

Dimensions of harassment at school: dialogs about gender with young high school students in São Paulo/Brazil

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Dimensiones del acoso en la escuela: diálogos sobre género con jóvenes estudiantes de la enseñanza media de São Paulo/Brasil (resumen: p. 15)

Cristiane Gonçalves da Silva^(a)
<cristiane.goncalves18@unifesp.br> 

Vanessa Jorge Leite^(b)
<vanessajleite@gmail.com> 

Júlia Clara de Pontes^(c)
<juliaclara.pontes@usp.br> 

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^(a) Departamento de Políticas Públicas e Saúde Coletiva, Instituto de Saúde e Sociedade, Universidade Federal de São Paulo (Unifesp). Rua Silva Jardim, 136, sala 218, Vila Mathias. Santos, SP, Brasil. 11015-020.

^(b) Centro Latino-Americano em Sexualidade e Direitos Humanos, Instituto de Medicina Social, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

^(c) Pós-graduanda do Programa de Medicina Preventiva (Doutorado), Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade de São Paulo (USP). São Paulo, SP, Brasil.

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Abstract

In this article, we discuss uses of “harassment” as a category employed by young students from public high schools to make sense of violence and gender discrimination experiences that occur in and out of school. The analysis is based on fieldwork records produced within the scope of a multicenter, mixed-methods research carried out in nine schools located in São Paulo. Harassment appears as a polysemic category that, by naming violence, helps to face gender and generation hierarchies and inequalities. We infer that the young girls have questioned norms and attitudes that feed gender inequalities in schools; in addition, they have denounced the silence or inadequacy of the institution in facing the problem. This enables to identify convergences with a new sensibility regarding violence against women that globalized feminist discourses have brought to the surface.

Keywords: Harassment. Gender. Youth. School.



Introduction

This article discusses the category “harassment” in the contemporary grammar of visibility processes on gender-based violence, from the meanings attributed to it, in the scope of a study carried out with youths in public high schools located in three cities in the state of São Paulo, Brazil⁽ⁱ⁾. The study aimed to evaluate a sexuality education program grounded on the multicultural perspective of human rights¹. The theme of harassment emerged as a central experience in conversations about the youths’ gender experiences, and is included in the broader debate about sexual and reproductive rights². The discussion was triggered by different situations that were named “harassment” and involve control of the girls’ bodies and conducts, as well as abuses with sexual connotation.

The theme in question emerged in the study from the recognition that schools are spaces of interaction between youths, who strive to re-signify relationships, defy convention and institutional hierarchies³, and fight for recognition of their practices and interests^{4,5}. According to Dayrell⁶, although the school “does not configure youth”, it is central to the constitution of the social expectations that are placed on this stage of life. Furthermore, according to Sposito⁷, the school guides the reflections on youth. Here, we take into account the school’s relevance in youths’ experiences, as well as the students’ questions and notes for possible and future transformations, like in the case of harassment: it was announced by the girls who participated in the research as a multifaceted issue deriving from institutional hierarchies that reiterate gender and sexuality rules^{8,9}.

The feminist debate, since MacKinnon’s¹⁰ classic work from the end of the 1970s, has vigorously postulated the association between sexual harassment and gender-based inequality of power, and has influenced the way in which Law started to recognize forms of harassment in the sphere of work relationships. According to Pamplona Filho¹¹, the power relations that regulate genders can be seen in male practices of sexual nature directed at women in hierarchic institutional contexts. He defines harassment as “[...] every undesired conduct of sexual nature that, although repelled by the recipient, is continually reiterated and limits their freedom”¹¹ (p. 4). Similarly, Janssen¹² argues that threats regarding school performance are forms of coercion and power that characterize harassment in the teacher-student relationship.

According to Bondestam and Lundqvist¹³, the discussion about sexual harassment shifted its focus from legal, organizational and interpersonal frameworks based on quantitative incidence data and use of scales to issues of power, violence, and gender inequality only in the 2000s. In 2016, the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef)¹⁴, in an international review on violence against children and adolescents, proposed the expression “school-related gender-based violence” for acts of physical, sexual or psychological violence supported by rules, stereotypes, inequalities, and exclusions that violate human rights and reduce students’ development and learning potential. Discussing harassment in education institutions, Souza *et al.*¹⁵ identify the reproduction of gender-based violence in relationships between adult teacher and young student; coercions expressed in approaches, comments or threats.

⁽ⁱ⁾ Multicenter research “Vulnerabilidades de jovens às IST/HIV e à violência entre parceiros: avaliação de intervenções psicossociais baseadas nos direitos humanos” (Youths’ vulnerability to STI/HIV and to violence between partners: evaluation of psychosocial interventions based on human rights) (FAPESP #2017-25950-2), developed by Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Universidade Federal de São Paulo (Unifesp) - Baixada Santista campus, and Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar) - Sorocaba campus.

In Brazil, sexual harassment was criminalized in 2001^(j), defined as coercion to obtain advantages or sexual favors. In the current public debate, it gained meaning and now names situations perceived as violent against women and girls that involve practices and attitudes of a sexual nature and without consent. In the 2010s, harassment appeared prominently in different campaigns in the social media, like those led by the Brazilian feminist group Think Olga: “Chega de Fiu Fiu” (No more wolf-whistling) (2014), about embarrassments in public spaces, and #MeuPrimeiroAssédio (#MyFirstHarassment) (2015), in reaction to inadequate messages sent to a 12-year-old participant in a TV program^(k). To Almeida¹⁸, these campaigns contributed, even though unintentionally, to the enactment of the law that defined “sexual assault” as a crime in 2018. Thus, a legal classification was produced to encompass a variety of “libidinous acts” practiced against someone without their consent¹⁹. Almeida¹⁸ argues that the presence of harassment in the social media, its movement to the mainstream media, and its new definition as a sex crime express a change in sensibility regarding acts like “catcalling”, “groping”, and “abuse”, whose meanings are in dispute. Sharing acts of violence on the Internet and exposing harassment narratives has configured, promoted, and amplified perception of this kind of violence.

The visibility given to harassment on the Internet – the mediator of contemporary experiences - is recognized as an effect of the trajectory of the feminist and LGBTQIAP+^(l) movements in Latin America since the end of the 1990s²¹. In Brazil, the participation of the Internet in the strengthening of these movements and in the dissemination of their agendas starts to increase in the 2000s. From 2010 onwards, according to Gomes²², in addition to being an organization tool, the Internet becomes an extension of the field of gender and sexuality struggles, in the production of knowledge about feminism, gender and sexual diversity that mediates personal and political engagement.

Such issues are vividly present in the repertoire of our study’s participants. Given the importance of the Internet to youths, it is not surprising that school-related gender-based violence is exposed and named harassment²³, and that activities that give visibility to violence, seek to denaturalize it, and forge networks to combat it are carried out. The harassment announced and denounced by female students, as we will discuss below, emerged in combination with the questioning of school rules and the growing leadership of women. The girls believe that the school and its agents are responsible for the fight against harassment and for the promotion of debates about gender and sexuality that take into account youths’ interests and desires, their subjective dimensions, and the contexts in which they live.

Methodology

This article results from data collected in the preliminary stage of the research “Youths’ vulnerability to STI/HIV and to violence between partners: evaluation of psychosocial interventions based on human rights”, whose objective is to evaluate a sexuality education program grounded on the multicultural perspective of human rights²⁴. The research focuses on the subjects’ perspective and on their intersubjectivity contexts, and seeks to spotlight inequalities in order to transform social relations.

^(j) Law 10224 of May 15, 2001, added article 216 A to the Brazilian Criminal Code. It defines the crime of sexual harassment as “[...] the act of coercing someone with the intention of obtaining advantages or sexual favors, in which the agent takes advantage on their condition of superior or on their ascendancy inherent in the exercise of a job or function”. The sentence varies from one to two years in prison¹⁶.

^(k) During the exhibition of the reality show Master Chef Jr., in which children aged 9 to 13 years competed for the title of best amateur chef, adult men wrote messages in Twitter to a 12-year-old girl: “M, send nudes”, “If she wants it, it’s not pedophilia, it’s love”, among others. As a reaction, Think Olga started the campaign #MyFirstHarassment to bring violence cases to light, emphasizing feminist precepts like “it’s never the victim’s fault”¹⁷ (p. 1).

^(l) We adopted the acronym LGBTQIAP+ to designate the spectrum of sexual orientations and gender expressions that surpass the limits of cisgenderism and heteronormativity. For an overview of the historical and political dynamics of alliances and disputes around this unstable and changing acronym, used for populations associated with sexual and gender diversity in Brazil, see Facchini and França²⁰.



The research is being conducted in five state-run high schools and four technical schools located in four sites in the state of São Paulo: Sorocaba, Santos, São Paulo/South Zone, and São Paulo/Southeast Zone. Two sites are located in mid-sized metropolitan regions and two in peripheral areas of the capital city. The schools were chosen based on the universities' action in the territories of the cities. We prioritized vulnerable regions and considered the school's interest in and consent to participate in the research.

The research teams in all the sites are formed by researchers who teach in the universities, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students. The teams also include researchers from the schools themselves: teachers and, particularly, scientific initiation High School students, who play the role of young agents and participate actively in the research development by means of conversation circles^(m) and other activities that give access to the rules, values, hierarchies, and tensions experienced in each school.

The study's preliminary stage was carried out from September to December 2019, when the researchers conducted conversation circles in the schools with the scientific initiation students, conversations with the schools' management, and observations of the schools' routine. These activities aimed to present the research and obtain consent for participation. In these first observations and activities, records were obtained in the form of notes, field diaries, and reports.

An important activity in the preliminary stage was the administration of a questionnaire to the third-year students of the nine schools, with a convenience sample of 717 students aged between 16 and 19 years⁽ⁿ⁾. To administer the questionnaire, the following activities were performed: (i) meetings with the school community; (ii) conversation circles with scientific initiation students, to present the questionnaire; (iii) obtention of students' consent for participation; (iv) administration of the questionnaire; (v) researchers' approach, after the questionnaire was administered, to verify if any questions had annoyed the respondents; (vi) meetings to plan and evaluate the process.

The analysis developed in this article focuses on the discursive material deriving from the observations and activities that accompanied the process of presentation and administration of the questionnaire. The uses of the "harassment" category for different situations were based on fieldwork, on the voices of the female students, who shared their personal experiences and those of other women, and named such experiences harassment.

The analytical work demanded an immersion in the records and results, in an attempt to identify uses of the term "harassment" in the field and their empirical references: how it was employed in the school's daily routine and how the girls mobilized the gender dimensions associated with the phenomena they named as that. The girls' leadership role is related to the way in which the category itself emerged and reveals an important aspect of the methods employed and of the results obtained. In some schools, during the conversations that took place immediately after they answered the questionnaire, some female students warned that it should also contain questions about the "sexism suffered by girls" and the "harassment of girls". Thus,

^(m) Conversation circles are research instruments, "[...] a conversation in an environment suitable for dialog, in which all the participants can feel at ease to share and listen, so that what is said and talked about is relevant to the group [...]"²⁵.

⁽ⁿ⁾ The questionnaire had 71 questions categorized as: social and demographic characteristics; access to and use of health services; participation in groups of youths; use of the Internet; sexual and reproductive life; discrimination on the Internet and at school; mental health.



the research procedures opened spaces that favored the visibility of assault, abuse, and sexist practices, as well as the demand for debating gender inequalities.

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Psychology Institute of Universidade de São Paulo (IPUSP) through opinion CAAE no. 00530918.9.0000.556.

Results

School practices that regulate bodies: “the school picks on the girls a lot..”

One important result was the identification of the use of the category “harassment” to describe different situations of the girls’ experience. The field records show that the female students used the term to expose different social practices targeted at the girls and carried out by other students, relatives, and school agents, including teachers.

Certain disciplinary practices and school rules are understood as attempts to control the girls’ bodies and felt as ways of harassing women, because they express “people’s machismo” and “the school’s machismo” in censorship and judgement acts. These practices, specifically those aiming to regulate the girls’ clothes - and which are not found to the same extent as in practices aimed at boys -, express the historical and persistent surveillance of bodies designated/perceived as female. In the field records, situations are described in which the girls were prevented from entering the school because they were wearing something considered “inadequate”, like “shorts a bit above the knees”. In addition to access control, there are also the practices of sending written warnings to parents or guardians and conducting classroom “inspections”, in which school agents inspect the girls’ clothes and warn those who are wearing clothes considered inadequate in the presence of the classmates.

The field reports register the indignation of the girls at these situations, which they consider humiliating and shameful. The school managers’ justification for this rule - “to avoid the eyes of the boys” - was emphatically questioned, as well as the fact that only the girls’ clothes are controlled, as “the boys attend school using shorts that reveal their underwear, tank tops that show many body parts, and the school does nothing”; “only girls get scolded”. The regulation of the girls’ clothes under the premise of “maintaining order” blames the girls for the boys’ behavior and exposes the way in which the school distributes responsibilities based on gender differences.

Schools in the face of harassment: “we are tired of talking about it and nothing is ever done”

Reports of harassment cases, including cases practiced at school by teachers, were part of the data collected in the field. In the accusations that the institutions did not take a position concerning harassment occurrences, or took measures considered insufficient (like conversations with people involved or verbal commitments to make inquiries), the girls emphasized that the schools did not face the problem. In a reported case that involved a teacher, the school’s conduct was criticized by the girls: although the school management was aware that “the teacher hit on the girls and took pictures



of them during classes”, it did not take actions that considered the point of view of the victims. In the analyzed material, there were also cases in which accused teachers were transferred to other workplaces, cases of silencing, and other inaccuracies in the measures taken by the management.

Psychosocial suffering also emerged as a consequence of harassment experiences. The referral of harassed students to “psychological treatment” was perceived as insufficient because no measures were taken in relation to the aggressor, who “went on with his life”, as suggested by this fragment of a girl’s speech: “I was referred to psychological treatment and nothing happened to the person who was making me suffer...”.

Schools seem to deal with harassment cases in an individualized way, as it were an issue restricted to the people directly involved. The study’s participants felt that the school agents ended up blaming the girls for the violence they suffered, due to some imprudence or some inadequate piece of clothing. The institutional practices that contribute to gender inequality are reiterated in the daily routine and, sometimes, participate in what is named harassment. During the fieldwork, the teams heard reports of detailed scenes with names of people involved, dates, and the emotions that were triggered. Many times, scenes were narrated with rage and perplexity at the institution’s silence, even in direct denunciations, as in the case of the girl who heard the following comment from a teacher during class: “Are you working out to look like that actress from the soap opera? [...] because she’s hot”.

The students to whom we talked consider that the schools have difficulties in dealing formally with harassment and adopting means to face gender inequalities. At school, the girls are susceptible to embarrassing situations on a daily basis, like the case of a women’s soccer championship that occurred in one of the studied schools. While the girls played, the boys shouted expressions that sexualized the players and their bodies: “hot”, “large butt”, “big boobs”. According to the girls, the experience became “a pornographic rather than a sports attraction” and was named harassment. The girls believed that the management misconducted the case, as the event continued with the exclusive participation of girls and the isolation of the boys. Accommodated in a classroom, they rebelled, broke tables, and attacked a teacher. The occurrence led to the temporary suspension of the event, which was later resumed at the girls’ request, but only with the participation of the players, without an audience. To the participants, the institution punished the players, who could barely finish the game, while “the school didn’t do anything with the boys”, reiterating perceptions about male impunity.

The girls blamed the schools for harassment due to their conducts and attitudes or because of their silence. Thus, harassment became constitutive of the schools’ practices and regulated by the lack of spaces for hearing and embracing the girls, revealing the institutional paralysis when gender-based violence takes place.

The girls’ leadership and denunciation experiences: “we don’t have a space to talk about it”

The rules that regulate access to the school spaces do not prevent them from being occupied by students and acquiring other meanings - the girls even forged channels



to talk about gender-based violence. In one of the participant schools, during the fieldwork, the researchers observed an intervention in one of the girls' toilets that denounced sexual aggressions experienced by students. The initiative was inspired by an episode occurred in one of the compartments of the toilet, where a student cut herself and wrote, with her own blood, words that asked for help and indicated a connection with a harassment situation she had suffered.

The political act observed in the toilet transformed that space into an occupation, where male names were written on the walls and doors, next to the word "aggressor". On one of the doors, there was an inscription in capital letters: "*EU TAMBÉM*" - a literal translation of Me Too, the hashtag that has been spreading over social media since October 2017 as a movement of denunciation of sexual aggressions committed against girls and women on a daily basis. A message followed: "use this space to report harassment, abusive relationships, etc." There were inscriptions of events occurred outside school, practiced by people who were close to the victims: "my cousin, 7 years old, 2017"; "my stepfather, when I was 6 years old"; "my ex, at his home, and afterwards he asked me why I was crying, 2018"; "my ex, at a party, I asked him to stop but he kept trying, I managed to escape but this has terrified me up to this day".

Another occupation observed in a school, and equally conducted by girls, was an artistic exhibition in which the works were inspired by the themes of femicide, sexual harassment, homophobia, and transphobia. The activity drew attention to gender demands and to the need of occupying also the curriculum, at the same time that stimulated informal embracement practices performed by collective initiatives.

These occupations translate the association of harassment with gender inequalities, and draws attention to the materiality of the violence that is manifested in different ways in schools and, despite this, is not a priority of the institutions.

Discussion

The category harassment: things learned and reflections on the field

The category "harassment", employed distinctively by the participants, articulated intimidation and coercion experiences that affect the comfort, dignity and freedom of girls at school. We classified the harassment practices according to the way in which they occur: (i) between students, usually committed by boys with conducts perceived as abusive; (ii) abuses committed by family members and brought to the school's attention; (iii) sexism and sexual assault practiced by teachers and other school agents.

In addition to the social practices classified as "harassment", the participants mentioned school practices that are part of the dynamics that makes harassment be a daily problem of the institution. According to them, despite sexist, assault and abusive practices, harassment is prolonged due to the discredit they face when they denounce such situations. The schools tend to classify complaints, denunciations, and demands as "exaggeration" or "drama". From the point of view of the girls, therefore, harassment experiences are associated with the discriminations they suffer because they are women.



The participants also verbalized the importance of an institutional approach articulated with other themes, like sexuality and mental health. In this sense, the girls' leadership identified in the analyzed material interacts with other findings of our research, like the specific question about sexual attraction contained in the questionnaire, in which 49.6% of the girls answered they feel attracted, exclusively or not, to women⁽⁶⁾. This points to a possible openness to non-heterosexual experiences by the female students. This result seems to correlate with the girls' questioning postures regarding heteronormative conventions, observed in the fieldwork at schools.

Harassment was announced as a problem that must be assumed by schools, as they have not yet taken responsibility, or sufficient responsibility, for gender-based violence. This indicates the need to adopt strategies to face the problem, and the most important one is the promotion of debates on violence against women and girls in schools.

The visibility of the category "harassment" in the voices of this study's participants corroborates the findings of other studies on youth agency of feminist discourses to interrogate gender normativities²¹. Thus, it seems possible to correlate the greater visibility given to sexist practices of sexual harassment and abuse with the reverberation of feminist discourses in students' groups that intervene in the daily routine of the school and make impact on gender and sexuality experiences^{22,23,26}.

In the scope of these transformations, the girls' engagement in denouncing practices perceived as harassment seems to show a "change in sensibility" regarding gender-based violence in contemporary times. This is proposed by Almeida¹⁸ when she discusses the effects of movements like #MyFirstHarassment, which have enabled the expression of silenced sufferings and complaints, as well as women's affective identification with the victims' accounts, something that was partially identified in the results of our research.

The empirical material analyzed here also allows us to raise questions regarding the reproduction of gender inequality in schools and the institution's conduct when facing cases of violence. Similar to what Gãdin and Stein²⁷ mentioned, the girls expose the schools' difficulty in assuming harassment as an institutional responsibility: the girls tend to be accused based on a moral assessment of individual behaviors, which ends up attributing to the victims responsibility for the harassment they suffered. Therefore, it is possible to infer that the schools are co-responsible for harassment in terms of their conduction of rules and practices, like in the case of their strictness in relation to the girls' clothes, which reveals the conflict in relation to body exposure as constituting the ways of being at school; in addition, the female body still represents a threat to the school order and continues to be violated in its spaces⁴.

Clothing control leads to girls being blamed for their "bad behavior" and serves as a justification for violence resulting from the "provocation" that the exhibition of the body supposedly produces. Stricter rules for girls and the institution's silence can be understood as measures of value that put them at a disadvantage compared to boys and facilitate permissiveness concerning the occurrence of harassment. Corroborating the study carried out by Parkes *et al.*¹⁴, we identify that the institutional conducts tend to strengthen gender norms and exercise different forms of violence against those who do not follow them, including the inflicted feeling of guilt.

⁽⁶⁾ Of the 717 questionnaires, 44.5% were answered by boys, 55% by girls, and 0.6% by students who identified themselves in another way. Among the girls, 46.2% answered they feel attracted only to men; 2.5% answered they feel attracted only to women; 14% equally to women and men; 27% mainly to men, but also to women; 5.6% mainly to women, but also to men. In contrast, 78.9% of the boys answered they feel attracted only to women; 17.1% answered they feel attracted, exclusively or not, to other men and, from this amount, 4.4% answered they feel attracted only to men; 1.6% equally to women and men; 3.8% mainly to men, but also to women; and 7.3% mainly to women, but also to men. The difference between the answers of boys and girls draws attention to the relevance of gender, as difference, in the distinct meanings of the convention on sexuality.



According to what Gâdin and Stein²⁷ have observed, our results point to absence of debates on harassment, attempts to hide the cases, lenience towards gender inequalities, and power asymmetries in schools. This contributes to the normalization of harassment in the school environment and turn the school into an unsafe place with impairments to learning, as proposed by Magalhães *et al.*²⁸. The construction of a freer and safer teaching and learning environment, therefore, depends on the school community assuming responsibility for and engaging in the prevention of violence, thus increasing awareness of the intrinsic relationship between harassment, gender, and power.

We highlight that we could learn about such a sensitive theme only because of the use of the active research methodology, which opened a space to hear the problem and discuss how it could be faced. Thus, at the same time that we learned about the urgency of the theme in schools, we identified possibilities to change practices and incorporate feminist pedagogies¹⁸ committed to gender justice. The voices of the girls who participated in the study strengthen the urgency of the fight against gender inequality at school and in the broader society.

Final remarks

Harassment, announced and denounced during the research, was presented in a way that converged with the new sensibility regarding violence against women that the globalized feminist discourses have brought to the surface. Discussing the idea of sexual rights as human rights, Carrara²⁹ addresses the moral regulation produced by contemporary political, medical, and legal discourses that reposition sexuality as a right associated with personal fulfilment, well-being and happiness, based on notions of consent and responsibility that delimit the frontiers between legitimate pleasure and violation. There has been an increase in social uneasiness towards violent and irresponsible sexuality, capable of jeopardizing people's integrity, which is materialized in the studied schools through the greater visibility of the violations and clashes between divergent regulations of the young bodies. Conventional gender expectations and hierarchies continue to operate at school, maintaining the conditions for the occurrence of harassment.

As a polysemic category, harassment emerges as an "umbrella" term that materializes the phenomenon by naming and arranging it. Thus, it discloses multiple violences. By naming the violence suffered, it enables to face gender inequalities both in and out of school. The women were the main questioners of practices that reiterate gender hierarchies and injustices; in addition, they denounced the schools' silence or inadequacy regarding these matters.

Schools are occupied by youths immersed in a globalized socialization strongly mediated by the Internet, which has repercussions on positioning, legitimates experiences, and has been enabling new ways of demanding justice through the reach and dissemination of contents that strengthen and are strengthened by feminist discourses, including those enunciated in schools.

What we observed in the field seems to indicate paths for changing the relationships established at school, either in the agency of the discourses or in the occupation of spaces - like toilets and other physical venues in the building -, with initiatives that are included



in the curriculum and question inequalities. Although the results show the recurrence of control measures over the girls, corroborating previous findings^{4,30,31}, they also reveal an increasing visibility of violence and demands for institutional responses.

In addition, we identified the urgent need to investigate how teachers understand the violence that occurs at school, given that teachers harass students and, therefore, indirectly authorize students to do the same. The relationship between adult teacher and young student is central to understand the institutional dynamics of exclusion⁴, which includes harassment. Facing harassment must be the responsibility of the entire school community, and institutional paths must be outlined with the youths' participation.

By announcing and denouncing violence, demanding institutional responses, and taking resistance initiatives, the female students question convention and expectations related to gender and age in the defense of their right to autonomy and to the legitimate and protected exercise of their sexuality, in opposition to the forces that intend to banish these themes from school. Therefore, we believe that the school plays a central role in the response to public controversies about children's and youths' gender and sexuality expressions³².

Harassment prevention at school intertwines with the discussion of gender-based violence, including the development of institutional policies and trainings, management of cases, and creation of support structures¹³. Furthermore, it involves the recognition of the generation hierarchies that regulate relationships and privilege the power position of adults to the detriment of young voices, including those that denounce harassment.

The present article intended to shed light on harassment as an important category for schools and youths, a category that reveals expectations of masculinity and femininity, power relations, and hierarchies regulated by gender and generation inequalities. The girls' leadership, both in the denunciation of harassment and in the verbalization of experiences that confront gender and sexuality norms, affects the daily routine of the school, and instigates the interest in conducting further research on the theme. In particular, it is necessary to reflect more thoroughly on how the reverberation of feminist discourses, disseminated, among other means, through the Internet, broadens the youth repertoire and affects relationships in the daily routine of the school.

Authors

Fernanda Farias dos Santos^(d)

<fernandafarias.s@usp.br> 

João Vitor Saldanha de Oliveira^(e)

<joaosaldanha2101@gmail.com> 

Vitória Lopes Hiraishi^(f)

<vitoriahiraishi@hotmail.com> 

Sasha Cruz Alves Pereira^(g)

<sasha.pereira@usp.br> 

Júlio Assis Simões^(h)

<juliosimoes@usp.br> 



Affiliation

- ^(d) Pós-graduanda do Programa de Saúde Pública (Mestrado), Faculdade de Saúde Pública, USP. São Paulo, SP, Brasil.
- ^(e) Bacharel em Psicologia, Instituto de Saúde e Sociedade, Unifesp. Santos, SP, Brasil.
- ^(f) Graduanda do curso de Psicologia, Instituto de Saúde e Sociedade, Unifesp. Santos, SP, Brasil.
- ^(g) Pós-graduando do Programa de Antropologia Social (Mestrado), Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas (FFLCH), USP. São Paulo, SP, Brasil.
- ^(h) Departamento de Antropologia, FFLCH, USP. São Paulo, SP, Brasil.

Authors' contribution

All authors actively participated in all stages of preparing the manuscript.

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Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Resumo

Neste artigo, discutimos os usos da categoria “assédio” empregada por jovens estudantes de escolas públicas de Ensino Médio para dar sentido a experiências de violência e discriminação de gênero ocorridas dentro e fora da escola. A análise baseia-se em registros de trabalho de campo produzidos no âmbito de uma pesquisa multicêntrica e de métodos mistos, realizada em nove escolas de São Paulo (SP/BR). O assédio aparece como uma categoria polissêmica que, ao nomear a violência, ajuda no enfrentamento das hierarquias e desigualdades de gênero e geração. Depreendemos que as jovens têm questionado normativas e atitudes que alimentam as desigualdades de gênero nas escolas, além de denunciarem o silenciamento ou inadequação da instituição no enfrentamento do problema, o que possibilita identificar convergências com uma nova sensibilidade em torno da violência contra mulheres que os discursos feministas globalizados fizeram emergir.

Palavras-chave: Assédio. Gênero. Juventude. Escola.

Resumen

En este artículo discutimos los usos de la categoría “acoso” empleada por jóvenes estudiantes de escuelas públicas de enseñanza media para dar sentido a la experiencia de violencia y discriminación de género ocurridas dentro y fuera de la escuela. El análisis se basa en registros de trabajo en campo producidos en el ámbito de una investigación multicéntrica y de métodos mixtos, realizada en nueve escuelas de São Paulo (SP/BR). El acoso parece como una categoría polisémica que, al nombrar la violencia, ayuda en el enfrentamiento de las jerarquías y desigualdades de género y generación. Concluimos que las jóvenes han puesto en tela de juicio normativas y actitudes que alimentan las desigualdades de género de las escuelas, además de denunciar el silenciamento o la inadecuación de la institución en el enfrentamiento del problema, lo que posibilita la identificación de convergencias con una nueva sensibilidad alrededor de la violencia contra mujeres que los discursos feministas globalizados hicieron surgir.

Palabras clave: Acoso. Género. Juventud. Escuela.