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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MASCULINITIES AND THE CHALLENGE FOR WORKING WITH MEN IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

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Abstract

The old hegemonic practice of masculinity is far away from disappearing in many of the region of our country and in frequently encountered family, political or social contexts. Investigation and actions are always aimed at preventing violence and tirelessly promoting policies for the equality of women in places that normally did not occupy and that it is difficult for them to give in to the old patriarchal system. The objective of this case study, is to reflectively analyze educational and social scenarios, to determine the strategies that are had for the denaturalization of the patriarchal organization and the significant change in the matter of work with men; from full involvement or integration to a change in sexist practice and beliefs that is reproduced on a daily basis. It is a difficult to think that generations that lived under this type of upbringing or privilege could give way and establish egalitarian ties; but that it may be possible to rethink the gender relations they live and the aspects they have had throughout their lives and the importance of building egalitarian relationships.

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Introduction:-

There are MANY reasons to do serious work in the educational training of men and in relation to masculinities; especially on issues related to gender, their sexuality, emotions and relationships as men with themselves or with other genders.

Breaking with a patriarchal system as old as man himself is not an easy task; Nor is it to think of a change in men that directly benefits women as well as himself; That is why the objective arises to reflectively analyze the different educational and social scenarios, which in the same way help to determine the necessary strategies for an unlearning of the deeply rooted patriarchal orders within all social contexts, in such a way that allows significant changes in terms of educational training for work with men.

Just as feminist issues have aroused interest within society, the issue of masculinities should invite us to reflect on all the contexts that the same concept contains, to a change in the mentality and understanding of social environments about the reality that implies the gender diversity. Breaking the molds of hegemonic masculinity has not been an easy task, nor will it be in the short term if the work of women is not stopped or made invisible, if we justify in different ways not losing privileges as men or if we They continue to repress the emotions or feelings that, due to the sexual condition as a man, one has.

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Working with men implies commitment and responsibility to promote a real change in male values and attitudes or behaviors; It is not possible to speak of a cultural heritage or of man's own nature; it is about actively promoting the end of violence against women and emotionally reinforcing masculinities.

The educational space is the ideal place where the process of unlearning the traditional models turns out to be more effective so that the new generations have a social coexistence of peace and free from aggression.

Masculinities and men

Being born a man and being a man as expressed by Kaufman (1989, 1999), Bonino (2006), Chiodi (2019), Bard (2016), Keijzer (1997) and many more; it goes far beyond the risk that being a man represents or that to which one could also be exposed as a male under the stereotypes established by a society with great gender problems, very specifically: violence. This has led to thinking and rethinking what it means to be a man and a woman in recent years, where issues of gender equality, feminism and masculinities have remained in vogue.

Hence, masculinities and work with men require in the same way that feminism make a rethinking or assessment that allows generating strategies to modify social behaviors. Many of the studies or interventions carried out under this gender-focused approach are aimed at preventing violence and promoting equality and most of the time the final recipient is the female gender: women.

I agree with Bard (2016) that from an objective point of view, men must be involved in these tasks or actions aimed at identifying problematic attitudes from their own privileged position as a man, in such a way as to contribute to socialization of new generations in the exercise of power and in egalitarian relationships. And this arises because for many generations based on historical details and according to Connell (2015), "... the natural sciences have characteristics that depend on the concept of gender. Western science and technology are culturally masculinized" and "... the dominance of science in discussions of masculinity thus reflects the position of masculinity itself (or specific masculinities) in social gender relations".

However, these same positions in recent years have given rise to questions that in past generations could not be thought about and are those related to emotional effects, daily affective relationships, domestic family integration, their sexual identity and their role in parenthood; attitudes that are also a reason to focus attention on the role that men play and the challenges they face based on demographic changes, health, education, justice and human rights (Guevara, 2008). All this based on unequal social structures, since there are at the same time different social representations and models of masculinity constructed differently by different social classes, cultures and age groups, each one with a different social hierarchy, as well as different social practices. considered as masculine.

Studies on masculinities proper have had a historical transition a little after the middle of the last century, it arises through a crisis in male identity based on the changes caused by a technological revolution that rethinks the new ways of thinking about themselves for men and women; moments that were of great changes worldwide.

According to Díez (2015), the archetype of traditional masculinity is far from being in decline, since the school context reinforces and at the same time belittles the culture and knowledge of women in their school content; in the use of language and in their coexistence relationship styles; encourages physical competition games and justifies behaviors based on submission and being at the same time not very supportive or cooperative.

The search in recent years for ways to eradicate violence against women, how to protect them or give them the opportunity to occupy highly masculinized public spaces in an equitable way; it continues to be a constant in the face of a concept generated from the same inequality and endorsed by the double face of a society under a latent hegemonic patriarchal system towards the new generations. It is perhaps one of the ways to eradicate injustice in social orders and put aside the model of the imposing and violent male.

Similarly, many men share the idea of being able to count on a more just and safe society, they make proposals on how to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and promote a less hierarchical and more inclusive economy (Guevara, 2008).

According to Agostina Chiodi (2019), it is the culture in which we are born and not nature that makes us different, it is a cultural interpretation that socializes bodies to determine who are men and who are women, it also mentions that

this socialization gender is oppressive because it conditions one to desire some things and reject others; such as playing, expressing ourselves, dressing or developing according to a script that tells us that it is “male” and that it is “female”.

Perhaps one of the most important achievements within this entire context has been to question the idea of universal attributes and roles shared by women immersed in society, as well as the uniqueness of gender identity, highlighting the diversity of conditions and experiences. female; They have also deepened the analysis of the subjectivities, perceptions and evaluations of women themselves as authors and actors of the historical process and have provided elements for the discussion on sexuality, reproductive health, democracy, violence and relationships in the interior of the different types of families (Ponce, 2004).

Masculinities education and society

Undoubtedly, the educational process of people will be a key element in the changes that are expected, especially in the prevention of sexist violence and in the same process of teaching towards new generations or social groups of early ages, this without losing of considering that there are different forms of masculinity and not all of them are in the same position of power and always based on the constant focus on what one should be as a man with respect to his sexuality (heterosexuality), the management of his emotions; extremely important condition for maintaining status (Connell, 2005).

Hence, it is considered that hegemonic masculinity seeks to be assumed by the same man; recognized, consented to or naturalized by those who are interested in maintaining the same model: society. A society that greatly exerts pressure on how to be or how to act, thus imposing inequalities between men and women; sexualizing not only the body but also spaces and history in dichotomous systems; Hence, any deviation or variation towards the norms established by the same society in relation to biological and psychological sex was indicated as a psychosexual dysfunction or a psychopathology (Schongut, 2012).

School environments are one of the main social contexts in charge of the reproduction of hegemonic behaviors and values, highlighting the assignment of activities and roles of boys and girls; always marked in the exercise of strength and power, in the concealment of feelings, heterosexuality, the obsession of penis size and sexual conquest; success, misogyny and homophobia. The challenges will be to overcome those stereotypical male models that remain attractive in most cases and that could be beneficial within a male school population, breaking patterns and social consequences in which sexism stands out, the perpetuation of homophobia and gender violence (Penna, 2012; Peña and Ríos, 2011; cited by Díez, 2015)

The educational process must be based on the curricular introduction of learning relating the rights and responsibilities that exist within the family nucleus; in an order or balance in the distribution and generation of skills in housework without allowing the abuse of anyone. The educational practice must also be in the generation of knowledge, skills and abilities to allow him to be an autonomous and free man, who can take care of other people, express his emotions and share his life with a free woman, not with a substitute mother.

There are many fronts that have been opened in search of a real change in a fight in search of gender equality; Of this, it must be recognized that the recognition of inequality and the constant existing of violence from machismo has launched a process for the change of men based on sharing responsibilities in tasks, care, love and relationships that seek peace and harmony between the genders, based on respect and tolerance.

Feminism facing a change

Citing Azpizu (2017), it can be said that contexts have changed in recent times, especially under the magnifying glass of groups of feminist thinkers and linguists, who when referring to 'man' when referring to the set of human beings, it is nothing more than one of the linguistic traps of patriarchy, which gives us a clue that the generalized human individual will present himself to us as a measure of the whole ”; but that man also refers to the masculine gender, the word woman will always refer to the feminine gender.

Much will depend on the perspective with which you want to look at the gender perspective, some people will look for elements that represent or identify feminist situations or those of the LGTBTTTQ + community under oppressive situations of a hegemonic patriarchal society and question the forms of how the male gender he appropriated some social aspects through the naturalization of genders.

Situations that have given rise that, when the time comes, women have had to build their own knowledge to show the place of discrimination that they occupied socially, it was necessary to understand how men did the same, thus emerging the need to see how they could also build e imagine a definition of themselves and how they meant the relationship between the genders.

There is talk of an existing crisis in hegemonic masculinity giving way to new masculinities. By definition, masculinity or the masculine term corresponds to the traits attributed or related to the male, or with characteristics attributed to him; endowed with organs to fertilize. In the opposite sense is the meaning of the feminine term: that it is typical of women and that it has traits related to women, endowed with organs to be fertilized (RAE, 2021).

The struggle for the visibility of women for centuries and for the recognition of having the same opportunities as men does not stop despite being already in the 21st century where very marked gender stereotypes and deep-rooted machismo are still disseminated and manifested; despising in many cases men who have feminine attributes, such as homosexuals, because in the eyes of society they do not meet the conditions of being a real man.

Work with men

The changes have been taking place despite the constant defense of traditional hegemonic masculinity, qualifying or disqualifying those who participate in other masculinities as deviant from what is considered an ideal; something that brings with it emotional and social consequences (Connell, 1995; Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix, 1998; Renold, 2004; cited by Díez, 2015).

For this, the challenge of education, despite the archetypes and stereotypes, both female and male, will be to overcome them; assuming a process of unlearning traditionally accepted cultural elements and employing shared ethical work, with a special emphasis on caring for an emotional education and against gender violence.

But it is the school, the social organization or the place that is important for the lives of children and young people, it is the place where in a very direct way it influences their socialization processes; It is there where gender inequalities are reproduced and exclusion is promoted in the form of homophobia or gender violence; especially when boys act differently or do not follow the parameters set by traditional models of masculinity (hegemonic). It is there where legitimacy and validity are given to the abuse of power exercised by men or boys, it is somehow institutionalized and patterns referring to a model of masculinity continue to be reproduced.

An egalitarian educational organization is required, where the entire community can participate in a critical dialogue and an active participation towards equality and plurality is consolidated, in terms of gender identity; not exclusive and whether to combine that individual identity with respect for the universality or diversity of people. It is in the school where one must specify "... the encounter and the relationship with the other person, from another culture, who speaks another language, who comes from another social position and, of course, who has another sex, are a source of emotions, tenderness, affection, feelings that humans weave in interaction". (Iturbe, 2007; cited by Ríos, 2015; p. 496).

If you seek to achieve equity in gender issues, it is a matter of breaking with those traditional roles or molds where the problem is; not in men, so it is important to discuss or reflect with the same men about men and masculinities. It is at the same time that the same work allows personally to propose initiatives and responsibilities to themselves, without leaving aside the contributions made by women in many of the areas where they travel: in the family, in education, in the social and academic or scientific; among many others.

Above all, because there is not only violence against women; it is also against the same men. Men to a greater extent tend to be the protagonists of violent acts because they are involved in youth fights or belong to criminal groups, because of the excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs or because they are in risky situations such as driving at high speeds.

This long-awaited change in men in search of that equality will always entail direct benefits for women or other people of different genders with whom they interrelate, being egalitarian is being willing to assume the new roles that are requested and leave a side the patriarchal mandates; express their emotions, desires and problems more freely; In the same way, recognizing the needs and rights that women constantly ask for in the roles of couple, friends or co-workers, is to be willing to support and assume care responsibilities in an equitable way.

Conclusions:-

There is a great thematic aspect that emerges from equity, gender, violence against women, femicide, feminism and many more that are linked in a very direct way with the issue of masculinities; issues that are approached with great frequency in feminist, religious, political, academic and other contexts. Each one of them offers us the possibility of having a perspective of “something” that is also gaining strength and is being asked loudly. A change in men, a change in those in which hegemonic customs and traditions still prevail, in which they conserve the archetypes and stereotypes of conventional models imposed by the social imaginary and also in those who are repressed from expressing emotions and feelings.

It is in the educational space or the school the ideal place to promote the change that is required; It is in this place where a culture for the work of masculinities must be promoted in the first instance and at all levels, otherwise there is a risk of continuing to promote situations that come from social customs; such as the marked discriminatory attitudes to diversity or gender roles.

Within schools, it is essential to have a program that presents alternatives or needs based on an initial self-evaluation in order to actively promote issues based on masculinities and linked to equity, gender and violence, mainly with a view to mentalize the new generations towards a social coexistence free from aggression.

It is a work of men with men and in which it has been found that it has a favorable impact on their practice and their approach due to the great social impact it has; otherwise, there is a risk of continuing in the old imposed models.

The questioning is still latent, victimizers or victims? The interesting thing about this should lead us to establish the necessary mechanisms in each of the educational centers for the work of unlearning; to uproot in the new generations that hegemonic patriarchy and to channel them in an adequate way towards environments of peace free of violence.

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