

Biopsychosocial Paper

Kaitlyn Goffin

HBSE

Southern Adventist University

Family Configuration

Thecie has two parents and a total of three siblings as well as 1-brother in-law, 2 nieces and 1 nephew. Her parent's names are James and Marie Previlus. Her Siblings names are Claudine, Martine, and Sammy. This is in chronological order. Her sister Claudine is married and her husbands name is Jay. Her niece's names are Cheley and Mariella. Her nephews name is Christopher. Thecie is the youngest sibling in her family.

James, her father is the Principle of an Adventist school. The title of this school is Bethel Junior Academy. However, James actually has a PhD in family and marriage counseling, which he does on the side. Marie (James's wife and Thecie's mother) is 51 years old. She currently has a job at an organization called HealthTrust Workforce Solutions. This job is an international job, which means that Marie travels around to others countries often training new nurses. On top of this very demanding job she is also in school currently trying to obtain her doctorate.

Both of her parents call West Palm Beach FL their home, but this was not always the case. Both of her parents are originally from Haiti where they were born and spent most of the beginning of their lives. They left Haiti in 1988 together. Thecie said that they did this in order to have a better life with more opportunities. She also mentioned that at that point in time Haiti was struggling with many political issues and the country was in a bad spot so they thought it best to leave. They came to Miami FL. They have only then moved once to West Palm Beach where they still live now.

Thecie's oldest sister Claudine is 34 years old. Thecie's parents adopted her when she was young. She is currently working on becoming a nurse. She no longer lives with her parents but with her husband and 2 children Mariella and Christopher as mentioned before. Even though

she is living independently from her parents she still decided to stay close by her parents as they all still live in West Palm Beach.

Martine is Thecie's next oldest sibling who was also adopted. She is now 31 years old. Thecie described Martine as the more rebellious sibling. In fact it got so difficult for Thecie's parents that when Martine was 16 they sent her back to Haiti. However Thecie's grandfather intervened and decided to take her in and under his wing. Martine has one daughter named Chelcy and is currently an entrepreneur. She also now lived in Florida relatively close to her parents.

Sammy is the third child in the birth order. He is 26 years old. He is a firefighter and is the one sibling that actually lives close to Thecie here in Tennessee. He actually lives in Ooltewah so she gets to see him more often. He also has a girlfriend that he is dating quite seriously and is developing a relationship with Thecie.

When I asked Thecie about people that were close to her she immediately mentioned that she was very close to Elisabeth and her daughter Magaly Jeanty. They consider them family just as much as blood relatives they are so close. Magaly was a former student of James (Thecie's father). He also knows Elisabeth from work. They started developing a strong relationship with the family through spending a lot of time together. Especially during the summer Thecie spent a lot of time at their house and vice versa. Thecie actually calls Elisabeth "Mom" and claims her daughter as her sister because the bond between them is extremely close. When Elisabeth got married the family considered her husband as part of the family as well.

Individual Development

Thecie thinks that she met all of her developmental milestones. She was right on time learning basic skills as an infant/ toddler such as crawling and talking. She says that when she

was around 7 months old she learned to crawl and from that point on she had a lot of energy and was extremely active. It was not long after that and she was standing and taking her first steps. Her mom says that this happened before the average age of most babies. Thecie then learned how to talk. Her first word was said when she was 1 and a half years old.

As an educator Thecie's father worked with her so that she began to read at a young age as well. She was mainly taught how to read out of the Bible. Thecie bragged that at the age of only four she was actually able to fluently able to read.

Erikson's Psychological Theory is one of the most foundational theories in how to gauge a person's development. This theory contains 8 different stages, which span over a person's entire life. Due to this, Thecie has not reached all of the developmental stages because she is only in her early 20's. The first stage is called "Trust vs. Mistrust." During this stage a child either creates a strong bond with parents and trusts them or does not. Thecie believes that she developed a strong sense of trust from her parents since they were always so involved in her life, however her brother created a source of mistrust. When they were young their relationship was rocky and filled with jealousy, which lead to problems. But now they have a good relationship.

The second stage is called "Autonomy vs. Shame and doubt" this is where a lot of self-esteem is established. Thecie said that from an early age she was given chores and activities that she was able to complete and upon completion she was given praise. Sometimes she even did the task wrong, but as long as she tried her best she was affirmed on her efforts. This gave her a very strong sense of self worth and confidence.

"Initiative vs. Guilt" is the third stage of development. In this stage a child becomes more independent. When faced with a new activity they are either encouraged to try or shamed for trying. This either creates feelings of the confidence to take initiative or is filled with guilty

feelings. The parenting style that Thecie's parents used held her to a very high standard. She was expected to meet it especially in school. She was also enrolled in music lessons and both with playing and schoolwork excellence was expected. If she did not meet the expectation there were consequences. However, the success resulted in feelings of accomplishment and she was proud of the good things that she did while growing up.

The fourth stage of development is called "Identity vs. Role confusion" in this time it is normal for adolescents to question and figure out who they are. However Thecie has an especially hard time during this stage. She really struggled figuring out who she was as a Christian and what it meant to be a Seventh Day Adventist. She also struggled with figuring out her role in her family. So often she was referred to as a little sister, a daughter, or granddaughter. Thecie wanted to find out who she was as herself not based on anyone else. But most impactful was her struggle to find out her purpose and why she was placed on this earth. Thecie however did succeed to make it through this stage. She leaned heavily on prayer and meditation to answer her identity questions. She now states that she has a firm understanding of who she is and why she is here.

The fifth stage of Erikson's development is called "Intimacy vs. Isolation." As a young adult this is actually the stage that Thecie is currently in. She has had her ups and down in this stage. Currently she is single, but does eventually want to find intimacy in a romantic relationship. But for now she is content in the waiting and working on developing herself as a person. She has had an intimate relationship before, but it resulted in a lot of negativity. Due to this Thecie is extra cautious moving forward. But this is for the best as she conclude that her previous partner did not treat her in a way that was how she should have been treated. She is now looking for more specific qualities in a person.

Even though there are three more stages in human development, due to Thecie's age, she is only this far. So this brings us to our next theory, Piaget's Theory. This theory unlike Erikson's, Piaget's stages only cover childhood, so Thecie is secure in the fact that she has indeed reached all of these stages.

Piaget based his theory on cognitive development. The first stage is called sensory motor. Thecie met this stage because as a infant she was very active. It was always difficult for her to sit still or stay in one place for a long time. She enjoyed crawling around to explore and take in all of her surroundings.

The second stage is called the Preoperational stage of development. In this stage a child actually begins thinking in a way that is geared towards a goal of solving something the memory also gets better. Thecie was raised in a home that really valued intelligence and her parents began reading to her and teaching her skills at a very young age. This allowed her to be able to do simple problem solving through play. She also mentioned that she struggled with egocentric behaviors. This especially came into play when interacting with her siblings. Being in this stage on top of being the youngest sibling in her family contributed to her having a very strong "My way or the high way" outlook on life.

The third stage is called formal operations. This occurs during childhood and it is when children begin thinking much more logically and critically. They are able to understand different variables to situations or different ways of thinking about things. During this stage was when Thecie was learning how to cook. When a problem arised that she did not anticipate she quickly learned how to improvise or change her plans.

The last stage is concrete operations. In this stage a person is fully able to think critically and put themselves in others shoes. Empathy is developed. Thecie reached this stage as a teen as

she became more sensitive to other people's feelings. This skill was one that was able to really develop as now in the Social work field she uses empathy on a regular basis.

Gilligan was another theorist, but his theories are very different from the last two discussed. His developmental stages are based on moral development and these stages do not necessarily correlate to ages. Thecie has made it through the first stage Orientation which is when everything is about you. As mentioned before as a young child Thecie was very egocentric. Now Thecie is in the stage of goodness and self-sacrifice. She has transitioned from putting all the emphasis on herself to wanting to put others first. Through her actions not only as a future Social worker, but as a person in general she desires for others to benefit from what she does.

Family Organization

When asked about the organization of her family, the first thing that came to mind was how close all of her family members are together. She mentioned that even though they are not all together all of the time, they stay very connected through group chats and phone calls. This was not always the case. Thecie's older sister Martine went through a very rough patch especially with Maria (Mother). But as of recently things have gotten a lot better. They are on communicating terms. The siblings' bonds to each other are still strong though. Thecie is very close to her parents and mentioned that even though she is in College she along with all her siblings are still very dependent on their parents.

Thecie described her parents' parenting technique as very authoritarian. Growing up there were always very clear expectations for behavior and the bar was not set low. They were always pushing her to succeed. If these expectations were not met, parents used punishments and negative reinforcement. Some basic rules that were laid out were those of respecting people in authority and being kind to others. Many of the family's expectations were based on the Bible, as

Thecie's family is very religious. This being said, Marie and James were loving towards their children and were always still supportive even through mess-ups. But she expressed that even though all her siblings are grown, her parents still have a relationship with their children as authority figures.

Though less often used, positive reinforcement was also used as a technique when Thecie was growing up. Her parents like to verbally communicate how proud of her they were of her especially when she succeeded in something difficult or that she had tried her best in. This helped produce confidence as positive self-esteem. Thecie was very secure that her parents loved her and were only looking at for the best in life for her. So even when she did fail or get in trouble she always knew that her parents disciplined out of love. As far as types of punishments the most common that Thecie mentioned were "whoopings" which is another way of saying spanking. Those were saved for serious disobedience. If the infraction was less severe, her parents would use a technique in which they would have the child stand or sit in one place for a very extended period of time. When this happened they were told that they had to stay there until told otherwise. Sometimes this lasted for hours. The longest time for Thecie was almost a whole night when she had to sit at the table after dinner for lying to her parents.

Thecie's parents come at marriage from a perspective of equality. They tend to discuss things together and make joint decisions instead of one having more power than the other. However Thecie mentioned that sometimes due to her mother's very outgoing personality it can seem at times that she has more power.

Marital Relationship

James and Maria have a very loving marriage and they are not afraid to show this publically. They show their love to each other physically by giving each other lots of hugs. They

also express their love for each other verbally by telling each other how much they love each other. They do this also by writing love letters to each other. Another really big way that they show love is through giving each other gifts. They try to do special things for each other all the time by getting each other gifts or flowers. Because Thecie's mother is traveling a lot due to her job when they are together they really try to make it special. They will often go on dates with each other to try to maximize the time that they do have. For both parties this has been their first marriage and there is no alcoholism or abuse.

James and Marie have a very vocal a loud style of approaching conflict. They raise their voices to a very intense level. To outsiders this may seem harsh, but in the culture of their family this is just how they express their disagreements. In this way disagreements are quickly resolved because all the feelings are put on the table at once. They have rule that they do not go to bed angry so it is really important for them to talk out their issues in order to resolve them in a timely manner.

When it comes to attitudes towards women, Thecie described that her father James really values women and is always telling his daughters that they need to marry men that treat them with highest value. Her mother's view on men is also positive. But she believes that men should be leaders especially for their families, more so in that role then she expects out of women.

Thecie's father had a difficult upbringing and so through his experience he was very determined to make his marriage last and be healthy. Her mother has parents that were married only to each other and so she was able to see how much effort must be put in to make a marriage last. They definitely both take time to make sure that their marriage is staying strong.

Family Communication Process

Thecie's family has a very strong bond and so it is very important for them all to stay in contact. Technology helps a lot with this. Through their phones they are able to text and call each other in order to talk every day even though geographically they are not all close together. The only sibling who does not share in this is her sister Martine, even though communication is improving. Thecie has a very open family where no topic is off limits. In growing up Thecie always felt comfortable asking her parents questions about anything. Even sex is something communicated about without shame or embarrassment. She mentioned that sometimes this could be almost a negative thing, as sometimes it seems as though there are no boundaries.

As well as being open to talking about all topics, feelings are openly expressed between family members. The feelings do not usually go bottled up for a long time. Whenever difficult or negative feelings come up the family works through them by having conversations when they can let it all out. However the expectation is that even when these feelings are expressed respect needs to always be shown. Another way that her family deals with conflicts is by taking time out to calm down and really process through feelings so that when they do express them, it is more logical and not as angry. It also saves them from saying something hurtful out of frustration that they would regret.

Family Context

James and Marie gain income through their jobs both as a principle and as a nurse. They are very open with their children about the finances of the family. The economic journey of this family has been hard and they have put a lot of time and effort into their education and jobs in order to be where they are now financially. They were very poor in Haiti and basically started out in America with nothing and worked their way up to the lifestyle they are able to live now. Thecie's father is very frugal and likes to keep a budget.

Thecie's parents have certain biases against group of people. They will have prejudice feeling towards Caucasian people and really do not understand the gay community. But as a whole due to their firm foundation in Christ they do view everyone as one of God's children.

James and Marie are very involved in their community in very highly respected and public positions. Her father being the principle of the Adventist school in the area is a prominent figure known by many people. He also loves Pathfinders. He has been a pathfinder leader for many years, which is also a very respected position. Thecie's mother is also very involved in their church. She is the leader of Health Ministries where she helps share the Adventist health message with others.

Thecie and her family have had a really difficult year with death this year. One of her cousins passed away which was then followed by the deaths of two uncles and then the death of one of her aunts. Her family is grieving and this has been a painful process. Some other losses that the family has encountered in earlier years were the loss of both of Marie's parents.

A really difficult time in Thecie's childhood that the family had to get through was when her brother was diagnosed with a brain tumor at the age of 14. Thankfully through treatment and surgery he made it, but it was a time the family really had to pull together.

Thecie has not knowledge of any intergenerational problems or family myths, heroes or heroines. The most draining thing on Thecie's family is financial drain. There are a lot of education costs as several family members are currently in school. Not only are James and Marie paying for the education of their children but they also financially support one of their grandchildren and their family that still lives in Haiti.

The community that Thecie's family relies on the most is their church community. Many times church members have stepped up to help the family when needed especially through prayer.

Other than this the family does not use any community recourses to Thecie's knowledge.

Family Strengths

The first thing that came to Thecie's mind when asked about what helps her family thrive and go on was knowing that they are all accountable to each other and that they want to make their family as a whole proud. They also have a lot of love for each other, which they often express. This love holds them together in the difficult times. They are always there for each other even in failure to help build each other back up.

The most important strength this family has however is their firm foundation as children of God and their faith in God. They use prayer and scripture as something to hold onto when all else fails.

Conclusion

It was such a learning experience for me to sit with Thecie and get to know a lot more about her family. Especially because she comes from such a different culture than me it was very interesting compare and contrast how our families run. All in all her family most impressed me with how close they all are and how much love they share. They are such a support to one another that have so many strengths. Another huge strength this family has is hard work. Thecie's family has come from complete poverty in Haiti to coming to America, and putting so much effort into creating a secure home to raise their children in. It is inspiring.