the paths: taboos and findings

Starting from the interviewees' reports, we noticed their mothers had shown up as the best familiar reference. It was with them that they felt at ease to talk. More than that, felt necessity to share feelings and emotions. That Ted and Taylor's case, for example.

Similar results were found in Nascimento e Afonso's (2011) research. The researchers found that the ballet dancers' mothers had knowledge of their son's life. It was them that followed their activities in school and in ballet, while the fathers, mostly, were involved in work. Another important to highlight is that none of the families, excluding Carlos', related homosexuality with dance. This association happened when he started to do classic dance lessons, specifically.

This affection with the mothers is possibly a facilitator for the participants in order to tell the entire family about the homosexuality. Fact that meets what Ribeiro (2008) shows. According to the author, a raise in homosexual verbalization is happening due to the society is learning how to respect those relations. The sexologist says that the homosexuals relationship' manifestations in the media may help to teach society. But this will depend of the way the theme will be addressed.

The interviewees Taylor and Jack related that their families' accept process about homosexuality was well succeeded, but both told that their parents showed concern when their sons revealed their sexual orientation. Both said similar phrases, like: “there wasn't prejudice from the family, still, there was concern”.

Ted, like his parents, also worried a lot. He believed that the “gay world” was only a space filled with promiscuity. As we saw, Taylor's family had the same concern, and AIDS was the biggest fear, as it was related to homosexual relations. According to Weeks (1999, p 37) “lots of people showed AIDS as a necessary effect from sexual excess, as if the body limits were tested and didn't pass in the 'sexual perversity' test, and this fact was directly linked to homosexuality. Sell (2006) remembers that even after four decades of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS), the relation stigma between AIDS and homosexuality still persists.

Another concern evidenced by Ted, Taylor and Carlos' families referred to the financial question related to the career – physical education and/or dance teacher. According to Pinto (2009) the lack of adequate pay to the teachers is one of the main challenges in the Brazilian education along history. The author states that, excluding some isolated cases, like federal network of schools and private elite schools, it is needed to give to the teacher's career the prestige that Brazil never had. And the best prestige indicator of a profession is the salary' valorization. According to the author:

> Taking the leap of quality in standard compensation of our teachers are fully feasible in current Brazilian tax reality. Accomplishing it, however, depends essentially of political and field values' changes, in the day-to-day relations that are made between professors, their students and parents. While those lasts were seen as opponents and the responsible for school failure by education professionals, as it happens today, nothing will change; instead, in economic crisis days, the risk of to occur teachers' salary devaluation, even more with the explosive increment of teaching municipalization in the last years, recalling that the towns are the poorest of the federative entities that compose the Brazilian republic. Establishing a strategic alliance between education professionals, parents and public schools students may be the most pressing task and also the hardest to all segments, organized or not, that fight for a public school of quality. (PINTO, 2009, p. 62).

To complement this idea, Pontili and Kassouf (2007) showed that teachers salary's improvements affect positively the urban area children's school frequency. However, Evangelista e Shiroma (2007) guarantee that the teachers' pay doesn't affect the teaching enhancement, so it doesn't need to be prioritized in renovations. The authors claim that lots of papers insist in the cost per teacher reduction.

It is noteworthy that different results obtained by the authors may be a way to denote why there's a large teacher depreciation. In other words, by not having a thinking unit about the teaching importance in literature, the harder is to notice the category' importance.

Another possible explanation about the low teachers' pay, but in a manner that don't justify the actual remuneration's conjecture, is brought by a couple of authors (LEWIN, 1980; LOURO, 2001; FERREIRA, 2006). Those authors discuss the feminization of teaching and how this can clarify the career depreciation. In other words, by being a mostly feminine job, the career would be willing to receive lower salary due to the entire historical context built around social depreciation of womankind.

Over these issues, is visible that all four interviewees are satisfied by sharing their sexuality issue with their families. More than that, most of them waited to be in secure financial and/or professional situations before telling the family

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although the process of the selected professionals' family acceptance was positive, there were concerns based on a historical prejudice, as relating homosexuality to AIDS and to promiscuity. Another fact related to prejudice was the feeling of inferiority caused by catholic religion in two of the interviewee's life, Ted and Taylor.

Another concern highlighted by the interviewee's families turned up when they decided to study physical education. The families showed concerns towards the low teachers' pay.

Based on the interviewee's talks, we noticed that the mothers appeared as a larger family reference. They were always present to share feeling and emotions. We think this proximity made the verbalization of the interviewed towards homosexuality easier.

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ABSTRACT

This present paper aims to describe family relationships from professional dancers who are openly gay, and graduated in Physical Education course. Firstly, it is shown how each one of these professionals relate to close family members – parents and siblings. Further, it is displayed connections between their life courses aiming to find similarities amongst them. It comes to a conclusion that mothers are believed to be a strong family reference for these professionals. The family demonstrates concerns towards their children's financial stability due their career choices, and that there still have been a correlation between homosexuality and promiscuity from them.

KEY-WORDS: gender; family; teaching activity.

ENTRE LA DANSE, L'ÉDUCATION PHYSIQUE ET L'HOMOSEXUALITÉ: LES RELATIONS FAMILIALES

RÉSUMÉ

Le travail présent a comme objectif décrier les relations familières de professionnel de la dance, certes d' homosexualidé et qui a un diplôme de éducation physique. Première nous exposons comme chaque un côtoie les familières plus prochaines – parentes, mères e frères. En selon moment nous mettons en évidence les proximité entre trajectoires de vies, entrelacement-les, visant trouver similitudes entre les cas. Nous comprenons que les mères sont prise comme référence familière pour cettes professionnel. La famille a démontré soucis financières em relation à choix de la profession d' enseignant et a eu índices de que la relation entre l'homosexualité et la promiscuité sexuelle encore est presente dans les familles.

MOTS-CLÉS: le genre; la famille; l'enseignant.

ENTRE LA DANZA, LA EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA Y HOMOSEXUALIDAD: RELACIONES FAMILIARES

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo describir las relaciones familiares de los profesionales de la danza, abiertamente homosexuales y capacitados en educación física. En primer lugar se explica cómo cada uno se encarga de su núcleo familiar - padres y hermanos. En el segundo momento se pudo comprobar la proximidad entre los caminos de la vida, entrelazando con el fin de encontrar similitudes entre los casos. Percibimos que las madres son tenidas como referencia familiar para estos profesionales. La familia demostró preocupaciones financieras relativas a la elección de la profesión docente y hubo indicios de que la relación entre la homosexualidad y la promiscuidad todavía está presente en las familias.

PALABRAS CLAVE: género, familia, enseñanza.

ENTRE A DANÇA, A EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA E A HOMOSSEXUALIDADE: RELAÇÕES FAMILIARES

RESUMO

O presente trabalho objetiva descrever as relações familiares de profissionais da dança, assumidamente homossexuais e formados em educação física. Primeiramente expomos como cada um deles lida com seus familiares mais próximos – pais, mães e irmãos. No segundo momento evidenciamos as proximidades entre as trajetórias de vida, entrelaçando-as, visando encontrar similaridades entre os casos. Percebemos que as mães são tidas como referência familiar para estes profissionais. A família demonstrou preocupações financeiras em relação à escolha da profissão docente e houve indícios de que a relação entre homossexualidade e promiscuidade ainda se faz presente nas famílias.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: gênero; família; docência.