

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERS WHO WORK IN HIGH SCHOOL: CONCEPTIONS ABOUT INTEGRAL EDUCATION IN SEXUALITY



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ABSTRACT

In our contemporary society, it is crucial to consider, more and more, the complexity of sexuality education, a theme that permeates the history and subjectivities of the subjects. The scope of this article is to identify the Social Representations (SR) in relation to sex

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education, sexuality and gender in the school context of teachers who work in high school in a state school in the interior of the state of São Paulo. The method used for the data collection procedure was based on semi-structured interviews, with open questions. We used the Theory of Social Representations as a theoretical-methodological framework to interpret and analyze the data obtained with the research. This is a qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and cross-sectional study, carried out with five teachers, with the objective of identifying the SR of the themes mentioned in their pedagogical practices. The results showed that sex education is an especially relevant theme for teachers, given the manifestation of contents, reverberations and expressions of sexuality in the school. However, insufficient training, family accountability, interference of personal and religious values, associated with silencing, taboos and insecurities on the subject, proved to be factors that limit the development of sexuality education. Notably, the current political moment has culminated in setbacks, evidencing tensions related to the theme. In this horizon, it is essential to bring these discussions to light, both in the process of initial and continuing education of teachers. In the context of this research, the importance of proposals aimed at deepening the analyses was evidenced, raising other intentionalities and pedagogical practices concerning sexuality and gender.

Keywords: Sex Education. Gender. Middle school. Brazil.

INTRODUCTION

When approaching the theme of sexuality, one often starts from a binary and biologizing conception, by which its expressions are reduced to masculine and feminine, and to their reproductive aspects, ignoring the complexity and social implications associated with gender constructions. Adolescence, especially, is marked by the beginning of biological changes linked to sexuality. This aspect, contradictorily, suffers social restrictions for the control and postponement of this experience, concomitantly with an intense incentive for its exercise (Domingos, Santana, Zanatta, 2021), which becomes very relevant in the educational process, since the identity processes of adolescence usually take place in these spaces.

The publication of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs) marks the formalization of Sex Education in schools (Brasil, 1997b, p. 287), in a transversal way, throughout the curricular proposal of the schooling process. From the PCNs, Sex Education was effective, however, what has been observed is that it depends on individualized actions, relegated to accessory strategies, having, as a consequence, the low incentive regarding planning and continuing education in this area (Silva, 2014; Barbosa, Viçosa and Folmer, 2019).

Figueiró (2018) reflects that, in order to work with sex education, we need to do an exercise of self-reflection, because sexuality is part of who we are, being at the base of our thoughts and feelings. Currently, several undergraduate courses, related to health and education, have recognized the need and importance of bringing the theme of sexuality during training, recognizing the fundamental role played by the school, with regard to the education of children and adolescents being recognized (Martins, Barbosa and Defani, 2024). The curricularization of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Teacher Training Courses is corroborated by the studies of Picolo and Rossi (2024) and Silva, Brancaleoni and Oliveira (2019) who state that themes of high social relevance, such as gender and sexualities, are little addressed and discussed in schools, undergraduate courses and teacher training. In Brazil, the number of teacher training courses that offer in-depth learning on sexuality issues is still small, as well as the disciplines that address the theme in undergraduate curricula in Pedagogy are scarce (Manchini, 2022). As a result, educators, after graduation, seek training and qualification; however, most of the time, they are not continued and incorporated into the Pedagogical Project, and address the subject in a punctual and external way to the school routine. This fact may be due to issues related

to prejudice or little concern about these issues on the part of Brazilian educational policies (Silva, Brancaleoni and Oliveira, 2019).

Matthke (2017) discusses the difficulties presented by teachers in dialoguing and addressing issues such as homophobia and sexism in school institutions, especially in private education. As a result of the lack of preparation, deepening and mastery of the themes, the approaches sometimes express prejudiced and normative thoughts. In addition, there is a high probability that the initial training of teachers took place in a non-emancipatory, uncritical way and without reflective possibilities (Picolo and Rossi, 2024).

From this initial contextualization, it is important to point out the importance of a continuous and permanent proposal of the theme of sexuality and gender in formal education, so that higher education courses, especially teaching degrees, include these issues in their curricula (Soares and Monteiro, 2019).

Thus, the objectives of this article are to analyze, based on the social representations of teachers who work in high school in a public school in the interior of the State of São Paulo, which conceptions we can learn about teaching practices, specifically about sex education and gender.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the foundation of the Theory of Social Representations, which, according to Moscovici (2004) are practical knowledge based on common sense relations, formulated by the set of ideas of everyday life and built through the connections between subjects and in group interactions. (Nogueira and Grillo, 2020).

The field research was carried out in a school in a Brazilian municipality in the state of São Paulo. Located in popular territory, it serves several peripheral neighborhoods and offers elementary and secondary education, having, at the time of the research, 460 students in elementary school and 249 in high school.

For the field research, we used the technique of semi-structured interview, through which we sought to enable the evocation of ideas related to sexuality, gender and public policies aimed at sex education. The interview can be partially structured, when it is guided by a list of points of interest that the interviewer explores throughout his course (Gil, 2003; Camargo and Correr, 2011). The script consisted of questions that dealt with: a) Initial and continuing training in the area of sexuality and gender; b) Issues related to professional performance in the area of sex education and gender in school with high school students;

c) Evocation of ideas, through inducing phrases, related to sexuality, gender, the current moment and public policies for sex education. For the elaboration of the interview, what was proposed by Bortolozzi (2020) was considered, including with regard to the sequence of themes: the author suggests that the initial questions deal with something more common in the participant's daily life, and then ask questions of opinion or that require knowledge.

Of the 22 teachers invited through the selection of a sample by convenience, following the criteria of being a high school teacher at the school and accepting to participate freely in the research; Five participants were interviewed.

The analysis of the data that emerged from the interviews occurred according to the following stages: 1) deep reading of the subjects' discourses with the objective of identifying the Social Representations; 2) list of the analysis classes that show the most significant elements. Thus, the data underwent fluctuating analysis, grouping and identification of the central nucleus, starting from the peripheral element (more sensitive and less recurrent) to the central one (stronger and predominant). This method aims to recognize the social representations of sex education and gender, against the background of sexuality, for teachers and to understand their practices in the school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the information obtained through the interviews carried out with the participants, the thematic classes supported by the discursive productions were extracted, as evidence of common sense theorizing. Thus, the results and discussions follow, based on the SR elaborated and shared by a group of teachers who occupy the same territory, a public high school, in a medium-sized city in the interior of the state of São Paulo. Since this group of people belong to the same social segment, the analysis classes elaborated in this study were interpreted and reflected as indicators of the dynamics of these SRs, which were constructed as a function of the tense, contradictory historical process, and which keep, in themselves, the potentiality and possibility of transforming the school routine.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants can be understood in their similarities (public servants working in high school) that give them identity and common trajectories, and by their singularities, because, although they originate from the same institutional locus, they are in different moments of their personal histories, whether in terms of their time in teaching, higher

education and their own convictions and values about the themes studied. This initial view is necessary to understand the socioeconomic context as an important element for the formation of SR.

Regarding the participants, the general approach, recorded in a field diary, indicated interest and adherence, observed by the readiness to participate in the interviews, regardless of the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Brazil, 2019), culminating in uncertainties in personal contact.

Table 1 shows, in an integrated manner, these participants, through whom the SRs will be presented and analyzed.

Tabela 1 - Sujeitos participantes do estudo

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
P1	F*	44	C***	Pedagogia Artes Visuais	Def. Intelectual Sala de Recursos Educação em Artes	5	2	Professora Artes Visuais
P2	F	55	C	Pedagogia	Educação Inclusiva	3	1	Professora Eletivas (Estética)
P3	M**	52	C	História Pedagogia Ciências (incompleta)	Sala de Aula Psicopedagogia Clínica	30	15	História Sociologia Geografia
P4	F	37	C	Letras/Português Pedagogia	Gestão Supervisão Educação Especial Psicopedagogia	16	3	Professora Sala de Leitura
P5	F	50	C	Letras	-	28	21	Professora Português

Fonte: elaborado pelos autores.

Legendas: 1. Gênero; 2. Idade (anos); 3. Estado civil; 4. Área de formação; 5. Pós-graduação; 6. Tempo de docência (anos); 7. Tempo de docência na escola pesquisada; (anos); 8. Cargo na instituição; * Feminino; ** Masculino; *** Casada

The average time of teaching among the participants varies: at the beginning of their careers and with extensive experience. Regarding the length of time working in the school where the research was carried out, three participants have worked in the school for less than five years and two for more than 15 years. Aged between 37 and 55 years, they are teachers with some variations in functions and, in their identities, they present diversity in

training and in the subjects taught. In the scope of this work, this evidence is a relevant fact, since the phenomenon of sexuality manifests itself, in a transversal way, throughout the process of elaboration of academic knowledge, with repercussions in the school routine. As proposed in the PCNS, the themes of sexuality should be transversal, that is, encompass all areas of knowledge (Moizés & Bueno, 2010).

CLASSES OF ANALYSIS OF RS

The qualitative results of this study indicate the central nucleus, organized in a systematic and consistent way, which confers a homogeneity of SR, linking the participants to a possible interpretation of the larger universe of society in which Sexuality Education occurs. Thus, they will be supported by peripheral systems, which sustain conventional ways of dealing with the phenomenon of sexuality in the pedagogical process and in the teaching action. Therefore, the results pointed to the class of analysis conceptions about sexuality education that underlie professional practice, which will be the object of description and analysis in the subsequent item.

Conceptions of sexuality and gender themes in sex education

In this block, when asked about the conceptions about the themes of Sexuality and Gender in Sex Education, the participants manifested SR that reflect their personal values and, consequently, are elements that anchor and support the practices in the context of the school routine.

Table 2 - Demonstration of the thematic class conceptions of the themes of sexuality and gender in sex education, based on the procedural approach of elaboration of the central nucleus and peripheral systems of the SR of the participants, using the descending hierarchical classification.

V A L U E S	1. SOCIAL	Criticism	Backspace	Young people's rights – not respected Government neglect – policies Policy supports gender-based violence Prejudice - Lack of Openness Psychological distress/sexuality Violence against women
	2. FAMILY MEMBERS	Paper	Traditional Denial	Contradictions - Conservatives Source: prepared by the authors. Ignorance and Misinformation Importance - family values Intolerance of diversity Parents exempt themselves - Negligence Questioning without imposing values
	3. RELIGIOUS	Repression	Expression	Tricky - Object Body Exposure to the hazardous Intolerance – sexual orientation

				Heteronormative – macho view Early sex life - pleasure
			Intervention	Approach – Learn – Update Auxiliary – Train - Know Dialogue – Clarify – Train Inform – Guide – Prevent Support - Respect
	4. EDUCATIONAL	Share	Need	Absence from initial training Lack of support - multiprofessional team Insufficient continuing education Negation role teacher ES Technical/scientific language Biologist-conservative view

Source: prepared by the authors.

Table 2 demonstrates, through the procedural approach of SR, the semantic constituent elements that, through semantic elements from the interviews, articulated by ties and connections, allowed the naming of classes that will be discussed next.

Social Values – Criticism and setback

In this first class, SR refer to the themes of sexuality, gender and sex education and were organized around social values. In this centrality, due to the centripetal force (which attracts to the center), conventional and consistent, the conceptions address the right of young people to sex education, criticism of the current political moment and indicators of regression. In this way, the exercise of sexuality, as well as sex education, is understood as a right of young people. However, they appear in an ambiguous way, with restrictions and repressions, based on personal and moral values:

P2 - I think so, you have to have sexuality yes... yes, but you also have to have respect, because, in high school, you have eighteen-year-old students there, there are twenty-year-olds, you get the idea, there are beautiful, wonderful teachers, who the student has already, fallen on... there is a lack of respect, I think. But if the two parties meet and there is an agreement there, among themselves, it is normal. It has to be talked about.

Q3 - I think... It's very, very good, it's very gratifying, to be able to see our young people are achieving this, this clarification, you know, there are diseases, there are a lot of things, there are a lot of things included there.

The lack of support and the difficulties encountered in the school environment in relation to interventions aimed at sex education are evidenced by statements that indicate government neglect:

P1 - It needs to have more support, more strength, we need that... This issue needs to be treated more seriously.

P2 - Our policy, our government should better embrace this cause.

P5 - Also, you have to develop this in all areas. This body, how do we say... Multidisciplinary, you understand, that you can guide in various ways, in all areas and especially in education.

We can verify, as indicated by P2's statement, that the SRs in relation to the government's actions deal with the existence of a Policy that supports gender violence:

P2 - We had the example of that young woman who suffered rape and, what an ugly thing, I get goosebumps, you know, one thing, so like that... it is disgusting with all this that is happening in Brazil. I've never seen these things, imagine the family of this girl, the situation she's going through and the only thing I say to you is like this, that I pray to God for them, because I'm not going to expose, like that, keep fighting... In the fight, in the media, because I think that the justice system has to embrace this and give all the support to this girl.

In this excerpt, which highlights a news item that involved the rape of a 10-year-old girl, which was disseminated on a large scale by the mass media and through social networks, as we found in the report published in the newspaper *El Pais*,

Victim, raped by an uncle, was treated in Recife after denial of care in the city where she lives, even with the approval of the courts. Radical activists shouted "Murderer" at the door of the clinic on Sunday to prevent the law from being complied with (Jimenez, 2020).

The dissatisfaction with the political moment, at the time the study was carried out, is the expression that marks the great setback in policies aimed at sex education and gender, and the silencing of this theme in the school environment are evidenced by the following statements:

P3 - Difficult, very complicated. it is very difficult in relation to these issues (...). backspace. So, we went from eighty to eight. I think it was too much, but it can't be eight either (..) There is practically no such discussion in the school.

In view of the speeches, it is imperative to reflect on the consequences of the current scenario of political regression in Brazil. The lack of discussions in the school space to inequalities, social discrimination and manifestations of violence in the school space and in other social environments. Reflecting and discussing on this theme will certainly strengthen the struggle for the affirmation of human rights in Brazil. For Brandão and Lopes (2018),

The debate on gender and sexuality in school can reduce sexism and misogyny, lead to the promotion of gender equality and sexual diversity, through learning to live with sociocultural differences. Thus, situations of suffering, illness and school

dropout are avoided for reasons that are not only the responsibility of adolescents. (p. 102).

On the other hand, dissatisfaction is also expressed in relation to the openness to sexuality education and the way the theme is approached. This can be highlighted by the positions based on religious, conservative and moral values. According to current studies, this influence generates, as a result, conservative attitudes, which are associated with anachronistic postures, of exacerbated rigor, and can lead to the reproduction of prejudiced practices (Torres, 2024; Vicente, 2024 Paiva, Antunes and Sanches, 2020). Participant 4's answers corroborate these ideas:

P4 - Ridiculous, ridiculous. Aimed at the acceptance of homosexuality, aimed at the acceptance of the human being as a human being... my opinion? So it's her. (...) So, I think that the policy, the way the government is putting it, no... I don't think it's correct. I don't think it's quite like that, no

The context of social isolation, resulting from the pandemic of the new coronavirus, according to the SR, made it difficult to answer the questions, especially related to unequal treatment linked to gender, as indicated in the excerpt below:

P1 - Due to the pandemic, we don't know what's happening (...) At this time, it would be very necessary indeed, at this time of pandemic. Like I told you, children and young people are vulnerable inside their homes, even the mothers who are there, are suffering too, so many women suffering there, even death. It's a life-and-death thing, and sexuality is an essential theme.

This context, according to current studies (Costa and Santos, 2024; Maffaccioli et al, 2024; Momm *et al*, 2024) highlighted a large number of facts that generated concerns about domestic violence which, although it already occurred on a large scale, began to register, in the pandemic, alarming rates, with emphasis on women.

The phenomenon of sexualities, in the study, circumscribes SRs that broaden the focus on the consequences of psychological suffering and reveals a very present concern for the participants:

P4 - The others are in active life; Wait a minute! we are not talking about sex for money, about a program; What is talked about is a life, an emotional issue. You get involved, and they are not in this matter of getting involved, they are in the matter simply of pleasure. So, you don't fill a void by having sex with several in one night; drunk, isn't it? She says: I don't even know if he was married. The way she was talking, it wasn't a feeling of pleasure, of satisfaction, you know? To feel satisfied with what she did. It was a feeling of usefulness. So, I think this is very dangerous. I think it's in a very trivialized way.

P5 - How many problems do people bring to adult life, which sometimes has a sexual connotation? Or else, a problem that she has sexually, but which is a child problem, which sometimes may not even be abuse, but some other problem, of a psychological nature. (emphasis added)

In the participants, the view of the results of the dangers of sexual experience unilaterally affects the female sex (Alcântara et al, 2024; Dos Santos, 2024). In the highlighted statements, the masculine seems to be shielded from this view of sexual intercourse as, in itself, a dangerous experience, with the eminent vulnerability of those who practice it, in this case, women.

Family values – Role of the family and traditional values

The second class of SR refers to family values. The role of the family and the impact of traditional moral values in sex education are raised as a sensitive point, according to the discursive evidence of participant 5:

P5 - Look, I think we do have an important role, as do parents, but they are exempt. We have seventeen, eighteen-year-old students, whose parents are much younger than me... but that does not address, cannot address, because of the creation of each one, a series of things of each one.

From this detail, we observe that this first idea, that parents exempt themselves from this role and fully attribute it to the school, is only part of the explanation. It is necessary to study the causes for this embarrassment with the theme of sexuality, so that, based on understanding, ways can be established to improve this communication, both in the family environment, and in school. In the 2011–2021 systematic review by Buchard, Barbosa, and Filmer (2024) on research that shows family perceptions of sexuality; they indicate that such a scenario of embarrassment is due to the theme still being considered a taboo and not discussed or enunciated within homes. The authors also point out that "(...) in the dialogue between parents and children, it was found that when dealing with the subject, it refers to the immersion of situations, experiences lived by the parents themselves" (Buchard, Barbosa and Filmer, 2024, p. 12). Gagliotto and Gagliotto (2022), in consonance, take into account the transgenerational aspects of the family, that is, there is an internalization of values, stereotypes, and conflicts in each member. Thus, there is a considerable tendency that conflicts that are not dissolved between the subject's parents/guardians and their respective parents, and are internalized, can be re-edited in the subject.

The difficulty in working with the theme of sexuality and the educational processes involved trigger other concerns, which were highlighted by the participants in this study: the risks of violence and cases of negligence. Due to vulnerability, it is always present in the universe of students at the school where the research was carried out, and was amplified by social isolation, what is reaffirmed by the study is that families, which are idealized by conservative discourses, evidence places that increase the risk of violence, in all its aspects, including sexual violence (Cabral, *et al.* 2021). As a result of the lack of comprehensive sexuality education, another very relevant point is the lack of knowledge/misinformation of students in relation to their own bodies, sexual intercourse, pleasure, among other demands that emerge in the school context:

P4 - From genetics, I was explaining this, from genetics, I was explaining the issue of menstruation, Premenstrual Tension (...) Always. Every year, all grades, one now or another, in one way or another, in a simpler language, for younger students, in a more advanced, more technical language for older students... Without being vulgar, I think it's important, without using the terms they use, to be something more technical... Yes, you can talk the same way but more technical... And sometimes he doesn't know the obvious. This is what people need to understand.

The treatment that should be given to scientific knowledge is always valued, and it seems not to pass through the pedagogical action of the teaching practice, the concern to start from the knowledge most connected to the daily life of students, aiming to create a space of approximation between what permeates the concrete reality of young high school students from peripheral and popular classes and the critical and scientific knowledge that can be the point of transformation of social reality and history of those students. Vygotsky, in his work (Dongo-Montoya, 2021), places the role of social interaction as a centralizer in the understanding of learning and cognitive development. Social interactions not only influence learning, but are the main driver of development, so knowledge arises and develops from exchanges and experiences with other people. The author reinforces that development occurs in a specific sociocultural context, that is, social interactions are not homogeneous and carry the cultural values and tools in which the individual is inserted but practical.

In the space of the results of this study, we highlight, through the perception of the participants, the challenging task of questioning without imposing personal values, which is presented as a concern of the teaching practice:

P4 - But, if it is the teacher, he should educate not with their values, he should educate, in order to guide and not in the way of their values, because, if I am going to educate according to my values, I think that sex education should be in marriage, sexual intercourse should be when you are mature enough for it and not in the sixth grade. So, I will not understand and find it conceivable that a sixth-grade child already has sexual intercourse with two, three students, this is not appropriate for me, I will respect and guide, but I, if I were to educate, I would not educate for that.

On the other hand, the expression of exacerbated conservatism is present, and it is necessary to think about the consequences and possible expressions of prejudice resulting from this way of thinking and acting:

P4 - Complicated to work with. It should exist, but in a way... it is to guide, correctly. Turned as if it were like this, everything very normal, everything very common, as if there was no longer a traditional family, not that it is perfect, it is nothing like that and not that it is wrong who has a different gender option, that's not what I'm saying, but wait, I don't have to think that, because a girl likes a boy she is wrong. Because the way it is being placed is as if it were wrong.

In this sense, contradictions are evident between the defense of the discourse of open speech on the subject and the control over the ways of speaking, of expressing, the latter being linked to religion and conservative values:

P4 - This subject should be talked about, in the same way I think, in a respectful way, the same thing as religion, the genders have to be respected, it is a person's choice, but it has to be oriented so that it does not become a trivialization.

Intolerance is evidenced through criticism of the acceptance of homosexuality, evidencing possible prejudices and heteronormative view in the school environment: P4 - Ridiculous, ridiculous. Aimed at the acceptance of homosexuality⁸, aimed at the acceptance of the human being as a human being... My opinion, right? So it's her.

The study by Souza, Silva and Santos (2017), which aimed to analyze the social representations of elementary and high school teachers about sexual diversity and homophobia, points out that such representations generate subtle prejudices and contribute to homophobia in the school environment. This subtle prejudice is characterized by a veiled or camouflaged discourse that eclipses the real feelings and beliefs of the

⁸ The expression homosexuality was commonly used in the past to refer to the sexual orientation of people who are attracted to individuals of the same sex. However, this terminology is considered obsolete and inappropriate in current contexts, since the suffix "-ism" suggests a pathological condition or a disease. In 1990, the World Health Organization (WHO) removed the classification of homosexuality as a disease or mental disorder, and it is now recognized as a natural variation of human sexual orientation. The term "homosexuality" is used to refer to the sexual orientation of people who are attracted to the same sex. (National Health Council, 2014).

individual or of a certain social group, perpetuating inequalities through subtlety and tolerance. For the authors, this scenario is the result of gaps in initial and continuing teacher training, as well as sociocultural and religious norms.

Religious values – Repression/expression

The third class of SR addresses the influence of religious values in relation to the expression of sexuality. The process of repression of this expression is evidenced by the intolerance to the "option" of a different gender, demonstrating again the heteronormative conception present in the school environment:

P1 - You have to talk a lot about this subject, you have to explain it very well to our children, about all this, this transformation, these transgenders, you have to explain a lot, because you have a very closed mind.

P4 - This subject should be talked about, in the same way I think, in a respectful way, the same thing as religion, the genders have to be respected, it is a person's choice, but it has to be oriented so that it does not become a trivialization (...) So, like, I think it has to be oriented from the consequences of the options, the body issue, the emotional issue, this whole issue. Aimed at the acceptance of homosexuality, aimed at the acceptance of the human being as a human being... My opinion, right? So it's her. Turned as if it were like this, everything very normal, everything very common, as if there was no longer a traditional family, not that it is perfect, it is nothing like that and not that it is wrong who has a different gender option, that's not what I'm saying, but wait, I don't have to think that because a girl likes a boy she's wrong.

Another concern, possibly based on traditional religious values, is related to vulgar sexual behavior, seen in a trivialized and disrespectful way and aimed at pleasure:

P4 - It's not a vulgar way, so it's as if the body were just an object for you to provide pleasure to the other, it's not a temple of the holy spirit, it's not your body, it goes far beyond an object to satisfy someone's five minutes. So, I think that the policy, the way the government is putting it, no... I don't think it's correct. I don't think it's quite like that, no. (...) This subject should be talked about, in the same way I think, in a respectful way, the same thing as religion, the genders have to be respected, it is a person's choice, but it has to be guided so that it does not become a trivialization (. . .) Very focused on the issue is... momentary, a lot to question is... disrespectful, very much for pleasure or exposure (. . .) I realized last year: no teacher, we're experimenting. No, I'm not trying ice cream, it's not something you try and you don't get marks, you know, so, for them it's now and it's not like that, there is a consequence, there will be a consequence of this. (...) It's not a vulgar way, so it's as if the body was just an object for you to provide pleasure to the other, it's not a temple of the holy spirit, it's not your body, it goes far beyond an object to satisfy someone's five minutes.

The expression of sexuality is understood as a form of exposure to situations that represent danger:

P4 - The way she was talking, it wasn't a feeling of pleasure, of satisfaction, you know how to feel satisfied with what she did, it was a feeling of usefulness. So I think this is very dangerous, so I think it's in a very trivialized way.

The criticism and even persecution of teachers who address issues related to gender diversity are notorious, possibly as a result of the current political moment:

P3 - It's complicated, it's difficult. This is much criticized when it is spoken. I... I talked about the military dictatorship and I talked about a book called Torture Never Again, and I mentioned a chapter that is sexual torture, okay, I talked about the macaw stick, there were complaints at school.

The influence of traditional religious values is notorious in the subjects' SR in relation to the expression of sexuality and possible movement of control and repression, considering sexuality more active than it should be: *"- Curiosity, they are curious." (P1); "- It's strong, sharp." (P3); "- More active than it should be." (P4).*

Another concern pointed out is in relation to the beginning of sexual life, considered precocious: *"- It starts very early. I think they are entering sexual life too early and without like that... None of them, you know, with many unnecessary marks." (P4).*

The difficulty of getting in touch with the theme and developing actions aimed at reflecting on sex education and gender is expressed by the word complicated: *"- Complicated to work." (P1).*

In view of the subjects' speech, it is necessary to reflect on the understanding of the word sexuality. Contrary to what some people think, sexuality does not refer only to the sexual act itself; It also encompasses gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. The phenomenon of sexuality is expressed in different ways, such as thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships.

As proposed by Maia and Ribeiro (2011), sexuality is understood as a social and historical phenomenon, thus, a "historical-construct". It is related as much to our beliefs, ideologies and imaginations as it is to our physical body.

According to Figueiró (2006), in formal and non-formal educational environments, sex education should lead to a conscious understanding of sexuality in its breadth, expressions and experiences, enabling a critical position on the part of students regarding social, political and cultural issues, to which sexuality is intrinsic.

Educational values – Action: intervention and necessity

The fourth class deals with SR in relation to educational values that generate impact on teaching action and points out the needs identified by the subjects. In this sense, addressing the theme is considered important and necessary for the subjects:

P4 - This subject should be talked about, I think, in a respectful way.

P5 - that before things didn't have a name and now it has a name, it has a lot of classifications, right, how to approach it. (...) You understand, to talk, to approach, without excluding, it's complicated, this new reality is not easy.

The need for updating is also evidenced by the difficulties reported by the subjects, generating possible impacts on pedagogical interventions: *"- So all the training, all the information, training, is welcome and necessary, especially now... That people are more open when saying what they feel or that is more surfaced, too, right. I think it's welcome."* (P5)element.

Another need that the subjects point out in relation to the students is about clarifying doubts and enabling information:

P2 - Oh, I think... It's very, very good, it's very gratifying, to be able to see our young people achieving this, this clarification, you know, there are diseases, there are a lot of things, there's a lot of things included there.

P5 - Then it has to be talked about, clarified, even.

Guiding assumes a prominent role in relation to sex education, being seen as the main role of the teacher in the school environment:

P4 - It should exist, but in a way... it is to guide, correctly.

P5 - It's also our role, to guide in every way, we don't guide ethically, from cleaning the room, not lying, I think that's so important, I say, it's my role, you know. This business of ethics... And this is a subject that cannot be left out. And it comes and comes and it happens.

The need for specialized professionals to dialogue and guide on the subject is evidenced by the demand for a multi-professional team: *"- This body, how we speak... multidisciplinary, you understand, that you can guide in various ways, right in all areas and especially in education"* (P5).

Talking about sexuality is linked to the biological view (focused on the biological body), as presented in previous topics, and is reaffirmed at this point:

P5 - And guys, incredible as it may seem [laughs], I'm not a biology teacher, but I keep explaining what [laughs], I was explaining the other day, holm oak, man, remember? From genetics, I was explaining this, from genetics, I was explaining the

issue of menstruation, PMS, always every year, all grades, one now or another in one way or another, in a simpler language, for younger students, in a more advanced, more technical language for older students.

The process of repression of the expression of Sexuality and the silencing of discussions on this theme, at the present time, are evident through the statements: *"Very little."* (P3); *"There is practically no such discussion at school."* (P3)element.

The absence of teacher training and continuing education is pointed out as a hindrance to the actions and is presented as a latent need:

P5 - I think it would be important to have this training for all education professionals, we are on the front line with these people. (...) So the school lacks this human material, this human formation, to be a multiplier with the agents, for the teachers, for the entire school community in general. (...) So how to deal with it, you know, so I think everything is welcome. So all the training, all the information, training, is welcome and necessary, especially now... That people are more open when saying what they feel or that is more surfaced, too, right. I think it's welcome. (...) So we will never know enough, not everything, we need to improve. (...) So, I think all learning is welcome, yes, all the training, you know, and you bring it here to practice, because it's not easy, you know.

The denial of the role of teacher in relation to actions and interventions in sex education: *"- No."* (P1); *"- I, daily, my family should educate sexually according to my values."* (P4). Another expressive concern of the subjects is about the care with technical language and scientific information, so as not to vulgarize or distance themselves from technical explanations: *"Yes, you can talk in the same way, but more technical."* (P5). The subjects' speech refers to the setbacks experienced in recent years in Brazil and their impact on the school environment. The silencing of discussions and actions is observed, especially in relation to gender diversity and the fight against homophobia. In the face of such setbacks, society seems to live with antagonistic positions, which sometimes denounce obscurantism and dogmatism, which ignore logic and scientific evidence, as is the case of human rights defenders, and at other times, effectively or fervently endorse reactionary discourses (Ribeiro, Monteiro, 2019).

CONSIDERATIONS

From the reflections of this article, we can understand the SR of teachers, however, although they do not provide closed conclusions, they make it possible to make valuable notes and reflections that, in addition to sharing reflections on the limits and possible advances, our intention is to present the aspects considered most relevant and enable

paths for new investigations, leaving suggestions that can expand the production of research on the SR of teachers in relation to the themes, sexuality education, gender and training curriculum, both at the initial level and in continuing education.

As a first point of consideration, we can emphasize that the difficulty in dealing with sexuality, especially in high schools, would be related to an understanding, originated in the common sense produced by society, which associates sexuality with sexual practice, disregarding that it is associated with desires and historical and social constructions, which represent essential elements in the process of the development of the individual in its concreteness. However, we observed, along with the results obtained in this study, that the biological issue is still strongly reproduced in a binary perspective and demarcated by moral aspects and with emphasis on negative implications.

Another fundamental consideration is the indication, which is important to highlight from this study, about the influence of the school context of the inclusion of the theme of sexuality and gender in the school curriculum, based on this expanded view, as social constructions, being, therefore, a phenomenon that can be influenced by the intentionality of the pedagogical work of the teaching action. Thus, our position, due to the transformative aspect that scientific research requires, is that the school is considered one of the most important social institutions, this would be - paradoxically - a device for maintaining the status quo that, continuously, due to its dynamics, would have the elements to unveil the ideological chains that prevent transformation. It is always worth mentioning that the school space, as well as other environments, was also constituted as a territory of disputes.

A third point of the study points out that sexuality education is presented by the participants as a thematic area of important relevance, given the emergence of content related to expressions of sexuality and its consequences in the school environment. the interference of personal and religious values associated with political and organizational limitations and insecurities in the educational sphere are indicators of factors that limit the effectiveness of a Comprehensive Sexuality Education, as part of the curriculum planning process and the school's Political and Pedagogical Project, as an effective and emancipatory activity.

By presenting these considerations, which resume the objectives of this article, we conclude that there is, in the central core of the study's analysis, a strong heteronormative discourse, which is tensioned by the stigmatization that surrounds sexual diversity. Often,

the discourse, in the school environment, is expressed in a prejudiced way, based on socially constructed and traditionally perpetuated values. As a result, this leads to the continuation of violence, reaffirmed and reproduced in the school environment. On the other hand, in the view of the teachers, sexual diversity is pointed out as accepted among students, much more than in the previous generation of teachers and parents. As elements indicative of conclusion, the dialogue and acceptance of demands presented by students is understood as a practice favorable to sexuality education, however, obstacles related to the teaching role and family role are evidenced. Sometimes, the role of teachers as sex educators is questioned, understanding it as pertinent to the private, family environment.

We also presented, for the debate on the theme, points of tension. We noticed, during the analysis of this work, that the professionals who work in this space demonstrate difficulty in addressing issues of sexuality and gender, understanding them as complicated and difficult subjects to deal with in the school routine. It is not a matter of blaming education professionals, but of proposing a reflection that goes through training, both initial and continuous, which justifies the continuity of studies that address this theme.

The school space needs to be reformulated and become a place that actually problematizes and provides moments of debate, listening, discussion about the historical construction of the feminine and masculine being; Because, to educate sexually, is to enable the individual to exercise the right of self-knowledge, access knowledge necessary to understand his body and his sexuality so that he is fully capable of reflecting, questioning and reviewing social taboos, expressing his feelings and, provided with information, in order to form his own conclusions about the facts that involve the breadth of the sexual universe. As a proposal for continuity, in order to impose on scientific research the commitment to transformation, meetings were offered to the school team for reflections, encouragement and support for the elaboration of intervention proposals, aiming at the development of new pedagogical practices related to sexuality and gender

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