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Nudes and unauthorized disclosure of intimate images: what is the message to the schools? ^{*1}

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Abstract

The practice among students of sharing photos that expose the nudity of girls has been experienced in most educational institutions in Brazil and around the world. Several cases reported in the media portray situations of humiliation and persecution that may lead, in addition to psychological damage, to problems in social relationships, lowering performance, school dropout and even suicide. The aim of this work was to discuss the relationships that have been established at school in the face of the practice of sharing naked self-portraits and the unauthorized dissemination of intimate images of girls. Twenty-seven in-depth interviews were carried out with girls and women from different Brazilian regions who had their intimacy exposed at different times in their lives, in addition to health and social care professionals who assisted adolescents and adult women who went through this situation. The data pointed to practices of negligence in relation to situations of violence, blaming girls and unpreparedness to guide questions concerning the experience of sexuality in a pleasant and healthy way. It was observed that these new practices of sexuality and violence against girls have resumed, in institutions, the opposition between manifestation of sexuality and good school performance. It argues for an education in sexuality based on the issue of desire.

Keywords

Sexting – Exposure of intimacy – Sexuality Education – Childhood – Policies.

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1- Data availability: The entire dataset supporting the results of this study has been published in the paper itself.

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Introduction

The broadening of Internet access using cellular phones as well as the use of social networks has popularized what has been called sexting in countries other than Brazil, designating the sharing of erotic digital media among peers, with contents belonging to the sender. This definition serves to differentiate this practice of sexuality from the violent practices of unauthorized disclosure of intimacy, to which girls and women in particular have been exposed.

These violent practices are differentiated according to how the media are produced, acquired (SYDOW; CASTRO, 2017) and disseminated. They may be produced under different circumstances, involving or not, knowledge, authorization, or desire of the one being recorded, even portraying images of sexual violence. The acquisition of the media that is later disseminated can be either on the initiative of the person depicted, by sending it, or it can be illegal, through theft or sexual extortion, known as sextortion. Sextortion can include the acquisition of erotic media as an end or means to a threat in rape. Dissemination, in turn, can be initiated for different reasons, such as affirmation of masculinity, control and condemnation of girls' and women's sexuality, revenge (as in cases that have been called revenge pornography⁴), and even commercialization (MOHAN, 2020). These different situations were reported by girls and women within the scope of this research.

Resulting from the expansion of these forms of violence, Federal Law No. 13,718/2018 (BRASIL, 2018) was enacted in Brazil typifying as a crime of sexual harassment the disclosure, without consent, of a photo or video with a scene of nudity, sex, or pornography. In addition to this legal instrument, some other legislations specifically protect minors, as is the case of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) (BRASIL, 1990) and Law No. 13,185/2015, which establishes the Program to Combat Systematic Bullying (BRASIL, 2015a).

Violence is a dimension present in the relationships between adolescents and, therefore, has been the target of several investigations. Research conducted by Minayo, Assis and Njaine (2011) on violence in affective-sexual relationships of young Brazilians found a high prevalence of various forms of violence. The study pointed to the fact that relational violence, which involves defamation and damage in other relationships, reproduces inequalities and discrimination, issues also evidenced in this research. In addition, the study coordinated by Minayo, Assis and Njaine (2011) reported reports of unauthorized disclosure of intimate images of women in several regions of the country.

Despite the need to give names to the situations of violence experienced by girls, the focus of interest in this work, the fact that the experiences of sexuality are permeated by positive aspects cannot be neglected. Danah Boyd (2007) calls attention to the fact that the use of social networks occurs in the same way as other public spheres in which young people participate, involving a search for acceptance, self-representation, and also risks. These risks contribute to learning the limits of social life, which is also an access to

4- The use of the term pornography is rejected as it is not recognized among women going through this experience (LINS, 2019).

adulthood. The author also discusses the contradictions between the marketing stimulus to consumption and sexuality of young people and adult repression of their behavior. She argues that the prohibition of access contributes to the division between the worlds of adults and young, and between juvenile people with and without access to such tools.

It is based upon reflections on the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and on school discourses about gender and sexuality that we sought to analyze the ways in which schools have dealt with the practice of sexting and with the unauthorized disclosure of intimate images of girls. We also sought, based on this analysis, to point out ways for an education in gender and sexuality oriented towards pleasurable and healthy experiences.

Methods

Twenty-seven in-depth interviews were conducted during the second semester of 2020 by video call, with an average duration of over seventy minutes. Seventeen of the interviewees were girls and women who had experienced exposure, and ten were health and care professionals who had experienced exposure.

The survey was advertised on social networks as a way to recruit participation. A WhatsApp contact of the researcher was made available so that interested parties could contact her and share their experiences.

The girls and women who had their intimate images disclosed were, at the time of the interview, between 17 and 50 years old. The age range of the health professionals and social workers was 18 to 62. Among the professionals, the research interviewed psychologists, social workers, and students from women's shelters, legal, public safety, mental health, private care, and volunteer projects.

Among the interviews it was possible to cover, besides a variety of situations and contexts, the age at which violence occurred with the women, and a diversity of ethnic-racial, socioeconomic, and territorial backgrounds. The locations of the exposed women covered eighteen cities in six Brazilian states (one woman was also exposed in the context of a large city abroad), being capital cities, inland and coastal cities, and small and medium size metropolitan regions. The locations of the professionals covered five municipalities in the same state - capital city, small metropolitan region municipality, and small and medium sized countryside municipalities.

The interviews with the exposed women involved describing how their images were taken and disseminated, how this affected them, and whether they sought help in the realm of personal or institutional relationships, such as legal or health services. The interviews with the professionals involved a detailed description of the cases attended to, the harm done to the girls and women, the care given to them, and the challenges to this type of care. In both interviews, the perspectives on the demands of care for women going through this experience were addressed, a topic dealt with in another paper (PATROCINO; BEVILACQUA, 2021a).

In addition to being recorded, the interviews were recorded in writing. The records were sent to be validated by each participant. Using content analysis as the method employed (GOMES, 2001), units and categories of analysis were defined based on previous studies and issues that emerged from the fieldwork.

The participation of minors involved the signing of both a consent form and an assent form by a legal guardian. As means of preserving the identity of the participants, fictitious names were employed. The racial/ethnic descriptions were self-declared.

Sexual rights of adolescents in Brazil

Sexual and reproductive rights are a set of human rights linked to the experience of sexuality, sexual health, and family planning. These rights seek primarily to guarantee information, freedom, and security in the manifestation of sexuality and in the reproductive process. The definition of these rights results from the dispute mainly between feminist movements and conservative religious sectors (DINIZ, 2015).

A historical review of adolescent sexual and reproductive rights, authored by Moraes and Vitalle (2015) pointed to the fact that the 1950s and 1960s were marked by the invisibility of these rights. In the 1970s, adolescence was still perceived from the reproduction of the idea of rebellion and, only from the 1980s on, discussions of adolescence as a phase of its own began. In this context, there was an approach to the discussion about rights, with a focus on pregnancy. Finally, in the 1990s, with the promulgation of the law of Children and Adolescent Statute (ECA in the Portuguese acronym), adolescents began to be understood as subjects of rights. But only in the 2000s, especially because of the action of the new social movements arise the idea of the adolescent as a protagonist subject, with autonomy.

In another study, Moraes and Vitalle (2012) listed the sexual and reproductive rights guaranteed by Brazilian legislation. The analysis evidenced that these are summarized in the Federal Law no. 6.202/1975, which guarantees pregnant women the continuity of studies at home; in the ECA, which deals with reproductive rights and protection against abuse, but not sexuality; and in the technical note of the National STD/AIDS Program of the Ministry of Health, which guarantees unrestricted access to condoms.

It should be stated that not only are the rights restricted, but they are also summarized in a perspective of health that is dislocated from the concept of comprehensiveness. Several rights essential to the full exercise of sexuality are excluded, such as the right to free expression of desire, or to live sexuality without discrimination. Nor is there a guarantee of the right to sexuality education and access to information, which would make possible a life without fear, shame, or guilt.

Several studies have pondered over the insufficiency of the sexual education currently promoted in Brazilian schools. Furlanetto et al. (2018) characterized these approaches as repressive and heteronormative, often developed by health professionals, or restricted to biologic categories. Vieira and Matsukura (2017) also pointed out a predominance of the biological and preventive model of sex education to the detriment of a broad approach psychosocial model. Ladislau Filha and Ribeiro (2016) evidenced that such limitations in the approach are also manifested in the educational materials adopted by the National Textbook Program (PNLD in the Portuguese acronym). Another significant issue is the fact that sex education programs are proposals coming mostly from the Ministry of Health, with little participation from the Ministry of Education (SFAIR; BITTAR; LOPES, 2015).

Leite (2012) further argues that the sexual rights need to be dislocated from the issue of violence and pathology. In her study on the perceptions of counselors of children and adolescents' rights, the author found that the issue of adolescent sexuality is seen as secondary precisely by those responsible for formulating public policies.

The difficulty in advancing this debate in Brazil also relates to the current context of a conservative political comeback, also observed worldwide. In the Brazilian case, and specifically in the educational field, the dissemination of misinformation, the popularization of the term "gender ideology", and the Escola sem Partido (School without Party) project have had an effect in trying to refrain debates about gender in schools and, in fact, have influenced the formulation of education plans throughout the country.

The unwillingness to look or talk about the sexuality of adolescents, or even to listen to them and assume that it exists and needs to be cared for like any other dimension of life, contrasts - and very much so - with the data on teenage pregnancy in Brazil. The data indicating that, in the age group of 15 to 19 years, 59 out of every thousand girls became pregnant in Brazil in 2019 (FREIRE, 2021) shows that adolescents have a sexual life; rejecting or trying to repress this reality in no way contributes for this experience to be established in a healthy and pleasurable way. Still, it implies denying the ways in which the social markers of difference generate different consequences for the lives of these young mothers (CHACHAM; MAIA; CAMARGO, 2012). The difficulties in dealing with the issue, especially in the school institution will be addressed in the next section.

Gender, sexuality and school

Foucault (1993) in his studies on sexuality, defended the need to break with the false silence about sex and describe the multiple discourses and ways of controlling it. Such discourses, which establish norms and, therefore, qualify what is socially understood as deviance, become the target of problematizations insofar as a broad understanding of their various effects on social life is reached. The discourses, teachings and forms of control around everything related to sex, reproduced in the various social instances, are what Louro (2000) calls as pedagogies of sexuality. As the author discusses, body, gender, and sexuality are not constitutions of nature, but dimensions learned and experienced in the context of culture. The author starts from the Foucauldian analysis of the explanation of the historical dimension of sexuality, constructed from a discursive network that regulates behavior.

Louro (2000) argues that concerns with matching the standards of body, sex, gender, and sexuality is linked to the need for certainty and for stable truths; and the norms that arise from them establish who is deviant, while the school institution is central in this process. The school practices a pedagogy of sexuality, a subtle and efficient disciplining of the bodies. This pedagogy, usually absent in the programmatic contents, is practiced in the daily life by the several stakeholders of the school.

At the heart of the matter, therefore, is the need to understand this pedagogy, its modes and effects. According to the Technical Note nº 24/2015 of the Ministry of Education (BRASIL, 2015b), the question is not so much the decision to insert or not the

discussion of gender and sexuality in school, but to understand that it has always been present in the institution, although not in an evident way.

Regarding the specific concerns about sexting, we observe a series of new discourses and pedagogies being produced around this practice. The production and sharing of media involve the construction of norms, regulation and rules of conduct that are internalized and start to constitute the subjectivities of young people according to the context in which they live. There is a morality surrounding the practice and, consequently, forms of coercion, especially directed at girls (JOHANSEN; PEDERSEN; TJØRNHØJ-THOMSEN, 2019; PETROSILLO, 2016).

Petrosillo (2016), in a study conducted in two public schools in Rio de Janeiro state, describes the aesthetics incorporated in the production of media in this context and the stigmatization of deviations from established standards. As a general matter, the categorization of girls between “saints,” “popular,” and “whores” operates, with girls expected to behave and represent themselves in such a way in order to be considered “popular.” Luiza Silva (2018) and Thereza Silva (2018), from a semiotic and curriculum studies perspective, respectively, analyzed web pages aimed at sharing, among women, their photos involving nudity, and identified other discursive productions, such as the break with aesthetic standards and the criticism of gender standards that operate in the circulation of these media.

Several studies have been directed to highlight how the discourses of gender and sexuality are built during school socialization and their effects on educational processes. Duru-Bellat (2000) discusses the way girls are educated for docility and submission, which ends up being profitable from the point of view of school evaluation and constitutes an explanatory factor for the better average performance of girls in basic education in relation to boys (except for disciplines in the exact area, from which girls are distanced). On the other hand, Souza (2002) has shown how the masculine performance adopted by girls can guarantee space in the classroom.

Not only the dimensions of gender and sexuality are present in the school context. They are articulated with other social markers of difference, being the ethno-racial a key issue in the production of inequalities. Carvalho (2004), in his research on the relations between gender and race and school performance, showed how the association of indiscipline with masculinity, allied with racism, ends up causing the accentuated failure among black boys.

Besides the school discourses that directly affect sexuality, to be deepened in the following section in relation to the practices of sexting and the violent exposure of girls, other experiences in the field of gender inequalities in their relation to the fields of knowledge were reported in the research presented here, as in the case of Kiara. The young woman, black, 25 years old at the time of the interview, took a technical course in automotive mechanics during high school, in a class of twenty students that included only three girls. Kiara started working, at 16, in a car factory. When she was 18, while working at Fiat, a montage was made up using her face and a naked female body. She was fired and was unable to return to the field of work in which she planned and wanted to work. Among the few women who worked there, only one remained, according to Kiara.

Such issues, regarding the social spaces assigned -or not- to certain groups, obey to socio-historical factors that have a direct impact on the subjects' trajectories. Not only for this reason, but also because school reproduces such differentiations, these issues should be problematized in the institution itself. In the following section, the traditional school discourses on sexuality will be analyzed in relation to contemporary practices.

Unauthorized disclosure of intimate images and the school context: new sexualities and violence and old school practices

Louro (2000), in her text regarding school pedagogies of sexuality, describes a set of values and practices aimed at behavioral education, with a special focus on girls. As the author discusses, the school needs to stimulate "normal" sexuality, but, at the same time, to contain it. In this sense, it educates for self-discipline, so that each person is capable of self-monitoring to maintain the standard behavior, taught as correct.

There is a historical association between the school environment, teaching by women, and the repression of the manifestation of sexuality. The association of teaching with spinsterhood and virginity presupposed asexuality and absence of vanity on the part of teachers (LOURO, 2000).

By extending to the female students what was demanded from the female teachers, Louro (2000) states that docility and discretion, the opposite of sensuality - to leave, for example, certain parts of the body on display - were expected from the girls. As the author discusses, the school architecture itself involves a larger guarantee of privacy for the exposure of the female body, as is the case of the bathrooms.

However, in opposition to the school's attempt to standardize behavior, adolescents seek an identity and are also influenced by other pedagogies, especially by the communication media. For this matter, Louro (2000) mentions the moral panic due to the fact that young people, through access to sexual content made available in the media, adopt behaviors that are not childish enough in the school perception. This context is certainly accentuated with the spread of Internet access.

The issues around teenage pregnancy and school dropout are indicative of the challenge for school institutions in dealing with the manifestation of sexuality among girls. The use of the terms "unwanted and early" pregnancy represents the lack of understanding and welcoming in relation to what is actually constructed as the desire of adolescents, and reveals the contradiction between the perspective of public policies and the public for which they are intended. The desire to become a mother during adolescence is quite frequent, especially among girls from popular classes (XIMENES NETO et al., 2007), a fact that should challenge the appropriateness of the terms used.

Louro (2000) also discusses that, in the face of sexualized girls, the school institution considers itself a victim and the girls, guilty. The school, in a contradictory fashion, reinforces its sexualization and contributes to constitute it as an object of desire. The experience of gender and sexuality outside the norm can only be accepted if it is hidden;

it must be kept in the private field, and not exposed. In the face of this debate, it is worth questioning how schools have reacted when intimate photos of girls are divulged, a phenomenon that has been quite present in the institutions. Is there a difference in treatment if the initiative to remove the images from the sphere of intimacy came from the girls or not? How do the identities of well-regarded students confront the fact that their sexuality is exposed, whether by choice or because of a violent situation? Do these questions also arise for boys?

Starting with the last question, the answer does not require much argumentation. Not only is the manifestation of boys' sexuality not subject to the same rigorous control as that of girls, but the unauthorized exhibition of their images occurs less frequently and without the same repression to their behavior as in the case of girls.

In the scope of the experiences reported in this research, it was possible to observe three key characteristics of school institutions in the reaction to the unauthorized disclosure of intimate images of girls: the neglect of situations of violence, the blaming of the victims, and the opposition between good scholar performance and manifestation of sexuality. The omission of the school in situations of violence occurred in different contexts and was shown to have serious implications.

Giovana, white, 21 years old, living in a state capital, was exposed when she was 14, in the context of the private school where she studied, supposedly by her ex-boyfriend - with whom she exchanged photos - when she started dating another older boy. She said that the school certainly knew about it because of the proximity between teachers and students - for example in physical education class - but ignored it. She remembers the school intervening only in one situation that involved the institution directly, when a monitor got involved with a student.

Tainá and Vivian, both psychologists, reported seeing adolescents who began self-aggressive behaviors (cutting) after being exposed. In the case reported by Vivian, a 39-year-old white woman, psychologist at a public security center in a capital city, the 15-year-old adolescent she treated had been exposed at school by her abusive boyfriend when she wanted to end the relationship (he was already blackmailing her, threatening to expose her). Besides the cuts, the desire to not go to school was what caught her father's attention, to whom the teenager would not have asked for help if he had not noticed that she was going through this situation.

Tainá, 28 years old, white, a psychologist working at a health center in a small town, attended three adolescents between 13 and 15 years old. The adolescents had in common a family background that was vulnerable both from the economic and affective point of view, and had been referred by the Guardianship Council. In all three cases, the girls were exposed at school - the 13-year-old voluntarily exposed her picture and was highly harassed by other girls - which not only aggravated their mental health conditions, but also contributed to their facing the absence of family and school support.

Úrsula, black, 36 years old, working as psychologist in a public security agency in a capital city, said that the network for the protection of children and adolescents, and specifically the Guardianship Council, are ill-prepared to discuss this type of issue with adolescents and emphasizes that these issues are recurrent demands with several implications.

The case of Bruna, an 18-year-old white girl who lives in a small town in the countryside, is emblematic proof of how the school's negligence can favor the exposure of girls to other types of violence. At the age of 12, Bruna had a montage made up of her face and naked body forged by her stepfather, who posted it at school. He intimidated the girl by threatening to show the photo to her mother if she didn't allow herself to be photographed naked or let him touch her. The school principal questioned Bruna about the photo, but did not contact her mother, who was only forced to deal with the violence her daughter suffered when she was 15, the age at which she was hospitalized as a result of a suicide attempt.

Tainá mentioned two other consultations with adolescents - held in a private practice in another small town - that showed the double risk of repression to the manifestation of adolescent sexuality, the absence of dialogue and the internet as a central place to manifest it. The adolescents, one 12 and the other 15 years old, presented common characteristics in their stories due to the fact that they got involved with strangers on the internet and found in the digital universe a space for the manifestation of sexuality, repressed in the family context. The 15-year-old teenager even had naked pictures of herself sent to a stranger, used to extort her father, a politician from a neighboring city. Until Tainá's follow-up, the teenager was not aware of the risk she was exposed to and missed the man she used to talk to, who disappeared after the extortion.

School interventions, however, when they occur, tend to focus exclusively on the issue of risk and not on the possibility of experiencing sexuality in an autonomous way. In the context of this research, the most frequent reactions were the omission and the blaming of the girls who produced the media, without any form of accountability from those who disseminated it. Ways of dealing with the issue have often proved deficient. In the study conducted by Mota (2015), although the school institution generally demonstrated an understanding that the practice of unauthorized dissemination of intimate images is violence against girls, it did not offer them any shelter and did not hold those who disseminated the media accountable. In the context of this research, the school either omitted itself from the violence and rejection experienced by the girls within its own institution, or rejected them outright.

Clarice, a 19-year-old white girl, living in a small town in the metropolitan region, was exposed, at the age of 14, by her then boyfriend, in the context of the public school where she studied. The issue surfaced at the institution's board of directors and Clarice, who had little support, only denied that it was her in the photo (her breast appeared, but not her face). The fact had negative effects on her mental health:

No one talked about it, no one talked to the other people, talking about how it was wrong to be debauched, talking about these things, you know. Nobody said anything to me that it wasn't me who was wrong, it was the guy who was wrong, nobody said that to me. [...] What hindered me maybe was the approach of the school, maybe I would have had more courage to face it if they had given me better support. [They didn't talk to the rest of the students, only me, they only complained to me. (Clarice, 19 years old).

The conflict between good school performance and the manifestation of sexuality was expressed by the institution itself and by colleagues. In some situations, there was, in fact, a drop in the girls' performance as a consequence of the violence experienced.

Daniela, brown, 19 years old, living in a capital city, was exposed at the age of 14 by a fellow student in the context of the public school where they studied. According to her, she, who was first in her class, had a big drop in school performance and became fifth. The school coordinator, who had great affection for Daniela calling her as her daughter, did not want to talk to her anymore. The girl suffered even greater sanctions in the family context, which was already violent, and had a worsening of her mental health condition.

Elisa, yellow, 19 years old, resident of a small city in the metropolitan region, was exposed at the age of 12 in the context of an upper-middle class school. Boys with whom she had stayed and were friends with divulged a picture of her with her naked back looking backwards. The school at first seemed welcoming, but later, in conversation with Elisa's mother and father, suggested that the girl withdraw from the school. After she left, Elisa went on to study in four other private institutions, and the first changes were marked by the fear that her colleagues at the new school would find out about her public image. Only in the last institution, where she developed good sociability with her classmates, she recovered her good school performance, even taking part in a math Olympics.

I think I started to do badly in school. Yeah, and I, like, always did very well in school, and at that time I started to, like, do very poorly. And also, if the school had prepared me better, dealing with this, it would have been much better too. (Elisa, 19 years old).

Pilar, black, 33 years old, was exposed in the context of a small countryside town at the age of 23. The man who formatted her then-boyfriend's computer released, in the context of the college where they studied, a video in which she was in a provocative pose on the sofa, in which we could not see her face, but her tattoo. Pilar suffered several harassments and was left scarred by them. She said that the image she had of being a good student was erased by the release of the video.

People are very prejudiced, you know. I went to college for four years, I used to go in at 7am and leave at 11pm, I was always very dedicated, and sometimes a video like this changes a person into someone else. And then I always thought about that because, at the time, everyone there talked about how I was always very dedicated, you know, and even then. And then it was very complex, it was very complicated. (Pilar, 33 years old).

The conception stating that the identities of a good student and of a girl that expresses her sexuality are mutually exclusive was also present in Rosa's account. The 17-year-old white girl, who lives in a medium size city in the countryside, works as a volunteer in a shelter project for women in situations of violence. She told us about the frequent practice of exposing girls in gossip pages and in lists that list the "sluttiest" girls. Because she had already posted a bikini picture on a social network, she was afraid of being exposed on one of these lists, at a time when many girls were being exposed, as she

said: “Only, at the time, I was considered the class nerd, the idiot who only liked to study, you know? So, I guess that’s why I didn’t appear [on the list].

It was possible to perceive how the condemnation of sexuality on the part of women is reproduced within educational institutions. Silencing the right to free manifestation of sexuality and the situations of violence, as well as blaming of girls, finds a consequence in the dichotomization between the profiles of good student and “slut”. The school performance may suffer a drop as an effect of the violence suffered and the rejection by the school institution, or it may simply be neglected due to the imposition of the sexual image, which tends to prevail. What is perceived is a kind of imposition of a choice, on the part of girls, between two behaviors that cannot coexist - dedication to studies and the manifestation of sexuality - an imposition that is not imposed on boys. The demand for the debate about this type of discourse reproduced in the educational field results from the verification that it hinders the guarantee of two fundamental rights for girls: access to education and full experience of sexuality.

It becomes clear, especially from the testimonies about the school’s negligence, such as those of Tainá and Bruna, and about culpability, such as those of Clarice, Daniela, and Elisa, that the bad performance occurs, above all, due to revictimization processes originated by the school institution itself. The drop in performance, which could initially be pointed out as a consequence of the emotional damage of the violence suffered, is, contradictorily, produced by the school, causing emotional aggravation.

It is also noteworthy that both denial of embracement and on the other hand, judgment, did not occur only at the institutional level, but by the whole school community. The lack of support from friends and, especially, from family members marked the interviewees’ statements. Besides Bruna and Daniela’s experiences, Clarice’s story was also marked by family neglect. When the teenager, having her bulimia condition worsened after the exposure, turned to her father, she heard that “poor people can’t afford to have this kind of problem”. Such situations are deepened in another work (PATROCINO; BEVILACQUA, 2021a) about damages and care in cases of exposure of intimacy. The paths for the reconstruction of this type of pedagogy by the school institution will be addressed in the following section.

Paths to an education in health and sexuality: the dimension of desire

In many of the experiences reported in the scope of this research, the unauthorized exposure of intimacy stimulated the self-reflection, on the part of the girls, about their ways of experiencing sexuality. Two questions called the attention in the reports because they point to demands for initiatives for promoting an education in sexuality based on women’s autonomy: the first concerns the fact that the girls revealed that the production of erotic media did not involve their desire, but the desire of the boys with whom they were having a relationship; the second refers to the absence of consciousness that the situation lived was about violence.

In relation to the first question, it was found that autonomy in the experience of sexuality is not an assumption for girls and needs, therefore, to be discussed. It is argued that there is no autonomy alienated from one's own desire, and that understanding it is the starting point for the experience of sexuality in a healthy and pleasurable way. The alienation of one's own desire was shown to be related to the absence of self-esteem and self-knowledge.

Regarding the second question, the non-distinction between the practice of sexuality and the situation of violence occurred on the part of school institutions and also by girls. It is worth pointing out that this confusion arises in the academic environment itself when it takes such situations as an object of analysis, as discussed in another work (PATROCINO; BEVILACQUA, 2021b).

Having their intimacy exposed assumes different meanings for girls. Often, the worst harms experienced are not about the exposure itself, but about consequences for their relationships (PATROCINO; BEVILACQUA, 2021a). Being aware of the distinction between violent practices and those done autonomously, many girls reported continuing to share erotic images in a pleasurable way. Moreover, the practice of photographing their own nudity also takes on political meanings and resistance, whether for the free sexuality of women, or for contesting the imposition of beauty standards. Such meanings were identified in the reports of this research and analyzed in other works (SILVA, L., 2018; SILVA, T., 2018).

The lack of acknowledgment of violence was reported by two psychologists - as in one of the cases assisted by Tainá, also appearing in another study (SILVA JÚNIOR; BRITO, 2020). The attribution of responsibility to another woman was reported by two other psychologists. In fact, the lists that name the "sluttiest" can be prepared by girls, as a manifestation of the reproduction of female rivalry (ALBUQUERQUE, 2015). This issue was addressed critically by one of the participants, exposed by a friend. Female rivalry is understood as a characteristic of socialization to dispute among women, strongly confronted in the field of feminism from the idea of sorority and solidarity (FOUGEYROLLAS-SCHWEBEL, 2009).

Among girls who were exposed, some reported maintaining their relationship with the boys who released their intimate images. The maintenance of friendship or dating on the part of the girls occurred either by a diplomatic way of relating, even though it involved suffering - perhaps muffled - as in the case of Giovana, or by the difficulty in interrupting an abusive relationship, as in the case of Helena. Giovana revealed finding difficult to remember specifically this moment in her life.

I kind of remember things, but I remember it kind of vaguely, otherwise I would give you more details. I think I kind of blanked it out, because I have a very good memory. But I chose to strikethrough [laughs] these memories. I know it happened, I know I was sad, but I don't remember if I talked to anybody. Because usually when I am sad, I know exactly where I was, if I cried, who I was with, more or less something that happened. But I put aside these memories. (Giovana, 21 years old).

Helena, a 21-year-old white woman living in a capital city, was exposed by her then-boyfriend twice during high school in the context of the public school where they studied. Although she was very sad, she kept dating after the two exposures. The first exposure occurred in the second year of the relationship, which lasted approximately six years.

Many professionals discussed the importance of sex education in the school context, either because of the difficulty families have in instructing young people, or because of the specificity of this period of life, in which it is necessary to strengthen self-knowledge and self-esteem. Adriana, a 62-year-old white woman, psychologist working at a women's shelter in a capital city, had seen three exposed girls in the last year. She affirmed that the experiences of violence and exposure are more destructive in adolescence, because it is a phase in which the emotional structure is not yet well developed.

Maura, black, 28 years old, living in a big city of the metropolitan region, was exposed at the age of 20 by two friends. Currently a teacher in the private network, she evaluates that what happened has effects on the exercise of her profession and she has already talked about harassment with her students. She defends that it is necessary for girls to have self-confidence and knowledge of the risks that exposure involves.

And having this self-esteem, I think, is very important. It is also a risk the way they are going to expose the pictures they take of themselves. I think that finding a balance there, between these girls feeling confident, feeling comfortable with themselves and also being aware of what the exposure of their images can generate, this is very important. (Maura, 28 years old).

As Manzanero (2021) states, based on an analysis of the condition of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, among the promising practices for promoting the rights of adolescents and youth are comprehensive sexuality education, programs centered on girls, programs that problematize masculinities with young men, and violence prevention programs. According to the author, investing in youth is a means of promoting social justice, and investing in health generates a triple dividend, by bringing benefits to the young person, in their adulthood, and in the next generation. He also considers that, for this to happen, it is necessary to guarantee youth participation and access to resources and instances of power.

As argued by other authors (LEITE, 2012; VIEIRA; MATSUKURA, 2017), education in health and sexuality needs to focus on autonomy and skills, and not be reduced to risks, violence and infections. From the analysis of the experiences of girls who had their intimacy exposed in the context of new practices of the digital universe, it was possible to identify the growing demand for defending and promoting the experience of female sexuality in an autonomous way, which involves self-knowledge, direct relationship with their own desire and, thus, is free of violence. This debate may not be disengaged from the gender issue and from the understanding of how normalizing behaviors based on sexual differences implies in limitations for the experience of sexuality and contributes to the reproduction of violent practices.

As Louro (2000) argues, the concealment of a certain debate goes against the educational process itself. It would be necessary, therefore, to reconstruct the pedagogy of sexuality that has been practiced in school institutions.

Final considerations

We tried to answer the question posed in the title of this text based on two crucial debates. These debates confront arguments about the restriction of sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents in Brazil and about the reproduction of gender and sexuality patterns in school discourses.

The contemporary practice of sharing nude self-portraits and the unauthorized disclosure of intimate images of girls have frequently manifested themselves in the school context and generated new discursive and coercive productions around gender and sexuality. It was evidenced that the institutions have neglected situations of violence and reproduced the practice of blaming the girls. Moreover, the antagonism, from the institutional point of view, between the manifestation of sexuality and the good performance of the girls, revealed to be even more intense, which contributes to processes of school exclusion.

The new practices of sexuality experience and violence against girls need to remind the school of its responsibility in the promotion of an education in gender and sexuality as an indispensable path to the promotion of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents. The dimensions of desire, self-knowledge, self-esteem and autonomy have shown to be crucial to this educational process, to the detriment of approaches reduced to issues such as risk or purely biological aspects.

It is necessary for school institutions to stop neglecting sexuality and gender education and address directly and broadly, involving the entire school community, issues that are even more urgent in the practices of socialization among young people in contemporary times. In this sense, intimacy, the right to image and sovereignty over the body are central points to be debated.

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