

HOMOSEXUALITY AND HOMOPARENTHOOD ON STAGE: NARRATIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT. This qualitative study aimed to discuss homosexuality and homoparenthood from narratives produced by 34 teachers working in 17 different Early Childhood Schools in the municipality of Novo Hamburgo, state of Rio Grande do Sul. Methodologically, narrative stories were used as a procedure to access imaginative productions, and later the results were evaluated by the content analysis. These results reveal the dilemmas crossing the theme, such as ideas of prejudice and unacceptance, remaining stigmas and the influence of pathologization and standardization related to the subject. Although dilemmas are present, on the other hand, participants approach the meanings of family with a conception of love and diversity. The teachers' narratives allow to question the way the themes listed are treated in schools. According to this statement, new studies are suggested to investigate the way in which these conceptions interfere with the daily practice of teachers in our country.

Keywords: Homosexuality; homoparenthood; early childhood education.

A HOMOSSEXUALIDADE E A HOMOPARENTALIDADE EM CENA: NARRATIVAS DE PROFESSORAS DE EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL

RESUMO. Este estudo qualitativo objetiva discutir a homossexualidade e a homoparentalidade a partir de narrativas produzidas por 34 professoras atuantes em 17 diferentes escolas de educação infantil do município de Novo Hamburgo (RS). Metodologicamente, histórias narrativas foram usadas como procedimento para acesso a produções imaginativas e, posteriormente, os resultados foram analisados pelo processo de análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 2011). Esses resultados revelam os dilemas que atravessam a temática, como ideias de preconceito e desaceitação, estigmas remanescentes e a influência da patologização e da normatização relacionadas ao assunto. Embora os dilemas estejam presentes, as participantes abordam os significados de família com uma concepção de amor e diversidade. As narrativas das professoras nos possibilitam questionar a maneira como as temáticas elencadas são tratadas nas escolas. De acordo com essa assertiva, sugerem-se novos estudos que investiguem a forma pela qual essas concepções interferem na prática diária das professoras e professores de nosso país.

Palavras-chave: Homossexualidade; homoparentalidade; educação infantil.

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HOMOSEXUALIDAD Y HOMOPARENTE EN EL ESCENARIO: NARRATIVAS DE PROFESORAS DE EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL

RESUMEN. Este estudio cualitativo tiene como objetivo discutir la homosexualidad y la homoparentalidad a partir de narrativas producidas por 34 profesoras que trabajan en 17 diferentes escuelas de Educación Infantil en la ciudad de Novo Hamburgo (RS). Metodológicamente, las historias narrativas se utilizaron como un procedimiento para el acceso a producciones imaginativas y, más tarde, los resultados fueron analizados por el proceso de análisis de contenido (Bardin, 2011). Estos resultados revelan los dilemas que cruzan el tema, tales como ideas de prejuicio y desaceptación, estigmas restantes y la influencia de la patologización y estandarización relacionada con el tema. Aunque los dilemas están presentes, los participantes abordan los significados familiares con una concepción del amor y la diversidad. Las narrativas de las profesoras nos permiten cuestionar la forma en que se tratan los temas enumerados en las escuelas. Según esta afirmación, se sugieren más estudios para investigar la forma en que estas concepciones interfieren en la práctica diaria de los maestros y profesores en nuestro país.

Palabras clave: Homosexualidad; homoparentalidad; educación infantil.

Introduction

Paradigms of discussion on sexuality have undergone changes over time. From a taboo topic, it becomes one of the most discussed in today's society. This does not mean that sexuality is no longer a theme surrounded by myths and prejudices, which are visible, mainly, when the debate refers to homosexuality - which continues to be seen by some people and groups as a deviation from sexuality, a perversion, a 'not normal' sexuality.

Historically, around 1870, homosexuality began to be the object of medical analysis. From that moment on, there were many interventions and controls in the search for a so-called 'normal' sexuality (Foucault, 1996). Homosexuality, considered in scientific circles as a disorder, was differently categorized in Brazil when, in 1985, the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM) removed it from the status of sexual disorder (Araújo & Oliveira, 2008). In this same perspective, in 1999, the Federal Council of Psychology establishes Resolution CFP 001/99, which states that homosexuality does not constitute a disease, disorder or perversion and, together with that, sets guidelines to guide the practice of professionals, in the sense of eliminating procedures that offered the 'cure' of any sexual orientation that was outside the heterosexual standard (Conselho Federal De Psicologia [CFP], 1999).

Even so, prejudice and disapproval of homosexuals remain in force in people or groups, such as those linked to some fundamentalist Christian religions. Several claims, clashes of opinions and different conceptions appear in the current scenario. Some people support the conservatism of standardization and others call for the right to exercise various forms of sexuality, fatherhood and motherhood. In relation to homosexual couples, these claims provoke resistance, both in the field of society and in the theoretical field (Perelson, 2006).

Prejudices and disapprovals of homosexuality also fall within the context of homoparenthood. We understand the homoparental family as one of the multiple family

arrangements that we currently face, and this is not a new family configuration, as single homosexual people or in partnership have been raising sons and daughters for a long time. However, it is only in the last decades that naming and social visibility begin to be recognized, from the reach of social movements (Martinez, 2013).

A fact that occurred in relation to these themes in the school context shows how some issues interfere with decisions taken in the National Congress. In 2008, when the Ministries of Health and Education launched the project entitled School without Homophobia, to respond to teachers' difficulties in dealing with this issue, the attacks of parliamentarians from the religious parties were intense. In May 2011, Dilma Rousseff, acting president of the republic, canceled the project – which forced the Ministries of Health and Education to suspend all activities related to it (Blankenheim, Oliveira-Menegotto, & Quaresma da Silva, 2018).

In addition to the reflection on the theme within schools, the context studied in this research is Early Childhood Education, due to the specificity of early childhood as a fundamental period in the construction of children's subjectivity. Further, we recognize the importance of the role and function of teachers, who are daily with children, in an educational position, and must be prepared to answer, in a clear, truthful and objective way, to questions related to the body, to gender and sexuality. This refers to the value of teacher training, insofar as the understanding of these topics helps to exempt the educator from personal values and can favor the development of children's autonomy and emancipation (Maia & Spaziani, 2010). In this assertion, the objective of this study was to discuss homosexuality and homoparenthood from narratives produced by teachers of Early Childhood Education.

Methodological procedures

This study is qualitative and exploratory, as it aimed to gather information on the subject to be investigated, enabling its design. The research participants are teachers from the municipal network of Early Childhood Education in the municipality of Novo Hamburgo, state of Rio Grande do Sul. Participants were 34 teachers working in 17 different early childhood schools in the city, belonging to the east, west and south regions. There was no representative from the northern region at the time of data collection, for organizational reasons by the Municipal Department of Education (SMED). For issues of confidentiality, the teachers will be identified with pseudonyms throughout the text.

The inclusion criteria for participation were: 1) being a teacher in the Early Childhood Education network and 2) accepting to participate in the research by signing the Informed Consent (IC). The exclusion criterion would be applied if the teacher did not agree with the signature of the IC. Participants signed it and confidentiality regarding their identities and other ethical aspects was guaranteed. This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee with registration 52111815.8.0000.5348, taking into account the guidelines and rules regulated by Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council, which concern research with human beings. In addition, we followed the guidance in Resolution 016/2000 of the Federal Council of Psychology (CFP) to constantly assess the situation to protect the participants and stop the research if necessary.

Regarding the methodological procedures, the participating teachers were invited to reflect on homosexuality and homoparenthood through the application of a narrative that was used as a procedure to access their imaginative productions on the subject. Assuming that we narrate in search of recognition of ourselves, understanding and guidance for life,

narrating is considered a privileged procedure for accessing the multiple affective-emotional meanings that are revealed not only in life and in the clinic, but also within the scope of research. Narratives are placed as psychological work on the various dimensions of human life and will be considered, in this study, as an expression of the individual and as their own 'I' in action (Granato & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2013).

The narrative used in this study was elaborated by the authors, in an accessible language, from the beginning of a fictional story. The story was presented in written form to the group of participants, asking them to finish the story as they saw fit. Each participant completed the following narrative: Luciano and Bruno have been together for 4 years, having formalized the relationship for 1 year from a stable union. During this period after the union, the desire arises, mainly on the part of Luciano, to be a father and start a family. Taking advantage of the opportunity to have dinner, he decides to talk about it with Bruno. He starts by talking about how much his desire has been increasing lately and asks Bruno's opinion. After this conversation, in which the two were able to expose their intentions and fears, they decide to call a third person to ask for help, talk about the subject and about the issues that the two will face. If you were that person, what would you say to them?

Data were collected was carried out during a SMED meeting, according to the availability of the municipality's Early Childhood Education manager, and took place in June 2016. Each participant recorded their narrative on a sheet, handwritten. Later, all narratives were transcribed into electronic format and data were analyzed by organizing the content into categories. These categories were created after reading the material, following the process of pre-analysis, material exploration and data processing (inference and interpretation), according to Bardin (2011).

Results and discussion

Data from this study resulted in the construction of four categories of analysis, which make up the results of this study and are presented as follows: 1) The (dis)acceptance of the other and the perpetuation of stigmas: reveals conceptions of disapproval regarding homosexuality and to homoparenthood and discusses how these ideas contribute to strengthening stigmas and prejudices; 2) The pathologization and standardization of bodies: problematizes the relationships found between the discourses of the narratives and the normative and pathological conceptions attributed to homosexual people; 3) Imprisonment of female and male roles and their impact on the understanding of family: demonstrates the conception found in narratives that maternal and paternal roles are understood as limited to the gender of the parents, hindering the possibilities of discussion about different forms of family; 4) What does raising a family depend on?: addresses the main aspects for the construction of families, referenced in the narratives, which point to a direction of love and diversity, opposing the ideas presented in the previous categories.

The (dis)acceptance of the other and the perpetuation of stigmas

Starting from conceptions of disapproval regarding homosexuality and homoparenthood present in the narratives, we discuss how these ideas contribute to strengthening stigmas and prejudices. It is visible that even the participants who put themselves in a favorable position with regard to the situation exposed in the narrative show fears and negative or disbelieving ideas about parenting in this context.

In these two narratives, participants Mara and Bia clearly oppose the couple's decision to have a child and justify their position with the prejudices they would face:

I would show all the points they would face, if they were prepared for it, that they should be sure of what they wanted, making them reflect on this decision that would change their lives, facing all the preconceptions of a society. With this, I would not encourage them to make that decision.

For me it is a complex and delicate situation. I think it depends a lot on the positioning of the parties (in this case, Luciano and Bruno), due to the fact that over time this child will instinctively ask for answers about themselves, their identity – as well as family structure. And certainly, there will always be prejudices on the part of society towards parents and children. I would not advise having this child.

In addition to the opinion against homoparenthood, another point to be highlighted in these narratives is the lack of perspective of change. The concepts presented show perpetuated ideas of non-acceptance and, consequently, a fixed and unquestionable understanding of the subject. In the following narratives, we can see a different position, as there are ideas of support for the couple. However, prejudice still appears as an impasse in the process of producing homoparental families, as we can observe:

As we still live in a society with a lot of prejudice, I would let them know about all this reality and everything they would face, all the difficulties, but if it was their will, I would support them, thinking precisely about the new family connections that are emerging and that their reality is already emerging and is no longer news to anyone (Carmen's narrative).

I would say that they would face a lot of prejudice, and that later their child would too. But that we all go through difficulties and that the family is the foundation, it is the basis of everything and that if that is their wish, they must move on and have the courage to pursue this dream (Clara's narrative).

I would say that they would go through many situations that would shake their relationship, but it was for them not to give up and always move on, leaving these prejudiced people aside (Beth's narrative).

So, is this what they want? Our society is slowly learning to 'accept' these situations, but there are still many cases of prejudice and discrimination. If you both want the same thing and are going to be together and prepared to win this 'fight', you have my support (Elisa's narrative, author's emphasis).

Here, we have narratives expressing and exemplifying opinions that, at first glance, can be perceived as contrary or favorable to the situation of homoparenthood. However, a more in-depth reading allows a view from other angles: the reality of prejudice, the difficulties, the (non) perspective of change, the 'fight' that needs to be fought.

To start the discussion on these issues, we must take into account that we are reflecting on a subject that is grounded in conceptions about sexuality and, therefore, surrounded by taboos. The diversity of human sexual manifestations is sometimes an untouchable subject that generates some discomfort.

Foucault (1984) worked around the term sexuality which, according to him, emerged late in the early 19th century. The term indicates something different with regard to a rearrangement of vocabulary, but it does not, of course, mark the sudden emergence of what it refers to, being used in relation to phenomena, such as: the development of diverse fields of knowledge that cover both the biological mechanisms of human reproduction and the individual and social variants of behavior; the establishment of rules and norms, some traditional and others new, which are supported by religious, judicial, medical and

educational institutions; and changes in the way individuals give meaning and value to their conduct, duties, feelings, pleasures and sensations.

The act of naming the body through the sequence sex-gender-sexuality takes place within the logic that supposes it as something prior to culture and that gives it an immutable, binary and ahistorical character. Such logic implies that sex is what will determine gender and induce a single form of desire, with the foreseen order being the only possibility to qualify as a legitimate subject. Despite this, this sequence is violated and subverted. Even if there are normative rules and strategies, there are those who transgress them (Louro, 2018). These become the main targets of corrective pedagogies and actions of punishment or recovery, reinforcing the stigmatizing character of what deviates from heteronormativity.

We can see a kind of stigmatization in the discourses of the narratives, with regard to the observation of some standardizing 'tactics' about sexuality. It is no longer a case of repression, that is, we do not have a direct and clear discourse of disapproval of homosexuality in this context. Nevertheless, what is observed are attempts to standardize the conduct of these bodies, which can be analyzed by the present idea that different sexual orientation is accepted, but these people are not allowed to have sons and daughters, for example.

The perpetuation of stigmas - here understood as a movement that tends to maintain a discourse and, consequently, a stigmatized conception about homosexuality and homoparenthood - appears in the narratives both directly, when the person clearly stands against the homoparenthood - "[...] it would not encourage them to make this decision [...]" - or indirectly, when the person is in favor of homoparenthood, but presenting some social limitation - "[...] leaving aside these prejudiced people [...]". These sentences, taken from previously presented narratives, demonstrate that this perpetuation occurs both clearly, when the negative conception is said, apparently, and in a hidden way, when the content is omitted in expressions that reiterate prejudice.

The pathologization and standardization of bodies

The disapproval of homosexuality and, from that, the formation of homoparental families still seems to be based on scientific assumptions, already outdated, and also on some religious discourses. Taking science and religion as factors present in people's lives and influencing the development of conceptions and meanings, these two aspects will be discussed in relation to the standardization of bodies, based on the presentation of some narratives that deal with this.

Reiterating the pathologization of homosexual bodies, present in social discourses even after the recognition of science and removal of the status of pathology from medical and psychological manuals, the narratives of Débora and Aline are presented, which explain the idea of a certain need for psychological attention for a homosexual couple to start a family:

First, I would look at the psychological 'profile' of the couple, whether they really understand the responsibility they are going to assume. If the couple is fully aware of what they intend to do, I would advise to go on (author's emphasis).

I would say that they could try to adopt a child of any age, despite being two men, try to deal with all the preconceptions that exist, provide psychological assistance to this child, because affection and

love is what the child needs and to follow life in a natural way, because they already live and act in a natural way.

In the first narrative, psychological attention was focused on the couple, that is, on homosexuals, in the sense of an evaluation of their profile. In the second narrative, psychological care was proposed for the child, who would be the couple's child. In both cases, the narratives present the need for this service, supporting the idea of pathologization - that it is not normal - and of standardization - of how they should be.

The notion of pathologization of bodies considered 'abnormal' is based on the meanings that the body had and has, historically. Biopolitics, inaugurated as a new technology of power in the 18th century, introduces a new group of knowledge that helps in the control and maintenance of bodies, in an attempt to ensure the population life, productivity and happiness, restoring their relationships. From this, population control emerges not only as a political problem, but as a biological, scientific and power problem (Foucault, 2005).

Biopolitics is related to the idea of standardization with regard to the control that is exercised over our bodies. The bodies considered inverted are those that do not conform to the format socially recognized as 'normal'. Any characteristic identified as deviant from the current social norm, such as different races, ethnicities, sexualities and genders, is classified as deviant. In this sense, the homosexual body, considered pathologic until recently, carries marks of a history permeated by views influenced by standardizing ideas in relation to sexuality (Foucault, 2005).

In this way, sexuality is constituted as a device for the control and standardization of individuals, not because it performs a function of repression of the population, but because it promotes a regulation of their sexual life (Guizzo & Invernizzi, 2012). This idea of regulation can be elucidated from the apparent conceptions in the narratives, which deal with the need for psychological care, here understood as medical care and, consequently, related to biopolitics, as a strategy of standardization of these homosexual bodies or their sons and daughters.

The ideas of pathologization, which appear in narratives pointing to a pretension to standardization from a psychological intervention, are also perceived in some narratives in which religious issues emerged. We observed, in the religious views presented below, in the narratives of Vera and Luci, a clear conception of deviance with regard to homosexuality and that, from this, supports the position of non-acceptance of the homoparental family:

If I were that person, they would probably already know my position in relation to their sexual option. I would tell them how much I love and respect them no matter what choice they make. I would also say that for me two men cannot give a child the necessary and healthy structure. For me, the family model created by God, the one in His scriptures, is the fundamental one. I also understand that the Lord loves these people! – but nevertheless I do not understand it correct to deal with these practices – [crossed out by participant]. I realize that values are being inverted and many practices are being imposed as healthy. But I respect and love each of them!

I would say that when starting your relationship, my position regarding your stable union is not favorable. I believe in the institution of the family created by God, between man and woman, father and mother. The child needs to grow up in a home with clear positioning references. Family in which roles are reversed, values are confused and distorted. However, I respect and love this couple even though I don't agree with their sexual position, I believe we should welcome and respect them as individuals.

In these narratives, we have evidence of the disacceptance of the religious position in relation to homoparenthood and respect appears as a 'politically correct' position. This position contrary to the fact that two men have the desire to start a family is based on the idea that two people of the same sex would not be able to exercise parenthood and that, for this to occur, one person of each sex is required, which will be explored in the next section. For now, we emphasize that pathologizing and standardizing conceptions also appear in religious discourse, when the themes homosexuality and homoparenthood are understood as an 'inversion', insofar as these subjects are considered inverted and unhealthy, failing, therefore, to offer an environment healthy for a child.

However, currently, research has proven that there are no differences in terms of the ability to care for sons and daughters and the parenting capacity of heterosexual and homosexual people. In addition, studies also point out that there are no significant differences between the development of children who are raised in heterosexual families when compared to those in homosexual families (Zambrano, Lorea, Mylius, Meinerz, & Borges, 2006).

Nevertheless, there is still a current social discourse that homosexuals would not have the necessary capacity to raise and educate a child and that, as a result, the child would not develop well in this environment. In addition to the scientific and religious assumptions that underlie these conceptions, we have another factor that needs to be elucidated and discussed: the way in which genres are understood. That is, the meanings of masculinity and femininity, in our society, have consequences on the conceptions of parenting and, in a way, can be a factor of prejudice to the homoparental family.

Imprisonment of feminine and masculine roles and their repercussion on the understanding of family

A point to be highlighted in the narratives concerns the conception that the feminine and masculine roles are imprisoned in sex, that is, there is only the possibility of a child having both references if they have a father (man) and a mother (woman). This can be evidenced in the following narratives: "For me, two men cannot give a child the necessary and healthy structure" (Vera's narrative) and "Family in which roles are reversed, values are confused and distorted" (Luc's narrative).

These conceptions carry a meaning of a closed gender, imprisoned in the sex corresponding to the biological body of the father and mother. This leads to a discussion about the way in which the processes of identification and development of sexuality take place, as it has repercussions on the way in which the development of children of homosexuals is understood.

Initially, in order to understand the idea we call 'imprisonment', we will clarify the concepts related to gender and sexuality. According to Scott (1986), the term gender seems to have appeared first among American feminists, who wanted to make explicit the fundamentally social character of distinctions based on sex. The word indicated a rejection of the biological determinism implicit in the use of terms like sex or sexual difference. Gender also underlined the relational aspect of normative definitions of femininity and masculinity in society.

According to Butler (1999, p. 158), "[...] gender is the social meaning that sex assumes within a given culture". From this perspective, we can think that sexuality is built throughout life and that the inscription of genders in bodies is always done in the context of a particular culture.

The concept of gender refers to the way in which sexual characteristics are understood and represented, affirming the social character of the feminine and the masculine. Furthermore, according to the same author, the possibilities of sexuality are also socially established and gender and sexual identities are defined by social relations, by the power networks of a society (Louro, 2007). In agreement with the ideas presented, Quaresma da Silva, Sarmento and Fossatti (2012) state that femininities and masculinities are constructed, produced and learned in the power relations of societies and are marked by particularities of their historical and cultural context.

Once gender is socially signified through a given culture, cultural transformations over time have produced significant shifts in male and female identities. In traditional societies, to be a woman was to be a wife and mother. At the same time, men were expected to be providers and also to give women a name. In short, it was the man who gave the woman her place in society (Ramalho, 2005).

We have seen that the discourse that appears, in a way, veiled in the narratives points to an idea of a closed gender, imprisoned in the sex corresponding to the biological body. Therefore, in this context, it becomes unthinkable that two people of the same sex can meet all the needs for the development of a child, and, taking this foundation into account, homoparenthood is not approved.

However, a broader understanding of the phenomenon allows another perspective. We can think, according to psychoanalytic theory, that two main functions constitute a subject: the maternal function and the paternal function. The mother, who anticipates and wants the child and for the child. The paternal, which frees from this condition of alienation and which names the separation between the son or daughter and the maternal function. Both, far beyond practical functions, are symbolic functions, which allows to say that the function overlaps the figure. In other words, no matter who is in this place – if they are a biological mother or father, if they are male or female –, but the role they are playing for the child is very important. Functions of anticipation, desire, separation, imposition of limits, etc., can and should be performed by fathers and mothers and, in practice, are exercised by everyone who performs parental roles. However, cultural constructions related to the feminine and masculine delegitimize some of these functions and legitimize only the traditional forms.

Filiation is a process that goes far beyond the biological condition of generating a child, it has the status of a social phenomenon insofar as it inserts the subject into the family and social bond (Julien, 2000). Bearing in mind that biological filiation does not guarantee the phenomenon of *de facto* filiation, the ability of symbolic transmission is what matters to us, which opens space for the possibility of legitimizing different types of families and existing parenting, as is the case of the homoparental family.

What does raising a family depend on?

After discussing the issues related to homosexuality, gender and parenting that emerged from the narratives, we will see how the concepts related to family raising appear. The narratives that follow deal with the factors necessary for the formation of a family in the understanding of some participants:

I would say that having a child is a lot of responsibility, but that if you are willing to take care, love, give affection, meet all the needs that this requires, then go ahead (Ester's narrative).

If they are really willing to take care of and educate a child, understanding how their participation as parents will be fundamental and very important for the development of this child and for their entire life (Rose's narrative).

If you are sure about having a child, let them move on. A home is made up of love and respect. And that they teach the child these feelings of love, so that they can face the obstacles that still exist in society! (Suzi's narrative).

We see, in these narratives favorable to the constitution of the homoparental family, positions based mainly on understandings of the family concept directly related to the words love, affection, responsibility, joy and care. From this perspective, the parents' sexuality is not taken into account for a judgment of what a good parenting performance would be based on the person's gender, but on their ability to love and care, give affection, be responsible.

Roudinesco (2003) discusses the construction of the family, from the psychic, political and economic perspectives, tracing its course from antiquity to post-modernity. She states that the family has a universal character, as it appears in practically all human societies, having as its function, from the beginning, to unite a man and a woman, that is, a male and a female subject. This naturalistic conception of the difference between the sexes, on which the concept of family rests, presupposes the obligation of two types of alliance: on the one hand, marriage and, on the other, filiation. These two spheres forming the family are also called 'conjuality' and 'parenting'.

Julien (2000) discusses these two scenarios within the conceptions of public and private life, analyzing the historical and social changes influencing the process of these two aspects of family life. For him, in traditional societies, the private was outside the public order, since it had a negative meaning, which is different from today, when we have an inversion in that order. So, currently, the private becomes the place of the conjugal and the public of the parental, from the invasion of what is private in the public scene and the progressive failure of the collective and paternal power. In this sense, parenting begins to openly depend on the social, through experts who legislate on the well-being and rights of children, not being restricted to the biological field, as it is constituted from an authorization by the laws of the state.

Social transformations make the family institution accessible also to homosexuals, who, historically, have always been excluded from it. This legitimacy to the family institution also becomes possible when the concept of family based on affective ties is recognized, which we can observe in the narratives of Sandra and Paula:

My opinion on the issue of adopting a child in this situation is positive, as I believe that if there is love, affection and the desire to form a family, it does not matter the configuration of the couple (man and woman, woman and woman [...]).

I would say that raising a child is a very big responsibility, so it must be something very well thought out. If paternity was really a desire for both of them, I would be most supportive. For me, the issue of homosexuality is not an impediment to building a family. Raising a child depends on 'love, responsibility, care', factors that are not directly linked to the parents' sexual orientation (author's emphasis).

In these narratives, we have evidence that the understanding of the concept of family is based on the assumptions of love, desire, responsibility and care, according to the conceptions of these participants. Another factor highlighted is that it is understood that characteristics necessary for people who want to build a family are not dependent on their

male or female figure, nor on their affective and sexual orientation, but on the way they behave in relation to the phenomenon of parenting.

Roudinesco (2003) also shows that, even with the decline of the traditional family, this institution is not dissolving, but organizing itself in a different and new way, horizontally and in networks. In the new family configurations, as is the case of the homoparental family, the reproduction of generations is also guaranteed, based on the possibilities of adoption and new reproductive technologies.

Another position favorable to the constitution of the homoparental family evidenced in the narratives refers to a 'politically correct' discourse of social action, relating the possibility of parenting in this context from adoption. We emphasize that it is not stated in the narrative that the couple thinks of constituting the family in this way; however, this appears in narratives of the participants as follows: "I would recommend adoption, as we know that there are many children waiting for a home" (Esther's narrative); "I would find the initiative of the two very cool, I would encourage them to adopt a child if that were possible and then they would build a family" (Laura's narrative); "There are many children at social risk and many needing adoption, I would say they could try to adopt a child of any age, despite being two men" (Aline's narrative); "I would say that if it is the desire of both and with the awareness of the responsibility that they would assume, that they look for the means to adopt a child" (narrative by Jaqueline); "I would say that if they both agree and are willing to love this child, they should adopt" (Gabriela's narrative).

In these narratives, there is a relationship between the previously mentioned concept of family based on love and responsibility. What must be taken into account, at this moment, is whether this approval of adoption in the homoparental context is only put at the service of a social benefit, that is, the thought that homosexuals can only have children if they do good for the society, a 'charity'. On the other hand, another perspective of meaning is, who knows, a lack of information about reproductive methods and the possibilities that currently exist for having a child. Furthermore, it must be considered that these children who are available for adoption were born from a heterosexual relationship.

In any case, we reinforce that mechanisms for modifying social attitudes and behavior are established to curb and eliminate prejudice and stigma in order to enable equal rights for all people (Freitas & Dias, 2012). In this sense, one of the main social places where meanings and behaviors are produced and reproduced is the school. In it, in addition to having the possibility of obtaining information and knowledge, we have a space for exchanging meanings and conceptions.

Final considerations

The dilemmas found in this study, which permeated the narratives, concern the ideas of prejudice and disacceptance, the stigmas still present in current discourses and the influence of pathologization and standardization in the evidenced conceptions. However, the existing ambivalence in these dilemmas also points to a plurality of meanings. Differences of opinions, the resistances, the doubts and the difficulties made emerge the subjectivities and the possibilities of analysis of this study. In addition to understanding the conceptions of homosexuality and homoparenthood, we grasped the meanings of family for the participants and observed that this concept has been changing,

and, consequently, the conception of family of most participants points to a conception of love and diversity.

With this study, we intend to contribute to the demystification of prejudiced ideas present in our society. In addition, we aim to open up possibilities for reflection on female and male roles, both in society as a whole and with regard to these functions inserted in the exercise of parenting. The idea of male and female roles fixed in the sexes imprisons the subjects and delegitimizes homoparental families and other configurations as family institutions accepted in our society.

Furthermore, we expect that this study can help to understand issues related to homosexuality and homoparenthood within schools. What was evidenced in the teachers' narratives allows to question the way in which the themes listed are treated in schools. In this perspective, we highlight the need for studies to investigate the way in which these conceptions interfere with the daily practice of teachers in our country.

Prejudiced ideas on the part of teachers may imply omissions or transmissions of moralizing, inappropriate and/or fanciful information in relation to themes of homosexuality and homoparenthood. The Early Childhood Education school is a training space that goes beyond care with food and hygiene, since it aims to promote integral child development in the affective, cognitive, social and physical aspects and, for that, it must seek to include, in their pedagogical projects, sexuality, playfulness, gender equality and sexual diversity (Blankenheim, Ramos, Pizzinato, & Costa, 2020).

Importantly, all participants in this study were women. The female universe of teaching, which is even more demarcated in Early Childhood Education, seems to be and/or to be stigmatized by a perspective of maternal care socially fixed on the female sex, excluding the male from the possibility of caring and teaching. These topics generate important social discussions and, therefore, are recorded here as suggestions for new related research so that debates on the subject can be expanded.

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