What Are Affective Relationships? Violence and Gender in the Narratives of Rural and Urban Teenagers From the South of Brazil

¿Qué Son las Relaciones Afectivas? Violencia y Género en las Narrativas de Adolescentes Rurales y Urbanos de la Región Sur de Brasil

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The objective was to investigate gender violence in affective relationships and how gender issues are presented in the narratives of 11 teenagers between 15 and 16 years old conveniently recruited from 2 public schools of rural and urban contexts from the countryside city of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Six focus groups were formed. Through an analysis of thematic content, the results pointed out the difficulty in delimiting different modalities of relationships, as well as the impact of romantic love on the invisibility of violence. While some teenagers advocated for feminism, they also antagonized and pathologized homosexual relationships. Despite the fact that most adolescents were heterosexual, they presented heteronormative, monogamous conceptions of romanticism and sexist gender views. In conclusion, the imaginary of romantic love, on the one hand, is fascinating due to the idealization of the relationship; on the other hand, it limits relationships and the ability to perceive situations of gender violence. Thus, the ideal of romantic love facilitates narratives of prejudice regarding sexual orientation.

Keywords: affective relationships, gender violence, adolescents, rurality, focus group

El objetivo fue investigar la violencia de género en las relaciones afectivas y el modo en que las cuestiones de género son presentadas en las narrativas de 11 adolescentes entre 15 y 16 años reclutados por conveniencia de 2 escuelas municipales de contexto rural y urbano de una ciudad del interior de Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Se realizaron 6 grupos focales. Por medio de un análisis de contenido temático, los resultados demostraron la dificultad de delimitar las diferentes modalidades de relaciones, así como el impacto del amor romántico en la invisibilidad de la violencia. Mientras algunas adolescentes defienden el feminismo, las mismas hostilizan y patologizan las relaciones homosexuales. A pesar de que la mayoría de los adolescentes eran heterosexuales, presentaron concepciones heteronormativas, monogámicas del romanticismo y visiones sexistas de género. Se concluye que lo imaginario del amor romántico, por un lado, fascina por la idealización de la relación y por otro, amolda el modo de relacionarse y de percibir situaciones de violencia de género. Siendo así, el ideal de amor romántico facilita narrativas de un prejuicio que concierne a la orientación sexual.

Palabras clave: relaciones afectivas, violencia de género, adolescentes, ruralidad, grupo focal

Portuguese habits marked affective and social relationships in Brazil during the colonial period between the 16th and 18th centuries. Church interference regulated people's routine regarding ethical orientation, catechism and religious education (Del Priore, 2005). Relations of domination presided over meetings between men and women, with the church interacting with the patriarcal mentality. Power relations were already implicit in the slave system since the 16th century and they were reproduced in intimate relationships, with the woman acting as a domestic slave, obedient and submissive to the husband. They were made to care for the home, the kitchen, the laundry, and to serve the head of the house (Del Priore, 2005).

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Between the 17th and 18th centuries, this dichotomy—the man as active and the woman as passive—was used to describe romantic relationships. The man had the privilege of the exclusive right to sexual desire, considering women as virtuous if they were submissive. To prevent disturbances, the modern State and the church domesticated conjugal love, placing it in the private space, thus creating the new ideology of the modern times. With this, chastity was inserted as preferable to marriage; it was a protection, useful and prevented, against the mortal sin of having sexual relations before marriage. Moreover, regarding sexual pleasure, only men had this right (Del Priore, 2005).

For a long time, the way men and women related to one another was not questioned. In the 19th century, feminism contributed to the manifestation of changes in women's autonomy, such as the right to wage labor, access to education, and participate in politics (Strey, 2013). In Brazil, the feminist movement began in 1970 with European and North American influences, from the politics of the military dictatorship in force in the country in 1964 (Sarti, 2004). However, it is important to point out that even before this date some women as, for example, Nísia Floresta Brasileira (1810-1895) and Bertha Lutz (1894-1976), were pioneers and created the base for feminism in Brazil.

The word *gender* was used by the feminist movement to follow the trajectory of fighting for rights, equity and respect between women and men (Kovaleski, Tortato, & Carvalho, 2011). The concept of gender refers to the social and historical construction of the female and the male genders, based on the power relations established between men and women (Scott, 1989/1995). According to Strey (2013), it is possible to question and to review the conditions in which social inequalities are generated in society. At that time, after a greater sexual emancipation and autonomy of women, Giddens (1992/1993) developed the concept of confluent love, which he based on romantic love. This is a type of love that is shocked by the understanding of an *only love*, that is, it is active and contingent. It is an equal feeling between women and men, it is considered as a pure relationship. It does not have room for the idea of *everlasting love*, focusing on everlasting while it lasts (Giddens, 1992/1993).

Bauman (1925/2004) developed another concept, that of *liquid love*, which echoes the absent and fragile bonds present in society. In the 21st century, in a world where individuality is well-known, relationships float between dreams and nightmares. The author believes that human relationships reflect men and women who are distressed due to feeling abandoned and lost, with irrelevant and dismissable feelings. They suffer to find security and somebody who they can count on when they need, to have someone to relate to. At the same time, the ambivalence of relationships places them in a state of tension between wanting the "eternity" of a relationship and losing the freedom to create new bonds. This ambiguity of relationships represents the liquid scenery of the modern life (Bauman, 1925/2004).

Teenagers meet while immersed in a time when they must become accustomed to the speed of what happens around them. Teenagers are a bubbling of walking metamorphoses surrounded by speed and plurality, and there is not only one way to be a teenager (Justo, 2005). The perspectives of critical social psychology and situated knowledge contribute to see the human being as a historical-social agent, not universal and fixed, but in continuous modification and transformation (Berni & Roso, 2014; Haraway, 1995).

As reported by Save the Children (2016), Brazil is one of the worse places to be a girl; every 11 minutes a woman is raped in the country. This data makes us pay attention to how prejudice against women happens, due to the interpenetration of markers, such as ethnicity/race and social class. These bases support and circumscribe social organization, where attitudes of prejudice, discrimination and domination give space to violence (Silva, 2010). The intersection between these markers is the basis of structural gender oppression (Mattos & Cidade, 2016). In 2016, the service "Disque 100" received 1,133,345 calls reporting violences against women. Of this number, 60.53% were against black women, corroborating the importance of including the markers gender, race, and class in the registers (Brasil, Ministério dos Direitos Humanos, 2016).

With this, it is fundamental to investigate affective relationships during teenage years, as was the case of a Brazilian research carried out in public schools of the cities of Porto Alegre, Florianópolis, and São José, with teenagers from 13 to 18 years old. The results show that "making out", "hooking up", and dating are common practices in these ages. Moreover, making out denotes relationships that are more disposable, with little affection and unfamiliarity with the other. Hooking up, on the other hand, happens between people who were previously interested in one another. Dating can start from hooking up or making out, and is a relationship that involves more responsibility and commitment (Carlos, 2011). Another research carried out with 3,205 young people between 15 and 19 years old found that 84% of the participants believe that it is

normal to make out without commitment during adolescence and that both boys and girls perpetrate violences in relationships (Minayo, 2011a).

In this sense, it is important to pay attention to the violence that occurs in affective relationships between teenagers, which is a national and international public health problem (Guerreiro et al., 2016). In Brazil, there is a lack of public policies to deal with violence in relationships among teenagers (Minayo, 2011a). Both the Statute of Youth (Brasil, Atos do Poder Legislativo, 2013, August 6) and the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Brasil, Atos do Poder Legislativo, 1990, July 16) mention the right of young people/teenagers/children to live in safe environments and focus on the importance of preventing and confronting this violence. However, the documents do not specifically mention the gender violence that happens in affective relationships between teenagers/young people. Studies that include sexual and gender diversity and affective relationships between teenagers are even more uncommon (Vianna, 2015). Thus, the objective of the study was to investigate gender violence in affective relationships and the way gender issues are presented in the narratives of teenagers of two public schools in rural and urban contexts in the countryside of the state of Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil. The relevance of dealing with this subject in adolescence is that even though teenagers are tied with social problems, and seen as the solution for the country, they are never considered as citizens, protagonists of society (Souza, 2009).

Method

Design

This research is one of the studies that integrate the Master's thesis called "Teenagers' narratives about gender relations in rural areas of Rio Grande do Sul". The present research is defined as qualitative and exploratory (Marconi & Lakatos, 2009; Minayo, 2011b). The epistemological positioning of this research is based on the perspective of the feminist gender studies, on critical social psychology, and the theory of situated knowledge.

Participants

The city where the study was carried out is located 67 km away from the capital of Rio Grande Do Sul, Porto Alegre. It is considered as part of the countryside of the state, with 25,793 inhabitants (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2015), distributed in an area of 821.62 km² (IBGE, 2016), and it has a high Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.733 (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento, Fundação João Pinheiro, & Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2013). It has seven high schools, 21 elementary schools, 17 pre-schools, with no private schools. This research was carried out in two public schools, through convenience sampling, one located in the urban area of the city and another located at approximately 25 km from downtown, in a rural area.

In this research, adolescence is understood as the period between 12 and 18 years of age, according to the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Brasil, Atos do Poder Legislativo, 1990, July 16). There were 11 participants in the study, seven young women and four young men (as shown in Table 1), between 15 and 16 years old, with age considered as an inclusion criteria. They were selected for convenience. All the participants had previous affective experiences, although this was not considered a criteria for exclusion in this research.

Instrument

Three focus groups in each school were carried out, totalizing six meetings. Regarding the periods made available by the schools, the meetings in the urban school happened in the afternoon, which made it difficult for pupils who studied in the morning and worked in the afternoon to participate; in the rural school the meetings happened at night, at the same time as lessons. It should be noted that the meetings were coordinated by a psychologist.

Focus groups assist in reaching a deeper level of knowledge, since they facilitate dialogue and the construction of collective learning (Dall'Agnol, Magalhães, Mano, Olschowsky, & Silva, 2012). From the group interaction, specific problems are produced and broadened (Backes, Colomé, Erdmann, & Lunardi, 2011).

Table 1
Data of the Participants

Teenager	Age	Gender	Sexual orientation	Marital status	School
Amanda	16	Woman	Heterosexual	Single	Urban
Henrique	15	Man	Heterosexual	Single	Urban
Miguel	16	Man	Heterosexual	Single	Urban
Olga	16	Woman	Heterosexual	Dating	Urban
Maria Paula	16	Woman	Heterosexual	Single	Urban
Júlia	15	Woman	Heterosexual	Dating	Rural
Eliane	16	Woman	Heterosexual	Dating	Rural
Samanta	16	Woman	Homosexual	Dating	Rural
Bianca	16	Woman	Heterosexual	Dating	Rural
Diego	16	Man	Heterosexual	Dating	Rural
João	16	Man	Heterosexual	Dating	Rural

Procedure

The researcher was supported by a script to coordinate the focus groups, in which all the steps of the meeting were planned (De Antoni et al., 2001). In addition, two video recorders and two audio recorders registered all the groups, in all necessary angles for later evaluation. Also, keeping a field diary made it possible to compile the data in the process of analysis (Castro, Abs, & Sarriera, 2011).

The present study followed the normative guidelines of Resolutions 466/12 (Brasil, Conselho Nacional de Saúde, 2013, June 13) and 510/16 (Brasil, Conselho Nacional de Saúde, 2016, May 24), which determine the treatment for human beings in scientific research. Moreover, a written informed consent form was used and signed by the participants. The procedures of this research started after the project had been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, under number CAAE 60884316.2.0000.5336.

Data Analysis

In the analysis, the set of meanings and directions attributed to the studied phenomenon were explored. This was done through a thematic content analysis (Bardin, 1977/1979) of what was said in the focus groups.

Results and Discussion

Different Types of Romantic Involvement in Adolescence

Most studies that analyze the subject of affective relationships research the concept of the theoretical conception of love (Chaves, 2016; Dias & Machado, 2011). The authors Dias and Machado (2011) believe in a non-essentialist view of love, one that does not accept the idea that this feeling is part of nature, of human beings, and of relationships. That is, like love, people are the product of historical and cultural constructions, and cannot be understood without observing the dialogical relations between the social, cultural, political, and historical systems in which they are situated. From interactions, love is built and rebuilt through a shared language and the set of meanings and directions understood in that culture (Dias & Machado, 2011). These agreements assist in the context in which this research occurred. Although some narratives presented saying "I love you" as a deep show of feelings, it has a flexibility regarding whether it can or cannot be said in affective relationships in adolescence:

I believe you should only say "I love you" when you really like somebody and not just for saying it. I never said "I love you" just to answer what the person had said. Only if I'm feeling the same. It took me a long time to say "I love you" to my boyfriend. (Eliane, 16 years old, rural school)

Eliane believes that saying "I love you" involves complex feelings and, even while dating, it should only be said when the person is sure of how they feel. Del Priore (2005) says that love is inserted in culture as a

practice that is inherent to human beings, like eating or drinking. Although the teenagers believe that love does not have a correct way to happen, there is an expectation of it meaning a recognition of the depth of commitment and intimacy of the relationship. According to Bauman (1925/2004), the fragility of bonds is associated with the tenuous relationships established in modern liquid society. The liquid state represents a fluidity that, although it appears to have a shape, is dilluted, due to the instability of affective relationships.

The expression "hooking up" appeared in Brazil during the 1980s, expressing relationships without commitment, involving anything from kisses to sexual relations. Both "making out" and "hooking up" can be understood as relationships in which people knew each other previously or not and that, generally, involve little affectivity (Ribeiro, Avanci, Carvalho, Gomes, & Pires, 2011):

> Hooking up is like you're going to a party, you hook up with that person. The other day you don't remember who they are and you don't go looking for them, or anyway, you just let things be… you don't take it seriously, not as a boyfriend. It depends, there are many ways to talk about hooking up […] You can't generalize it, right. There are people who hook up and take it seriously. (Amanda, 16 years, urban school)

> It depends on the type of hooking up… For example, I am hooking up with someone and the person wants to go steady and I want to go steady, but we don't know yet… We don't have the courage yet. We don't have the confidence. (Samanta, 15 years, rural school)

Although hook up denotes something fixed, motionless and with a feeling of permanence, the teenagers in this research flexibilized their terminology. The perceptions presented by the teenagers showed that hooking up can happen only one night in a party or not, it can involve only kisses and hugs, as well as not to involve commitment, being a passing moment, without a more committed future relationship (Justo, 2005). A few studies show that hooking up and making out are not only practices of teenagers, but also of single adults, who kiss themselves without commitment and are guided by physical attraction (Ribeiro et al., 2011). These perceptions are similar to the reflections made by Bauman (1925/2004) and Justo (2005), who understand hooking up as the most expressive type of relationship in adolescence, consecrated in young people's culture (Justo, 2005).

Despite the popularity, the research participants surprised with a more flexible view when defining that hooking up can have different formats, considering the private understanding of each person. However, the way relationships occur in adolescence reflects the contemporary world, which does not allow the creation of lasting bonds. Thus, teenagers institute how relationships work now: reducing relationships and satisfactions to immediate desires, with little commitment and little responsibility (Bauman, 1925/2004; Justo, 2005).

> It depends, if the two are aware that they made an agreement, "oh, we won't do this", and if one breaks it, that is cheating. (Olga, 16 years old, urban school)

The agreements mentioned by the teenagers are a type of manual that symbolize the rules attributed to the relationships. That is, the people involved determine rules as, for example, how many times they will see each other during the week or if they will be allowed to go out alone to parties (Schleiniger, 2014). Minayo (2011a) believes there is a moral of coexistence and limits in the relationships of hooking up, dating and marrying in adolescence. The way the agreement is followed is fundamental so more reliable bonds of commitment and trust can occur. Hooking up may be considered a social and cultural game, where love is tested so a possible transition into dating can occur (Ribeiro et al., 2011):

> In dating you share your problems more. You trust the person. You share the problems you have at home, our outside, anything. (Samanta, 15 years old, rural school)

> It's like, "oh, I'm dating, but I'm dating at home". It would be better to have your own house already, to also build a family […] not depending on your parents. (Henrique, 15 years old, urban school)

Still in the scope of love, the intensity of the feelings seems to be more valuable than the definition of how the transition from hooking up to dating happens. Although the definitions are not explicit, the importance of the rules established between both people is evident. It is this agreement that will define some behaviors and rules regarding what the relationship will be (Ribeiro et al., 2011). In this research, the practices in the relationships can be mixed, as a result of the rules defined. Engagement and marriage were expected to be discussed by the groups, but these relationships were not considered common at their age. Dating was the relationship that presented more responsibility, involving commitment and autonomy. In most narratives, dating was seen as a symbol of entering the world of adulthood, involving family and a continuous frequency of meetings (Ribeiro et al., 2011). Despite this, most narratives flexibilized the definitions of relationships, demonstrating that each couple has freedom in defining their relationship. However, it was considered

important to present a dialogue between the teenagers of the rural school, that, in a certain way, contradicts the flexibility demonstrated until here:

> Samanta: What if I have a question? I think everybody has this question. What is your astrological sign? [Laughs].
> Researcher: I am a Scorpio.
> Júlia: But she doesn't seem like a Scorpio.
> Researcher: So the sign is very important to you?
> Eliane: Wow, so much!
> Júlia: Very important.
> Samanta: It has a lot of influence.
> Eliane: Well, I have my natal chart, I have my Sun, my Moon, my Rising sign and everything…
> Researcher: Do you think that this influences relationships?
> Júlia: Yes, a lot.
> Elaine: I think two things have a lot of influence. The sign and the name. Seriously, guys. "Marias" are all the same. My God! How can people not see this?
> Researcher: How do you think astrological signs can influence relationships?
> Samanta: Regarding people, I think that the sign influences behavior.
> Eliane: You already know how it's going to be […] you know the person and you see that those characteristics are very strong in that person.
> João: The signs are completely the opposite of some people I know [...]. The person's sign you ask after a while… you don't have anything else to talk about and you ask "oh, what's your sign?".

The teenagers' interest in astrology was striking. Only the boy in the group did not agree with the young women. The teenage girls believe and justify that astrological signs influence the way people act in relationships. According to Staudt (2015), astrology became popular in the 1960s and, for many people, is used as a guide to get information on oneself and others, from the mystical knowledge of the signs (Miguel & Carvalho, 2014). Moreover, some magazines show information about the zodiac on a specific section, as it is the case of the magazine *Capricho*, which targets female teenagers (Staudt, 2015).

In 2015, a research analyzed the horoscope presented in *Capricho*. Some of the results showed an association of the female public with traditional aspects regarding sexuality and gender representation in the astrological forecasts of the magazine. Moreover, the horoscope presents misconceptions of femininity, with contradictions between the content presented. Although horoscopes are not scientific knowledge, people who study it want to divulge it and introduce the subject in society (Staudt, 2015). In her field diary, Staudt (2015) perceived that the signs are situated as powerful knowledge that discloses the personality and character of the other person, many times defining if one will enter in a relationship or not. Knowledge of astrology impacts not only the approach, but also the continuity or not of affective relationships for some teenagers. The search for orientation in astrology can determine the way teenagers relate to one another.

Sexist Violence and Conceptions in Affective Relationships

According to Gomes (2011), the idea that violence does not exist in relationships between young people is part of the social imaginary. The ideal conception of dating as a relationship of only love and pleasure pushes away a reflection about possible violence. As pointed out by the author, most narratives of participants in this research express how much verbal violence is associated with affective relationships in adolescence. Following are a few:

> The worst kind of violence for me is verbal violence. (Eliane, 16 years old, rural school)

> Starts arguing, starts attacking verbally. (Júlia, 16 years old, rural school)

> After a verbal aggression, it's OK to stay together, people decide. (João, 16 years old, rural school)

> They talk a lot about verbal assaults. (Maria Paula, 16 years old, urban school)

> Many people are abused verbally and don't care. (Miguel, 16 years old, urban school)

> More yelling. (Henrique, 15 years old, urban school)

Most narratives recognize verbal violence as an aggression, but let it go, due to considering it less serious than physical violence. Gomes (2011) believes that by thinking this way, teenagers strengthen the social imaginary that says that only physical violence is problematic.

Psychological violence is divided into three subtypes: threats, verbal/emotional violence and relationship violence (Oliveira, Assis, Njaine, & Oliveira, 2011). According to Minayo (2011a), psychological violence is a

subtle form of abuse that can block self-esteem efforts, resulting in threats of abandonment and cruelty to the person suffering it. In a research carried out in 10 Brazilian capitals, 85% of adolescents said that verbal violence occurs when dating and hooking up. Of this number, 96.9% are, concomitantly, aggressor and victim. Due to its high incidence, this type of violence is trivialized by teenagers and some situations are seen as acceptable, since they are common and current between adolescents. Although the studies mentioned above got their results from a reality different from that of this research, the similar data assists in the discussion. Some of the frequently trivialized situations are related to provoking jealousy, talking about past bad things, causing anger, and speaking in a hostile manner. Close contact between people who are dating is what generally increases the probability of misunderstandings. This type of violence is identified more often in dating than in hooking up, precisely because of a closer coexistence and intimacy of dating (Oliveira et al., 2011):

> Researcher: What is love?
> Samanta: It is an affection, a care, respect...
> Eliane: Jealousy.
> Researcher: Is it part of love?
> Eliane: Yes.
> Samanta: Yes.
> Eliane: If you like the person, you become jealous.
> Samanta: I think that yes, not too much, but jealousy, you know.
> João: Not too much.

Teenagers' perceptions of love and jealousy are like the understanding of Bosch Fiol et al. (2007), who emphasize some myths of romantic love that, generally, are taken as truths and induce perceptions in affective relationships. The authors perceive myths as beliefs that hinder the perception of violence and gender domination. One of the main myths is that of the "other half", which denotes a union destined to be monogamous, as the only possible choice. Accepting this can contribute to an excess of demands between the couple, and influences how much they tolerate inadequate behaviors and situations so that the relationship with "the ideal" partner will function. Another myth is that jealousy is a demonstration of love, and even a premise of true love. This myth is frequently used to justify violent, selfish, and unfair situations in relationships. Another myth is that of omnipotence, according to which "love can do everything", resulting in a belief that true love is enough to solve any problem, with no need for external or internal interventions to the couple. This myth causes that behaviors or attitudes are not modified by the couple, making it difficult to resolve negative situations within the relationship. The last myth is marriage, based on romantic love, which makes the couple the only base of coexistence. That is, theoretically, the couple is satisfied with the relationship, but is susceptible to future disappointments.

A form of communication commonly used in affective relationships is the Internet, seen as a way to meet people, set up dates and confirm relationships. Due to the closeness established, the Internet is a space that facilitates the occurrence of jealousy from certain behaviors (Ribeiro et al., 2011):

> Eliane: We are not jealous when someone likes something [on Facebook], I am jealous when someone loves something. You can't love anything. You can like stuff, even I do that […] but you can't love […]. If I see somebody on Facebook, I check all the likes to see if he's there.
> Researcher: But if he liked, what does that mean?
> Eliane: If he liked, or actually loved, I go and ask him why he loved someone's picture.
> Researcher: You don't care about liking?
> Eliane: Not, I don't think liking is a problem.
> Júlia: But loving is just not necessary.
> João: When you see your boyfriend liked something [on Facebook], he liked a girl's picture, the girl went and liked it and he goes and likes a bunch of her pictures. You know?
> Eliane: Ah, he can't leave comments. He can't leave comments! [Laughs]
> Júlia: He can't answer comments either.

Bauman (1925/2004) says that the idea of relationship in itself can be confusing, because, instead of calling each other partners, people choose to talk about networks. When using the term network, there are only two possibilities: to connect or to disconnect. The idea of being able to brake the connection makes relationships "virtual relationships". They are relationships that slide, without consistency or relevance. For the teenagers in this study, the Internet, informatics and the virtual environment are of central importance and impact the way they relate. Generally, the teenagers did not identify online behaviors as violence, considering them merely annoying situations (Flach & Deslandes, 2017).

Although the groups did not refer to it, online violence can start based on the control and monitoring of the other person's life on social media, as presented in the teenagers' narratives. With the idea that jealousy is common in relationships, in the same way it is associated with violence (Barros, Ribeiro, & Quadrado, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2011). Online monitoring and jealousy were mentioned by both young women and young men. Some studies show that teenage girls more frequently control and monitor their partners, while teenage boys are more straightforward and expose and share their partners' sexting. Even though this did not appear in this research, it should be explained that sexting is a term that appeared in the United States, combining the words sex and texting, and involves sharing messages of sexual content of the partner with a person or a group (Barros et al., 2015). Sexting is not considered to be a violence; however, without consent, it becomes revenge for porn, a type of digital attack that aims to humiliate and defame after a relationship has ended (Flach & Deslandes, 2017). Regarding relationships, several fears were pointed out by the teenager Amanda:

> If it's gonna be alright… but if it becomes something bad [the sexual relation], then it sucks, right? There are great risks, right? […]. Being foul-mouthed… always women, men are seen as tough, studs. (Amanda, 16 years old, urban school)

This narrative mentions the fear of being foul-mouthed, evidencing the inequality between women and men and the fear of being judged, due to having or not having sexual relations. A study by Carlos (2011) identified that among teenagers, young women are not well seen if they hook up with different people. Both young men and young women believe that this type of attitude harms the image of girls who could have a serious relationship in the future. Young women are usually seen as "easy", while young men are seen as "studs". For Carloto (2001), gender divisions are established by sexist, exclusive and antagonistic criteria, that attribute a hierarchical system between men and women:

> Sometimes you find a girl who is easier. So you grab the car, go out with her, take her to the camping site, and you'll get laid. It's like a person who is not so serious, you know. She's freer with things […]. From the way she walks, talks, the way she talks to you, the way she reacts when she's with another person. It's from these characteristics that you understand what the person is […]. An easy woman, she is less than man. But a correct woman, she is not less than a man, she is equal or even greater, better. (Henrique, 15 years old, urban school)

> But you're not seeing things from the girl's side there […]. You feel attracted to that person and you go and hook up with them. And things happen, at the party you can hook up with other people… before you realize, you've hooked up with 9, 10. And you're not easy […]. There's nothing good you can say about a woman who hooks up with 2, 3 people. The man is the stud. The woman is always seen as the wrong one in the story. (Amanda, 16 years old, urban school)

When the teenager Henrique considers it wrong for a young woman to be easy, because she has sex, he is strengthening the idea that women must be virgins and wait for the "prince charming" (Beauvoir, 1949/2016; Cubells Serra & Calsamiglia Madurga, 2015; Del Priore, 2005). In this sense, this participant demonstrates a world view that makes it impossible for women and men to have gender equity. This is what makes it important to recognize the narrative of the teenager Amanda, "But you're not seeing things from the girl's side there", as resistance to the oppression directed to women.

Although the young man's statement was rejected, the inferior position women occupy in the social imaginary was not explicitly nominated as a type of violence. The perceptions of the participants evidence the field in which symbolic violence takes place. According to Farmer (2004), violence is strengthened through organized structures within families and political, social, and economic systems, that do not provide equal chances for everybody. Mendonça (1996) believes the the deepest form of structuring and naturalization of violence is symbolic violence. This is a type of violence that is subtly naturalized in daily life. Even though the narratives do not express physical violence, they elucidate situations and thoughts in which gender violence is strengthened and stimulated (Gomes, 2008). Although Saffioti (2004) understands gender as a set of norms that establish standards between men and women, inequality is not necessarily presumed. Inequality, which is not natural, is set by different cultures, by power structures and by the fabric of social relationships. Gender inequality does not exist previously in the relationships between men and women, but it is constantly constructed and strengthened. Although gender violence can occur in other types of relationships, the widely spread manner in which it happens is directed from men to women (Saffioti, 2004). In the teenagers' narratives, gender inequality is strengthened when the same behaviors, from one perspective, depreciate young women and, from another, privilege young men.

Perceptions of Feminisms and the Pathologization of Homosexuality

Although the feminist movement has a common ground, it can be characterized as a multiple movement, with plural aspects. In this sense, the use of the term *feminism* is understood due to multiplicity of fights that were undertaken and are still awake in the search for gender equity in society. The concept of gender equity is ethical and is associated with the principles of social justice and human rights. It carefully and attentively questions the current situation in which thousands of women suffer daily from inequalities. To reflect on these issues is to look at and move towards future social transformations (Fonseca, 2005). These considerations show that, in some situations, the teenagers in both schools build narratives that emancipate women's bodies from sexual and gender oppression. Most young women declare themselves as feminists and worry about deconstructing prejudices and problematizing the place of women in society (Silva, 2016):

> People compare feminism and sexism. No, feminism is trying to make women be treated like men, sexism is men being more, not equal, more. Women don't want to be more, they want to be equal. (Elaine, 16 years old, rural school)

> There's no equality, so women are always seen as less than men. (Amanda, 16 years old, urban school)

> I think that women always, for a long time, have wanted to be respected. And men know this, but never say anything; some, not all. (Samanta, 15 years old, rural school)

However, although the narrations transmit the importance of the representation and legitimacy of women, one of the narratives attracted attention. The teenager Amanda, who defended gender equity during group discussions, antagonized homosexual affective relationships. In one of the focus groups, adolescents were asked for magazines clippings with images that represented affective relationships in adolescence. After the search, some teenagers talked about their choices, as was the case with this young woman:

> Well, these are the normal relationships we see daily [heterosexual]. And… for me these are abnormal relationships [homosexual]. Well, it's my opinion, ah, I'm not against, but I have nothing in favor. (Amanda, 16 years old, urban school)

This teenager, who demonstrated a concern for the visibility of women and young women and on equal rights between women and men, presented a different perception of sexual diversity. According to Mayorga, Coura, Miralles, & Cunha (2013), the feminist movement expanded the knowledge about the oppression faced by women in society. Despite the high index of violence against women and the different situations of social inequalities women still face, the subject is recognized as an emergent problem in western societies. In this sense, the importance of social networks that spread activist behaviors through mechanisms, such as liking, commenting and following feminist pages, cannot be ignored (Bocchi, 2016). The Internet enables ample sharing of these ideas, but also of criticism and debates on feminism, violence, and gender. Its scope, in different areas of society, results in the autonomy to reproduce content online, like blogs, pages, and groups (Ferreira, 2013).

Transfeminist movements—or transgender feminism—have been getting stronger in Brazil. Its objectives are to fight for the emancipation of transgender people and to deconstruct the scientific and political practices of invisibility, segregation, and silencing of these citizens. Moreover, they question the essencialist premises of the traditional feminist movement, which considers that gender and sex are given at birth. In the 2000s, transfeminism is manifesting in politics, gaining power through the Internet, with blogs and pages on social networks, and through activism in groups, organizations, and institutions (Mattos & Cidade, 2016).

The term cisgender is used to describe people who identify with the gender attributed at birth, the male or female social categories (Aultman, 2014). The naturalization of cisgender existence and heterosexuality promotes the idea of an evidence of the norm and of differences as abnormalities. Therefore, it seriously affects the experiences of transgender people, with prejudice and violence as the ones most mentioned by transfeminists (Mattos & Cidade, 2016). Structural violence is perceived when the right to life and access to basic rights are limited by social exclusion (Neto & Moreira, 1999).

It became necessary to talk about these issues, because the researcher's field diary registered some contradictory narratives of teenagers who presented themselves as feminists, but did not accept homosexual relationships. These considerations lead to the understanding of Rich (2010), who created the concept of compulsory heterosexuality as a category to analyze the institutions in which women are traditionally controlled. The author reflects on how "numberless women [are] psychologically trapped, trying to fit mind, spirit, and sexuality into a prescribed script because they cannot look beyond the parameters of the acceptable" (p. 41). The understanding of heterosexuality is political, from the moment in which it is

normalized, naturalized and excluded, confining the feminine and incorporating it as the opposite and complement of the masculine. The *difference between the sexes* is a founding category of compulsory heterosexuality, with the idea that the sexual bodies are established by their social parts and status and that nature defines the importance of human beings through biology. The difference attributed to the sexes is, consequently, political, inasmuch as it strengthens social inequality (Swain, 2010).

Compulsory heterosexuality conceives a cultural persuation process in which families and educational institutions impose norms of submission and devotion to the masculine, which is reflected in the division of labor, remuneration, and social importance (Swain, 2010). Moreover, Rich (2010) perceived, since the 1980s, the need for an intersection between feminists and lesbians. Lesbians were seen as deviant and pathological, thus, they were invisible to society. They were even discriminated against in institutions that received women in situations of violence, with feminist influences.

Rich's reflections helped to think about the context of the research, because the prejudice reflects the importance of this discussion, which has been evident for some time. Regarding homosexuality, the issues of normality and abnormality, based on sexual orientation, were for a long time debated by professionals from the areas of health and psychology, who considered homosexuality as a mental disorder. But in 1973 the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality as a pathology from its manual, due to the lack of empirical bases that relate homosexuality to mental disorders (Costa & Nardi, 2015). In this research, some teenagers still reported narratives that related homosexuality to something deviant and pathological:

> I have nothing against it, but I don't think it's right, you know […] If there was a gay couple next to me, I wouldn't, I wouldn't go to them and ask them to leave. That would be, it would be impolite, right. But I don't like it […] They are kind of brash, you know. They are kind of brash with normal people. There are some that are… too flamboyant around people. (Henrique, 15 years old, urban school)

From Henrique's narrative, it can be seen how the language corroborates situations of exclusion and violence. The binary logic that presents man-woman, adult-child, heterosexual-homosexual, normal-abnormal, right-wrong, excludes, discriminates, and is based on opposing pairs, terms that contribute to normalizations and prejudices in society (Dinis, 2008). Beyond mentioning his disapproval of homosexual couples, Henrique highlighted his thoughts when he captioned his pictures as "a normal young couple" and "normal friends" to standardize, specify and classify what he considers to be normal:

> I think if there was a respectful attitude, we could get by, right, but with respect. They have to respect to be respected by people. One thing leads to the other. (Amanda, 16 years old, urban school)

The data registered by the service "Disque 100" in the National Human Rights Complaint Department (Brasil, Ministério dos Direitos Humanos, 2016) indicated that 1,876 complaints from LGBTQ people had been placed in 2016. There were 50.2% for discrimination, 29.6% for psychological violence, 17.35% for physical violence, 3.61% for institucional violence, 3.3% for negligence, and 2.21% for other situations (Brasil, Ministério dos Direitos Humanos, 2016). With these data, it should be asked: who needs to be respected? Today is a historical time in which intolerance is being installed and repeated in private life settings. In this sense, more and more constraints are imposed in personal relationships (Dinis, 2008).

It is interesting to point out that, due to the presence of a lesbian teenager, the rural school group was able to go further in the reflections regarding respect to sexual diversities. The teenager's narrative revealed the importance of realizing that, regardless of sexual orientation, the feelings and affection of the people are the same:

> I have a girlfriend and I have friends who also have girlfriends. There are people who accept it and people who don't […] I don't understand people who don't accept it. It doesn't change anything in these people's lives. […] There's no difference. It's the same thing, a straight couple and a homosexual couple. It's the same love, the same thing. (Samanta, 15 years old, rural school)

In this sense, the teenager of the rural school brought pictures of polyamory, three-way relationships, homosexuals, bisexuals, and heterosexuals, going beyond the binary and heterosexual logic. Due to the lack of representation in the urban school, the teenagers' narratives were probably more intolerant and conservative, with more pathologization of homosexual relationships.

Final Considerations

In this study, most teenagers recognized the existence of different types of relationships in adolescence. However, this does not mean that the historical differences attributed to women and men, as well as

heteronormativity, had been reformulated (Ribeiro et al., 2011). Different narratives showed prejudice concerning sexual orientation in relationships, regarding non-heterosexual relationships as abnormal and deviant.

The difficulty in delimiting different types of relationships reflects the provisory and instantaneous character of affective bonds in contemporary society (Bauman, 1925/2004; Justo, 2005). The imaginary of romantic love, on the one hand, is fascinating, due to the idealization of reliability, security, fidelity and durability of relationships; on the other hand, it constrains relationships and makes it difficult to perceive situations of gender violence in relationships (Justo, 2005). The naturalization of gender not only contributes for violence, but also collaborates in making it invisible (Gomes, 2011). Thus, it should be asked: how to stop something that is not even recognized as violence?

Although some teenage girls attempted to question the characteristics imposed on women and men in relationships, many sexist and prejudiced narratives corroborate situations of violence against sexual and gender diversity (Gomes, 2011). Feminist teenagers, but intolerant of non-heterosexual orientations, are a paradox derived from the segregation of gender and sexuality in society. Furthermore, it demonstrates the importance of feminists and the LGBTQ population to support themselves to critically appraise the dominant paradigms that ignore and discriminate against social reality. The lesbian perspective must be approached by feminist theory, with its theories being included. In this sense, it is important to point out that it was the teenagers of the urban school who had the greatest difficulty in including homosexual relationships in their narratives. In the rural school, a lesbian teenager brought an inclusive speech that motivated the group to have other reflections on the importance of respect in any type of relationship.

Although some studies indicate that young women are more often the perpetrators of verbal violence (Pazos Gómez, Oliva Delgado, & Hernando Gómez, 2014), care must be taken not to underline conclusions that fail to relativize these data. Other studies point to the fact that young men are less likely than young women to admit their violent practices or simply do not recognize them as violence. It is understood, therefore, that it is necessary to be careful not to draw generalizing conclusions about the feelings of men and women, since they can spread hasty understandings and can strengthen trivialized violence and gender norms in the day-to-day basis (Flach & Deslandes, 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2011). Moreover, many teenagers simultaneously perpetrate and suffer violence, which makes comparison between women and men difficult (Haynie et al., 2013). In addition, it wasn't the goal to generalize the results of this study, but to investigate the teenagers' main perceptions regarding their affective relationships. Despite the difficulty in delimiting relationships, some narratives mentioned that astrology and the Internet guide and strengthen affective bonds. In a similar manner, the rules of couples are fundamental for recognizing violent situations.

Finally, mentioned by the student Olga, of the urban school, when talking about relationships: "Yeah, where there's respect, where there's confidence, there's no violence". Historical and social issues structure violence in relationships; invisibility and lack of recognition are perceived by the naturalization of power relations in society (Justo, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to revisit the relevance of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1995) at a time when, on the one hand, romantic love impacts relationships and, on the other hand, liquid love is present in the culture of disposal, the speed and the difficulty in demarcating relationships.

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