

Traces of homophobic bullying in the memory of Chilean dissidents

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Abstract

The article presents the results of an investigation carried out with sexual dissidents, who were subjected to homophobic bullying in their passage through the school system in the last three decades. Basically, 40 dissidents residing in the central-southern macrozone of Chile were interviewed, in order to reveal the traces that homophobic bullying left in their memories and life stories. From the methodological point of view, the qualitative study, based on life stories, was privileged. Among the main findings is the existence of dissidents who seem not to have overcome bullying, others, on the other hand, in which painful episodes surface on certain occasions and, finally, another group that despite traumatic memories “managed to turn the page”. However, the common denominator for all of them is that homophobic bullying was not a casual episode, but a painful milestone that marked their lives.

Keywords: bullying / school / dissidents / memory / homophobia

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Introduction

The purpose of the article is to present the results of a qualitative - interpretive research carried out with men, sexual dissidents, who were subjected to homophobic bullying during their passage through the Chilean formal school system in the last three decades. Basically, 40 dissidents were interviewed, in a period of time of just over 4 years, residing in the central-southern macrozone of Chile (between the regions of Valparaíso and Bío-Bío), in order to unveil the traces left by the homophobic bullying in the subjectivity and memory of these people.

In this regard, it should be noted that said harassment, which occurred in school spaces, marked the lives of the victims, particularly their self-esteem, social relationships, effects on their learning, fears and insecurities to which it gave rise, and even the love relationships they managed to establish. Likewise, relevant in this analysis is the attitude assumed by the different educational institutions towards the problem, which at times tended to reinforce the feeling of isolation, misunderstanding, abandonment and withdrawal of those involved.

Conceptually, homophobic bullying can be defined as: “(...) a specific type of school violence that is directed towards people because of their sexual orientation and / or gender identity, perceived or real (...)” (UNESCO, 2013,

p. 13). And although it can be affirmed that bullying has always been present at all levels of the school system associated with violence between peers, the distinctive aspect of this specific type of harassment is that in Chile it has been institutionally endorsed by the school. In other words, homophobic bullying is incomprehensible if it is not taken into consideration that it has been possible in national schools because the different educational agents (managers, teachers, psychologists, educational assistants, etc.) have not only been ignored and they are complacent in the face of this type of violence by not adopting remedial measures, but have, on multiple occasions, promoted or made themselves accomplices of these acts of violence. In this sense, the moralizing exhortations, (many of them religiously inspired), the exaltations of androcentric and exclusive masculinities, the promotion of heterosexist ideology, homophobic discourses, among other practices, exercised by the figures of power within the schools, have not only legitimized and perpetuated homophobic bullying as a form of peer relations, but have also covered it with a cloak of impunity (Grozelle, 2017; Bacchini, et. al., 2020), to the point that bullies also of not being aware, many times, of the damage they cause in their victims, they believe they are contributing to the preservation of the heterosexist order that, supposedly, guarantees the social and psycho-emotional well-being of all its members.

From the analysis we can point out that, despite the passage of time, different historical moments and diverse generations, homophobic bullying has left indelible marks in the memory of these dissidents, to the point of becoming painful episodes that mark a before and after in their personal stories. No less relevant is the way in which they internally processed the painful memories that the experience of the harassment entailed. Hence, the centrality that the dissident's story takes on as a tool for investigation, but also for healing.

From the point of view of the structure of the article, in the first section we come across some methodological details. Subsequently, the results ordered sequentially according to the milestones and common denominators of the life stories of the people interviewed are presented, starting with the earliest or initial ones that give rise to the harassment, to end with those episodes that show the marks in their personal stories. even though they are no longer part of the

formal school systems. Finally, by way of closing, the discussion and conclusions are presented that debate not only about the effects that this type of bullying causes on the victims, but also about an order that is perpetuated in the school and against which remedial measures are not enough punctual, but structural changes are necessary aimed at breaking the heteronormative order.

Method

The research, the results of which are presented here, favors the qualitative - interpretive approach based on the life stories of men who define themselves as homosexuals, gays or sexual dissidents, whose ages fluctuate between 25 and 50 years, residents of the Chile's central-southern macrozone, who graduated from secondary education establishments of different administrative dependencies (municipal, subsidized and paid individuals) in the last three decades.

Table 1 Period in which the interviewed dissidents graduated from secondary education

Década -1990		Década - 2000		Década - 2010		Total de egresados
n	%	n	%	n	%	
10	25	17	42,5	13	32,5	40

Source: self made

Table 2 Distribution of the interviewees by region of residence

Región	n	%
Valparaíso	5	12,5
Metropolitana	20	50
O'Higgins	7	17,5
Maule	5	12,5
Bío - Bío	3	7,5
Total	40	100

Source: self made

Table 3 Type of establishment from which the interviewees graduated

Municipal		Subvencionado		Particular pagado		Total
n	%	n	%	n	%	
16	40	13	32,5	11	27,5	40

Source: self made

In order to collect the information, in-depth semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2015) were chosen, applied in a period of time of just over 4 years, whose script of questions was validated based on expert judgment.

The information analysis was carried out according to the continuous comparison method postulated by Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2002),

which resulted in systematic coding procedures in order to systematize properties and hypotheses about of the phenomenon under study from the principle of theoretical saturation. For the purposes of this article, the results of the latter are exposed, which, on the one hand, tries to account for the painful and even traumatic experiences in relation to homophobic bullying that the interviewees were

subjected to and that ended up marking a “before and a later” in their life stories and, on the other, the consequences that this harassment had on their self-esteem, the type of interactions they established with their peers and with the different educational agents, the effects on their learning, the fears and insecurities to which it gave place and even the love relationships that they managed to establish.

Results

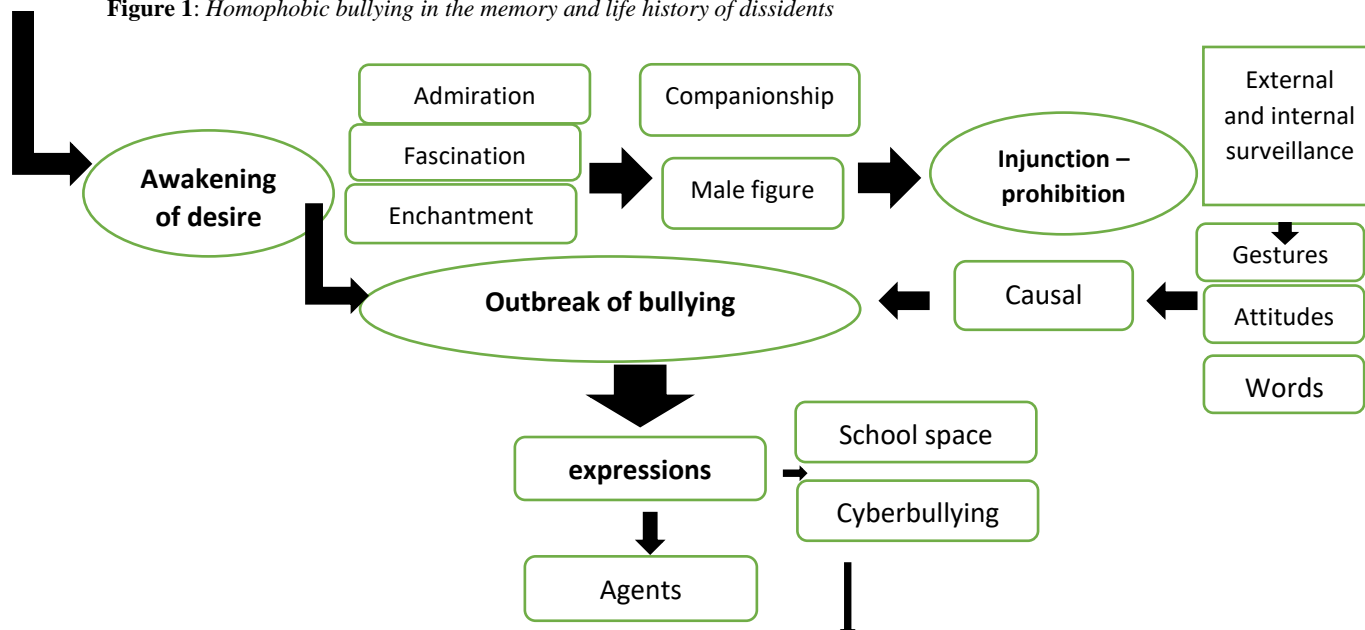
As already mentioned, the results of the research are structured according to the conceptualization developed in the selective coding, which is ordered following the key moments or distinctive milestones in the life history of the interviewees, starting with the earliest memories. No less relevant in this selective chronology are the marks left by homophobic bullying on the subjectivity and different areas of these people's lives. For now, we must emphasize that bullying has been part of the daily school routine. However, what distinguishes generic from homophobic bullying is that the latter is motivated by the breaking, involuntary or not, of the mandates of the heteronormative order. Hundreds of young people around the world, without intending to, turn into targets of this type of specific violence simply by loving, desiring, behaving ... in a way other than the impositions and expectations of that order (Grozelle, 2017; Parent et. Al., 2019; Moyano and Sánchez, 2020; Bacchini et. Al., 2020; Eshagh et al, 2020). However, the mismatch is not the only novelty, but unlike other types of bullying, peers are not the only agents of violence. It is not unusual for teachers or other educational agents themselves to turn themselves into bullies or

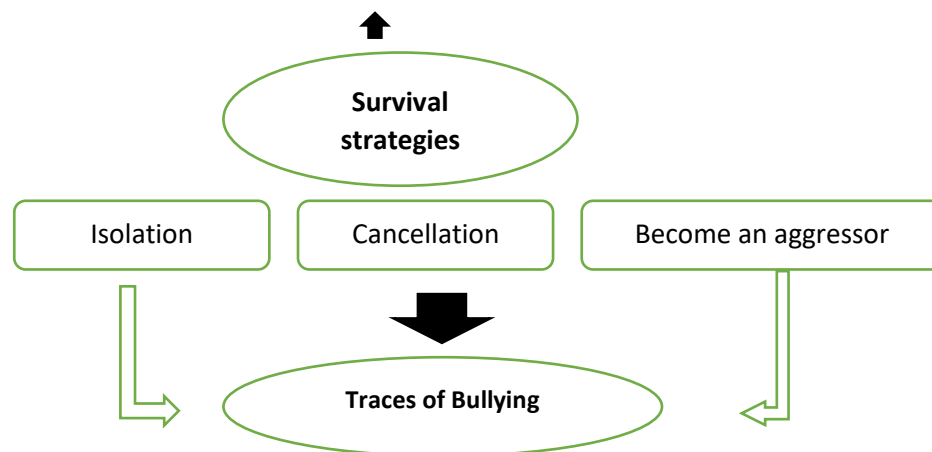
instigators of homophobic bullying; a situation that is paradoxical if one takes into consideration that they should be the first called to protect and guarantee the physical and psycho-emotional integrity of their students.

The aforementioned antecedents, in the Chilean case, are not a simple appreciation product of the testimonies of the interviewees, but are endorsed from the registry of complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity that it maintains, from 2009 to the date, the Superintendency of Education, which in addition to issuing an annual report of the complaints registered throughout the country, reports the causes that the complainants use. Based on this record, it can then be affirmed that most of the complaints originate not so much from peer harassment, but from harassment, mistreatment and arbitrary disciplinary measures applied by directors, teachers or other educational agents (MINEDUC, 2018; Cornejo, 2019).

The attitude of these agents towards dissident students is explained, to a large extent, by an overflowing machismo, religious adherence to evangelical fundamentalist groups and Catholic fundamentalists, to the weight of tradition that led us to suppose that a dissident orientation or identity could be reversed through from the resort to violence, to the association between dissent and cowardice, weakness of character or even lack of patriotism, among other various arguments.

Figure 1: Homophobic bullying in the memory and life history of dissidents





Source: self made

Awakening of desire

Approximately 80% of those interviewed indicate that homoerotic desire entered their lives at a very early age, in the stage of pre-school education. The least place this awakening in adolescence or youth. And even when they cannot explain its origin or a specific episode, images, sensations ... evoke an attraction for people of the same sex expressed in admiration, sympathy, companionship ...

"I remember when I was very young that I liked comic book superheroes, not only for the feats they performed, but for their defined, muscular bodies ... I remember that I liked to run my fingers over their arms, legs, pectorals ... not for a sexual desire, but because of the enchantment that the male figure awakened in me (...) " (E, 37b).

This story reveals not only an attraction whose origin is difficult to explain, but also bursts into the earliest memories, all associated with pleasant or gratifying sensations. However, along with the pleasure that male company causes or the fascination and aesthetic delight that his figure represents, they quickly discover the prohibitions that are associated with attitudes or gestures of affection between people of the same sex.

Thus, from very early on, men learn not only to discipline their gestures and attitudes, so as not to expose themselves to ridicule and rejection, or to cover up or hide a "stigma", but also to take care of each word, especially when they verbalize or express admiration, fascination or desire for another man (Núñez, 2011).

"One day we were rehearsing for the May 21 parade, the teacher who was in charge of organizing it asked the class who should be the standard bearer and the escorts, since that was one of the privileges of being in 4th grade (last year of high school), but we should justify the choice. I very spontaneously and naively propose to a fellow X and argue that it should be him because he was tall and handsome. Immediately, my classmates and the teacher began to say: 'uhhhhhhhh... you like XXX, 'fagot' '. He blushed with shame. From that day on I learned that I could never flatter a man in public " (E, 7a).

The body disciplined by the various systems of control, modeling and in permanent surveillance by the school system (Núñez, 2011; Junqueira, 2013) learns that any transgression of the heterosexist order will be severely punished through public derision, mockery or physical violence. But above all, he learns to be in permanent vigilance of every gesture, attitude, word or even thought that exposes him, becoming an obsessive guardian of himself.

And it is at this point where homophobic bullying erupts, well, not everyone manages to successfully circumvent that silent, buried, invisible surveillance. A little carelessness can lead to years of harassment and worse still, to marks attached to the most intimate self. There are not a few who in this eagerness to protect themselves from harassment end up harming others in a spiral of violence and evil that ends up confusing victims and perpetrators, puppets of a

tragic work where the only winner is an order that has the pieces as pawns chess without caring about the damage and pain that it causes in its wake.

Thus, a trivial episode can unleash years of suffering where the school, instead of being a place of welcome, companionship and solidarity, becomes a frightening place (Unesco, 2013; Bacchini et. Al., 2020; Moyano and Sánchez, 2020; Parent et. Al., 2020; Hatchel et. Al., 2020). A true torture center for hundreds of children and young people who see no other way out than evasion, isolation or annulment, who do not aspire to anything other than flight and the end of an ordeal that sometimes lasts for several years ; Well, for many of them their time at school represents the darkest period of their lives, one that only evokes bitterness, anger, resentment ...

The suffering caused by homophobic bullying in victims can reach so much that more than half of the interviewees confessed that at some point in their lives they came to think of suicide as a way out or escape from situations that they considered insurmountable (Grozelle, 2014; Parent et. Al., 2020). However, it was only 3 of the 40 interviewees who actually tried.

"I was already tired of being annoyed on a daily basis. The teachers did nothing, when they were bothering me a lot, they said to my classmates: 'children stop bothering'. That made me more angry and helpless. I remember that on television there was a commercial for a deodorant or soap, I don't remember well, that said "touch me." My classmates, pretending to be funny, stuck me, without me realizing it, a sign on my back that said "touch me." When we went to recess the annoying one began to touch my butt and, they told me, if you are asking, while they laughed 'shit... of laughter'. I felt so humiliated that I couldn't hold back the tears. When I got home, without saying anything to anyone, I locked myself in my room, all I wanted was to sleep and never wake up again. I remembered that I gave my grandmother sleeping pills, I went to her room and took them out. I took the whole box (...). Hours later, I woke up in the hospital with the stomach lavage they were doing (...)" (E, 5b).

In other words, for many of these children and young people, homophobic bullying becomes so persistent that they see no other way out than suicide. The idea always

appears as a certain possibility, when all the other doors have been closed (Unesco, 2013; Parent et. Al., 2020). In this analysis, it is still curious that 11 of the interviewees stated that what stopped them in their suicidal ideas and prevented them from achieving it was, precisely, the fear that their families would find out, because of their death, of that they were dissidents. In other words, along with the suffering caused by the bullying they were subjected to in the school space, they were terrified by the very idea of exposure to the family; A situation that shows that homophobic bullying is often nourished by both school violence and the homophobic attitude of parents, who, far from helping and containing, become other executioners (Grozelle, 2017).

Expressions and agents of homophobic bullying in the school space

According to the reports of the interviewees, the most frequent forms of homophobic bullying that they experienced in the different educational establishments were mockery, derision and public humiliation. Physical violence, expressed in hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, "capoteras", etc. Although present in the reports, they appeared less frequently, comparatively, regarding social, psychological, moral and even sexual harassment (Unesco, 2013; Grozelle, 2017; Moyano and Sánchez, 2020; Bacchini et. al., 2020). Probably because such attacks were less traumatic than teasing or public humiliation, which undoubtedly left indelible marks on their souls and memories.

"Every day when I arrived at school I received a whistle, accompanied by noises that simulated kisses. The inspectors simply watched and grinned mockingly. When the scandal was very great, some inspector limited himself to saying: 'young people behave', without reprimanding or calling anyone's attention " (E, 23b).

As can be seen through these stories, the harassment, in addition to being repetitive, was shared by the complicit silence of those who had to ensure the integrity of all the students. And although situations of harassment occurred in all areas of the school, the dressing rooms, according to the testimony of all those interviewed, were particularly dangerous, not only because of the teasing or beatings, but also because of the sexual abuse that, on certain occasions, they occurred there (Bacchini et. al. 2020; Parent et. al., 2020).

And contrary to what one might think, it is not only the peers who are the aggressors, but sometimes teachers, managers and other professionals and officials who work in educational centers also intervene, which confirms what we indicated at the beginning of the article, and that it coincides with the information from the registry of complaints of discrimination from the Superintendency of Education. That is, the different educational agents, on multiple occasions, in addition to being accomplices of the harassment with their silence and indifference, are also, on occasions, facilitators of the acts of violence or clearly active agents of homophobic bullying with their prejudicial comments, their abuses of authority, their actions that violate the mental or emotional integrity of students through systematic persecution, police interrogations and arbitrary disciplinary measures (Cornejo, 2019).

In this regard, it should be remembered that in recent years, unlike what happened until the beginning of this decade, an apparent disappearance of arbitrary or non-due process expulsions has been observed, by virtue of the regulations of the MINEDUC and the greater control of the Superintendency of Education over the establishments. However, veiled practices always persist, such as, for example, pressuring the parents of dissidents to withdraw their children from schools, convincing them that "these school communities are not appropriate for their children." Thus, in the eyes of the educational authority, it is not the establishment that expels, but rather the parents who voluntarily withdraw their children.

The paradox of these practices is that instead of taking advantage of the presence of dissidents in schools to initiate reflection processes within them, about what inclusion in a broad sense implies, unrestricted respect for human rights and the recognition of differences, in addition to submitting to a critical and reflective analysis their own beliefs and convictions regarding sexual and gender dissidents, they choose to persist in beliefs and practices, many of them religious, anchored in prejudices and ideas preconceived (Grozelle, 2017; Hatchel et. al., 2020). Cognitive and spiritual blindness that, along with preventing school communities from advancing towards higher stages of human development, perpetuate conflicts and legitimize abuses and violation of rights.

"I never denied my orientation, my family believed that it was 'a thing of age' (...). I do not know why she gave the counselor with me I had to go to the school psychologist. I thought it was to

talk about how much they annoyed me, although the truth is, I "didn't pay any attention". I was used to it and it didn't complicate me because I had my group of friends who managed to me in all of them (...). When we started talking with the psychologist, I noticed, from his attitude and what he told me, that gays made him uncomfortable. He began to tell me that what was happening to me were age disorders, that maybe I had suffered some abuse and that's why it was like that, etc. etc. He advised me that I should undergo treatment to change and that it would be good to talk to my parents (...). The worst of all is that several things that I told him he disclosed to all the teachers. Later, several of them gave me as an example in class, to talk about deviations. Of course, instead of helping me, my colleagues 'grabbed me more for the lever' (annoyed) (...)" (E, 35b).

The previous testimony, in addition to highlighting the lack of judgment and prejudice that some professionals who work in the educational field have, motivated by beliefs that, despite all the changes experienced in recent decades at the international level in relation to the demedicalization of homosexuality, they continue to believe that this is a deviation, a disease or a sin. Deep-rooted belief in some minority sectors of the population that in the last two decades have seen their position reinforced with the emergence of religious fundamentalist / fundamentalist groups, scattered throughout the continent, who denounce an alleged ideological bias in gender studies and that They have raised as a fight slogan: "Don't mess with my children." Worse still, they have refloated and tried to cover conversion or reparative therapies with an air of "scientificity", which in the Chilean case are particularly dangerous by virtue of the absence of legislation that prohibits them (Ojeda, 2019), as the very statement of the Chilean College of Psychologists AG (2015).

(...) It is urgent that the State of Chile prohibits reparative therapies that affect LGBTI children, adolescents and adults. In addition, laws, education programs and public policies aimed at reducing harassment and stigmatization of the LGBTI population should be implemented. Ultimately, the state must assume an active role in protecting the rights of the LGBTI population as it would with any sector of the population that is

disadvantaged and its rights violated due to social and cultural circumstances.

We also make an emphatic call to school institutions, teachers, fathers, mothers, parents, to reject reparative therapies and not go to them. We warn parents and guardians of LGBTI children or adolescents, who put their children at serious risk by rejecting them because of their sexual orientation and even more so, taking them to this type of therapy, mistakenly believing that they are helping them (...) . (p. 21-22).

In the extensive document, along with underlining that homosexuality does not constitute a mental pathology and that reparative therapies have not shown any efficacy (Montoya, 2006), they note that there is no complete information on how many institutions and professionals practice these procedures in the country. Likewise, they denounce the oversights in the professional training itself: *“it is possible to verify that in the curriculum no looks are incorporated that question or challenge certain pathologizing constructions (...)”* (p. 11). Thus, as the religious bias incorporated in the professional training promoted in certain universities protected by an interpretation, at least questionable, of the freedom of education.

Returning to the discussion around the agents of homophobic bullying and the spaces in which it takes place, one of the most repetitive environments in the interviewees' accounts (in more than 80% of the cases), are the religion classes. Unlike other subjects, where some mention of the subject is very exceptional, generally caused by a problematic situation derived from a complaint, accusation or disciplinary measure, in religion classes, according to testimonies, it is relatively common for teachers to make comments, either motivated by reading a biblical passage of alleged condemnation of homosexuality (a fairly common practice among evangelical teachers), or by a news episode where dissidents are involved or are mentioned, for example, in recent years regarding the tour of some cities in the country of the so-called “freedom bus”, which, together with opposing sexual education in the country's schools, promoted sexual binarism and fierce

opposition to the recognition of sexual diversity and especially Trans children.

Despite these hateful speeches, from the same stories, a certain distinction can be made between the classes of religion headed by evangelical professors and those led by Catholics. In general, in the classes of evangelical teachers the speeches, in addition to being more repetitive and frontal, without much detouring and where the condemnation emerges without complexes, in the classes of Catholic teachers the homophobic discourse is tried to disguise through philosophical or psychological allusions that they appeal to the psycho-emotional immaturity and self-centeredness of the dissidents. On rare occasions they appeal to a biblical text, leaning rather towards the doctrinal teachings present in the Catechism of the Catholic Church or some texts by Catholic moralists who condemn homosexuality. In this sense, unlike the evangelicals, there is here an attempt to clothe homophobic discourse with pseudo-academicism and objectivity, by not relying exclusively on religious documents.

One of the most recent forms of harassment, present only in the accounts of those interviewed who graduated in the last decade, is cyberbullying. In the previous period, the phenomenon, in addition to not being reported by those interviewed, does not seem to represent any setback, despite the fact that most of them declare themselves active users of the different social networks and other applications and devices since the beginning of this century . The first complaints or glimpses of the problem arise regarding malicious comments on personal Facebooks, spreading false rumors or trying to upset all the classmates against a dissident.

If homophobic bullying is already problematic because of the marks it leaves on the memory and personal history of the victims, cyberbullying is even more so, not only because of the anonymity and virulence with which certain comments are often made, but also because when leaving the space school becomes an authentic public derision, difficult to control, where the person is even more exposed not only to aggression from peers, but also from unknown people who believe they have the right to express their opinion, make categorical judgments and even destroy honor and life of other people even without knowing them.

Survival strategies for homophobic bullying

Among the most recurrent strategies present in the interviewees' accounts to deal with the homophobic bullying of which they were victims is isolation, annulment and transforming themselves into aggressors of other apparently weaker or vulnerable dissident students. In this trilogy, in almost 90% of the cases, isolation appears. This fairly usual strategy makes the person involved avoid all relationships with their peers and that their attendance at the educational center, in addition to being forced, is almost exclusively to attend compulsory classes, avoiding any interaction, either with their classmates or with the teachers themselves or other educational agents. So much so, that even extra-programmatic activities were forbidden given that, as the interviewees themselves report, at a time when supervision and control on the part of the teachers were relaxed, and considering that many of these activities are carried out in spaces open (especially sports), the chances of suffering any type of aggression multiplied.

"(...) I did not share or speak with anyone (...). To avoid being disturbed during recesses (I hated them!), I pretended that I was reading a magazine or a book. In class I sat in a corner at the back of the room to avoid stares and hurtful jokes. Maybe sometimes they bothered me, but it was less. I learned that the best way to avoid them was by isolating myself (...)" (E, 32b).

The previous story makes it clear that isolation could be a strategy that at least lessened aggressions. However, the long-term consequences were not only problems in establishing relationships with other people in different social settings, expressed in withdrawal, introversion and almost pathological shyness, but also the difficulty in expressing and defending points of view, expressing opinions, outsourcing emotions and feelings, and even establish loving relationships.

"I have a hard time getting close to people, by nature I am distrustful. Do not continue to try to approach a person that I like. Normally I expect them to come closer (...). The few times that I was in a relationship, my lovers complained that I was not very expressive, not very affectionate, too quiet, that they never knew what I was thinking. In the end that, almost always, ended up damaging the relationship (...)" (E, 31b).

Another recurring strategy very close to or related to isolation, present in more than half of the reports, is cancellation, or rather self-cancellation in order to go as unnoticed as possible and thus avoid bullying and school aggressions. This strategy is almost always expressed in introversion, self-absorption and the firm decision to avoid expressing any opinion, claim, disagreement or even to ask or clarify any nebulous point. In the strictly academic field, according to the testimonies of the interviewees, it expressed, according to the testimony of the interviewees, in avoiding asking to clarify any doubts about the subject of classes or requesting further explanations to develop an exercise, task or school project. All this with the aim of not attracting the attention of colleagues, especially those who appeared more active and protagonists of the acts of harassment and violence.

"I avoided asking, even though I wasn't understanding anything the teacher was talking about. I knew, from what I had already lived, that if I opened my mouth they would make fun of me or make a fool of me. I remember once, when I was in the second year of the secondary school, that I asked something, in addition to the boos, there was no shortage of the one who said in the midst of the general laughter: "In addition of being fagot you are silly." I blushed with shame. From then on I never asked again in public" (E, 15b).

As can be seen through this story, the cancellation has effects in different areas of the life of those involved, however, one of the most worrying is in their own learning processes, by virtue of the fact that it is the student himself, moved by fear, which reduces or limits their learning possibilities by avoiding asking questions, clarifying doubts or asking for explanations. In other words, homophobic bullying not only negatively impacts the victim's self-esteem and self-perception, but also has harmful effects on her cognitive processes. In this sense, it can then be said that homophobic bullying paralyzes, limits and restricts the possibilities of integral development to which every person is entitled.

A last strategy, which although much less usual than the previous ones, appearing only in 20% of the stories, is the transformation of the victim of homophobic bullying into a victimizer or aggressor of some other partner. This strategy arises as a way to avoid harassment and / or shift the focus of attention. In other words, homophobic bullying leaves traces on both victims and perpetrators, especially when the

latter are also dissidents who resort to these strategies in order to avoid harassment and harassment, and at the same time hide a dissident orientation and identity. In this way, to the feeling of school, family misunderstanding, etc. because he is the bearer of a difference that marginalizes him from the heteronormative order, feelings of contempt and guilt are added for cowardly attitudes towards his own peers. It cannot be ignored either, that this strategy can hide, on occasions, an internalized homophobia that punishes in other dissidents what is rejected from itself, thereby confirming that premise that maintains that homophobia is always destructive both for those who it suffers as much for the agent; well, in the case of the first, as we have observed throughout this article, it undermines his self-esteem, self-confidence and trust in other people. In the case of the perpetrator, homophobia not only makes him a despicable person, full of hatred, but also prevents him from reaching higher stages of spiritual and emotional development. Ultimately, homophobia still violates his human condition.

Conclusions and discussion

A first conclusion that could be drawn is that heteronormativity, or “cultural heterosexism” of which Grozelle (2017) speaks, is reproduced through different mechanisms aimed at legitimizing a single way of organizing life and expression of sexuality (Colegio de Psicólogos de Chile, 2015) and that, in this scenario, homophobic bullying becomes a mechanism for disciplining and punishing all those who deviate from or transgress the borders of that order (Bacchini et. al. 2020). That is to say, this specific type of bullying does not arise only as a result of problems with school coexistence, indiscipline or maladjustment of certain students to the school environment and its norms, but rather from a reductionist and limited vision of sexuality that excludes certain groups of people in advance by virtue of their sexual orientation and / or gender identity, even before meeting or interacting with them and, in addition, in their eagerness to legitimize themselves, resort to different discourses ranging from pseudo scientific premises to religious diatribes that grated in the most extreme fanaticism and intolerance; passing, by the way, by tradition and custom that, although valuable, are not always ethical and reasonable, especially when they violate the dignity of people.

That is to say, it is an apologetic, circular, tautological discourse that is based on its own assumptions and prejudices that does not bet on reflection and discernment, much less admits questions. In short, an intolerant speech that often leads to hate crimes and of which homophobic bullying is nothing more than a consequence of it, as a visible expression of the violence, discrimination and homophobic exclusion that it promotes, whose hallmark is the prejudice towards dissident people of the heteronormative order.

In this final analysis we cannot ignore either that bullying and bullying, motivated by a dissident orientation or identity, in addition to having become a serious mental health problem worldwide and for the psycho-emotional development of the victims (UNESCO, 2013), unfortunately, in the Chilean case, if we stick to the testimonies presented, it is part of the daily school life. That is, homophobic bullying, ubiquitous in schools, makes these campuses, which should be focused on the learning and integral development of students, appear among the most homophobic social spaces and, consequently, the most insecure for hundreds of dissident children and young people in school age (Grozelle, 2017; Parent, et. al., 2019; Bacchini et. al., 2020). A situation that, in addition to permanently exposing them to all kinds of violence, makes them more vulnerable and prone to suicide.

In this sense, the school institution, as shown by numerous studies (Parent, et. Al., 2019; Moyano and Sánchez, 2020; Bacchini et. Al., 2020; Hatchel et. Al., 2020), far from being a the protective space, the reception and recognition of the different sexual orientations and generic identities has historically been a reproductive and perpetuating space of the heteronormative order through different dissuasive disciplinary devices that range from the management and control of the body to the ideological discourses present in the school curriculum (Núñez, 2011; Junqueira, 2013); Thus, the school as a place of knowledge, remains a space of censorship, ignorance, fear, shame and violence in relation to gender and sexuality.

However, this is not its only distinctive feature, since it can sometimes become, as was demonstrated through the testimonies of those interviewed, in a violent and unhealthy space for dissidents who see their mental and physical health exposed by virtue of the cultural and institutional homophobia present in the school. Violence that is not harmless or temporary, but leaves indelible marks and traces in the memory and life stories of the victims, which

is why specific measures are not enough to combat it, but structural changes are required that, necessarily, go through the break of the heterosexist paradigm at the social level; Well, there is no term for homophobia and, consequently, for homophobic bullying, without a paradigm shift.

By way of closing, it only remains for us to reiterate some research findings. In the first place, that, despite the passage of time, different historical moments and different generations, homophobic bullying left perishable traces in the memory of the dissidents who were subjected to this type of harassment, to the point of becoming painful episodes that mark a before and after in their personal stories. Second, the educational establishments, in general, milestone that marked their lives, where the differences emerge not from the memory itself, but from the way of processing it.

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