

# Meanings attributed to affectivity and experience of sexuality by LGBT school youths

## Sentidos atribuídos por jovens escolares LGBT à afetividade e à vivência da sexualidade

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## Abstract

This is a study on the narratives of young students self-identified as part of social segments of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people (LGBT), who acted as protagonists in projects to promote health and defend human rights in school contexts. The study used qualitative methodological strategies, such as recording the participants' life history and in-depth interviews, aiming to understand the meanings attributed to actions developed in the projects and to aspects of their life experiences. For three months and in different settings, a trans woman, a cis gay man and a cis lesbian woman participated in the interviews, sharing their life experience. This article contemplates four central categories identified in the narratives: identities and diversity, map of violence, affective-sexual experiences of young LGBT students and health promotion of young LGBT people in the school setting. The violence described shows physical, psychological, sexual aspects, as well as neglect and abandonment. Discrimination in the family and at school scenarios emerged as a mark of suffering. We concluded that sexuality and human rights education projects in schools can be considered an opportunity for knowledge and exchange between peers, allowing for a more humane and protective experience of the affectivity and sexuality of young LGBT people. Atlas Ti version 8 supported the data processing and codification.

**Keywords:** Sexuality; Human Rights.

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## Resumo

Este artigo é um estudo sobre narrativas de jovens escolares autoidentificadas como parte de segmentos sociais de lésbicas, gays, bissexuais e pessoas trans (LGBT), que atuaram como protagonistas em projetos de promoção da saúde e defesa dos direitos humanos em contextos escolares. O estudo utilizou estratégias metodológicas de natureza qualitativa, tais como o registro da história de vida e entrevistas em profundidade, visando compreender os significados atribuídos às ações desenvolvidas nos projetos e aspectos das experiências vividas. Participaram do estudo uma mulher trans, um homem cis gay e uma mulher cis lésbica, que durante três meses e em diversos cenários dialogaram nas entrevistas. Este artigo contempla quatro categorias centrais identificadas nas narrativas: identidades e diversidade, mapa das violências, vivências afetivo-sexuais de jovens escolares LGBT e promoção da saúde de jovens LGBT no cenário escolar. As violências descritas abrangem aspectos físicos, psicológicos, sexuais, negligência e abandono. A discriminação na família e na escola surgiu como marca de sofrimento. Conclui-se que os projetos de educação em sexualidade e direitos humanos em âmbito escolar podem ser considerados oportunidade de conhecimento e troca entre pares e facilitadores de uma vivência mais humana e protetora da afetividade e da sexualidade de jovens LGBT. Para o processamento e classificação das narrativas foi utilizado o software Atlas Ti, versão 8.

**Palavras-chave:** Sexualidade; Direitos Humanos.

## Introduction

This article addresses experiences narrated by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual and transgender (LGBT) adolescents and young people participating in health promotion projects in the school space. It is important, however, to define preliminarily what it is to be a teenager or a young person. For the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence is a period between 10 and 19 years with intense biological and psychosocial changes, while youth covers from 15 to 24 years. In the Brazilian *Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente* (ECA - Statute of the Child and Adolescent), adolescence occurs between 12 and 18 incomplete years. In the *Estatuto da Juventude*, which addresses the rights, principles and guidelines of public policies of young people, this period is defined between 15 and 29 years. However, understanding adolescence and youth requires a broader understanding than just considering chronological aspects of age.

The term “youth”, sociologically, shows some perspectives. Pais (1990) proposes the classification in currents, being the generational one, which favors age factors and biological aspects, approaching a more universalist dimension of young people, and another, the classist one, which assumes youth as a phenomenon influenced by the social markers of insertion of young people in different social classes, life experiences and forms of social integration. Bourdieu (1983) argues that classifying youth considering only age and biological factors does not allow to understand the concept in the complexity of its dimensions. Other perspectives appear in the way young people insert themselves in the world and in the practices and life projects linked to the meanings given to life and social relations established in the various contexts.

LGBT youth protagonism in school space proposes reflections that can broaden perceptions and give new meanings to the experiences of sexuality and affectivity, potentiating the role of youth in the contemporary world. The term LGBT is used to represent sexual and gender diversity, but other inserts have been designed by the assumption of visibility, such as the acronym LGBTQI+, in which “Q” refers to the English word *queer*, originally used

pejoratively, as well as *faq* and *faggot* in English, *bent* in German, *marica* in Spanish or *viado* in Portuguese. *Queer* was subsequently re-signified by the theoretical contributions of several scholars, including Butler (2002), who makes a critical reading of performative and hierarchical gender coercive normalizations. The designation “I” is used for the recognition of the intersex person, and the (+) in the perspective of other gender categories. Still, according to Jesus (2012), “sex” is usually defined biologically and gender translates social issues; based on such assumptions, the human being receives a designation of “gender” at birth. Thus, when a person identifies with the “gender” that characterized them at birth, they are classified as cisgender (cis), and when this “gender” differs from their identity, they are classified as transgender (trans). Since there is no consensus regarding the use of these terms in the academia, the use of the cis and trans terms to refer to the research participants is due to their mention by the young people themselves in their narratives.

The focus of this study is to reflect on health and sexuality, themes present in the conceptions and practices of adolescents and young people who attend school spaces. We also aimed to direct thought to the role of schools as privileged spaces for health education and promotion of practices and interventions that contribute to the well-being of this population, since being young LGBT in the school space is a challenge, in the face of advances and setbacks of educational policy in Brazil.

Historical notes portray that discussing sexuality, especially in schools, during the military dictatorship, was not well-regarded by the current conservative morality (Bedin, 2016). In the 1980s, with the loosening of censorship, the concern to take the debate to schools resurfaced, fueled by the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the increase in the number of teenage pregnancies in schools. Only in 1997, the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCN - National Curriculum Parameters) provided official recognition of the need to establish a transversal dialogue on sexuality education in schools, despite the current hygienist and biologizing discourse (Bueno; Ribeiro, 2018). However, it was only between 2003 and 2011 that social inclusion policies made possible rapprochement with LGBT

social movements, enabling an increase in academic production on the subject, increasing the visibility of gender and sexual diversity issues in educational policies, and putting on the agenda issues still considered taboo in the school environment.

It is important to understand that the school project that housed the experiences narrated here began at a time of recognition of the role of the state and public health and education policies in relation to the school. As the project developed, the project *Saúde e Prevenção nas Escolas* (SPE - Health and Prevention in Schools) was implemented in 2003, which validated HIV/AIDS prevention and education in sexuality and human rights in schools. In 2004, the *Conselho Nacional de Combate à Discriminação* (National Council to Prevent Discrimination) continued this strategy, publishing the document “*Brasil Sem Homofobia: Programa de combate à violência e à discriminação contra LGTB e de promoção da cidadania homossexual*” (Brazil Without Homophobia: A program to prevent violence and discrimination against LGBT and to promote homosexual citizenship), expressing the intersectoral policy of confronting homophobia. As of 2007, the Programa Saúde na Escola (PSE - Health at School Program) was created, with the intention of strengthening actions for integral development and community participation in health and education programs and projects (Brazil, 2011).

Gradually, they created human rights approaches in schools from 2003, but only in 2012, the *Diretrizes Nacionais para Educação em Direitos Humanos* (EDH - National Guidelines for Human Rights Education) were established in school settings (Beleche; Silva, 2017). These guidelines intended to articulate spaces for debate, continuing training and establishing support networks in the school community, as well as adopting, in this environment, the reduction of individual and social vulnerabilities, building spaces of respect for diversity, fighting violence and establishing protection mechanisms.

On the other hand, in 2004, in the political field, the *Escola Sem Partido* movement (School with no Political Party) began, claiming to represent parents and students opposed to what its defenders called “ideological indoctrination” in schools, trying, among several setbacks, to exclude themes and terms such as sexual orientation and gender from the *Plano Nacional*

*da Educação* (PNE - National Education Plan) and the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC - National Common Curriculum Base). The conservative bench was strengthening in power, leading to the cooling of actions and dismantling of hard-won policies. With the country politically divided, mainly from 2014, the Escola sem Partido movement gained more space. Currently, there is a setback regarding the inclusion of these themes in school agendas, such as sexuality, gender and human rights, deleted from documents relevant to legal support for actions linked to the formation of citizenship.

According to Neves (2017), throughout 2014, there were plans to minimize inequalities with emphasis on the promotion of racial equity, gender and sexual orientation in the PNE and BNCC; however, the approved text excluded such purposes and the government continues to plaster spaces of freedom of expression, potentiating prejudice and discrimination of LGBT youth. For Deslandes (2015), this threatens the construction of democratic values in society. Additionally, religious conceptions imbricated in a political scenario have eclipsed the secularism of the state and stimulated stigma, discrimination and vulnerability to violence directed at such segments of youth (Silva; Paiva; Parker, 2013). Despite this, some schools persist in trying to expand spaces for the counter-hegemonic discussion of the rights, sexuality and affectivity of young people.

In this article, in addition to the experiences of the young protagonists as interlocutors with their peers in school, we intended to understand how they face affectivity and sexuality and the meanings attributed to their life trajectories and school project.

## Methodology and context

This is a qualitative study based on the systematization of narratives and life stories of three young LGBT people, former students of a school that developed health promotion projects, where they were protagonists and coordinators of this initiative in various environments. For three months, the young people were accompanied by the researcher in 29 meetings. Semi-structured interviews were developed based on a pre-established script, which addressed the following subjects: school trajectory,

quality of family and social relationships, facilities and difficulties of experiencing sexuality and affectivity, involvement as protagonists in education actions in sexuality, human rights and health in schools. The research took place within the framework of a project in a public school, since 2001.

The school project brought critical reflections that encouraged the formation of young protagonists in the methodology of peer education. The experience was shown in an international forum and was also recognized by domestic and foreign organizations. Currently, the project has become a non-governmental organization (NGO), with the aim of continuing to promote the citizen construction of young people. In their coordination, as a reflection of resistance, LGBT youth, for the most part, dictate the pace of actions.

The data of the interviews were confronted with field diary notes from perceptions, body expression and symbolic representations seized during the research. Transcribed interviews were analyzed by the Atlas TI 8 software. The narrative material was classified from the units of meaning, following the content analysis method of Bardin (1977). The data were selected in quotations, represented as significant excerpts from the transcripts, codes as phrases and words that summarized relevant excerpts and code groups, representing the central categories of analysis. The investigation observed the ethical considerations involving human beings, in accordance with current standards, and the project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculdade de Saúde of the Universidade de Brasília (CEP/FS/UnB), under number 2,270,313.

## Results and discussion

Three young LGBT people participated in the study. A 20-year-old trans woman, former student of the school where she started the process of accepting her transvestism, a 20-year-old cis gay man, who got involved with the project as a student, and a 17-year-old cis lesbian woman, who upon meeting the project collaborated with activities inside and outside the school. Currently, all of them, directly or indirectly, collaborate with the NGO.

From the floating reading of the narratives and the selection of the significant excerpts from the

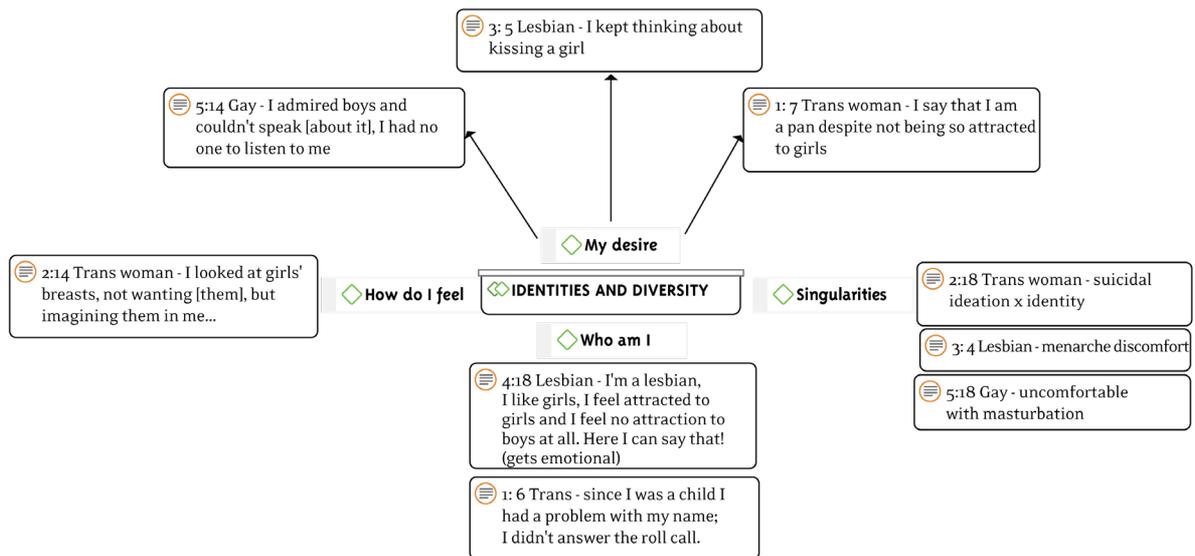
transcripts, four central categories emerged for the conception of this article: Category I - Identities and Diversity; Category II - Map of Violence; Category III - Affective-sexual experiences of young LGBT students; and Category IV - Health promotion of young LGBT in school settings. The results produced four representative figures called networks, shown below.

### Category I: Identities and Diversity

In the Identities and Diversity category, discoveries about identity, fear of social non-acceptance and feelings of denial emerged. Denying

LGBT identity can be a consequence of internalized homophobia, a term coined by Alan Malyon (1982), which expresses self-concept and self-contempt as a result of desires and behaviors unrelated to cis-heteronormative norms and which, internalized by LGBT people, hinder the process of acceptance and assumption of their sexuality and identity and contribute to the stigmatization of peers. On the other hand, the young people expressed reinforcement of identity and “empowerment”, introspection and struggle for belonging, allowing a diverse and original look at themselves, as expressed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Category I: Identities and Diversity with some subcategories: who am I, how do I feel, my desire and singularities**



We observed some convergences and singularities in the identities of the young participants in the research. Gender identity can be experienced in various ways and, thus, the heteronormativity or binarism attributed by biological sex and gender, as male and female, no longer responds to the various possible identities or forms of affectivity experienced today (Spargo, 2017).

Figure 1 shows the network, in which convergences classified the identity category from the codes “how do I feel” and “who am I”. The cis lesbian woman reported that “*I didn't like those things, it wasn't men's clothes I wore, they started*

*saying that I wanted to be a boy, and that wasn't the point.*” The trans woman reported that before the process of assuming the new identity, when observing the breasts of her friends, she did not feel attraction, but rather a desire to have them, and felt bad for it. In all the speeches, we noticed suffering or difficulty in assuming to be LGBT. The young gay man, for example, said “*I didn't want to be [gay], I was afraid, because of the way I acted, when they said that I looked gay, I cried a lot...!*” We therefore found that assuming identity has never been simple, since it is dynamic, unstable and not established, but always subject to transformation (Louro, 2017).

Sexual orientation translated as the subcategory My Desire was the most painful awakening perceived in the narratives, as it showed guilt, loneliness, exclusion, fear and suffering, which, according to Spargo (2017), marks the transgression for not following the norm imposed by society, which privileges cis-heteronormativity. The perception of these feelings arose from some reports, such as the term “pan” used by the trans woman to represent the attraction she felt to people, regardless of their sexual identity, gender, sexual orientation or biological sex. The young lesbian was attracted, but felt guilty by the desire to kiss girls. The young gay man reported loneliness when he realized that he desired boys, but had no one to share such feelings.

Another aspect identified was the discomfort of the trans woman with her civil name since she was a child: “*since I was a child I had a problem with my name, I said it was Mathews, João; I kept inventing, I didn’t answer the roll call.*” This situation can portray discomfort from an early age, signaling transsexuality not as an option, but as a gender identity. To become an LGBT citizen, she needed a deep reconstitution in her self-esteem and self-confidence. The young cis woman’s account “*Look, I’m a lesbian, I love girls, I feel attracted to girls and I feel no attraction to boys at all. Here I*

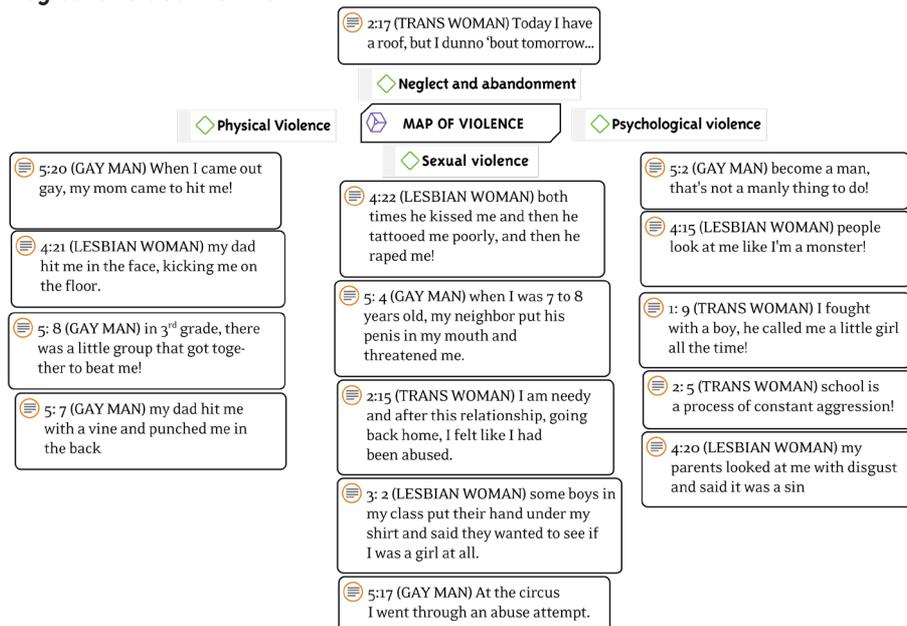
*can say that!*” presupposes a journey through several stages of recognition, which involved processes of encouragement and re-signification from the approach of spaces of freedom and expression within the school.

The Singularities subcategory expresses feelings, such as the trans woman’s constant suicidal ideation, the result of suffering because she felt she was born in the wrong body. Many scholars admit that the transgender experience, in the so-called internalized transphobia, reflects a war of the person with their own body, leading to anguish and anxiety in the relationship with their anatomy. Another feeling in this subcategory was in the dread of the young gay man when he experienced guilt in masturbation, which indicates that myths and taboos in sexuality not only plague the cis-heteronormative society, but in a generational way can be related to all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation.

## Category II: Map of Violence

We observed in this category the mark of aggressiveness and hostilities as elements present in LGBT trajectories. Figure 2 shows that the narratives refer to episodes of various types of violence, all highlighted in the literature on the subject.

**Figure 2 – Category II: Map of Violence according to subcategories: physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence and neglect and abandonment**



The various forms of manifestation of violence narrated by LGBT youth indicate that this is a recurrent phenomenon within the family, which reveals the centrality of the valorization of heteronormative relationships with moral and religious influences and the particularly painful response within these social structures (Silva; Paiva; Parker, 2013). The narratives express that the experience of sexuality and the construction of gender identity are subject to mechanisms of oppression at various social scales. In the analyzed narratives, parents applied physical violence after knowing about the most fluid identities of their children.

When the family violently rejects a behavior because they consider it dirty and outside the norms of good customs, an oppressive portrait grows and the person begins to feel assaulted in other environments. This can be seen, for example, in the speech of one of them: “*school is a process of constant aggression!*” (Trans woman, 20). So getting out of this cycle is a huge challenge.

The sexual violence reported by the research participants was manifested as a result of a process of vulnerability. We observed the increase in the practice of rape in society, and it we can infer that being a lesbian confronts the sexist culture of control of bodies and female sexuality. In this line, hatred and prejudice may be the bases of “corrective rape”, as an attempt to convert the sexual orientation of the victim into heterosexual, strengthening conservative and patriarchal masculinities (Silva, 2017).

The young lesbian suffered violence when the tattooist charged her a forced sexual intercourse for work as a mechanism of proving her sexual orientation. Having felt exposed and threatened to suffer new violence, the young woman opted for silence. Another event she reported dates back to the age of 10, when classmates touched her body without consent: “*some boys in my class put their hand under my shirt and said they wanted to see if I was a girl at all. The other colleagues saw and said nothing, a teacher saw me crying and didn't care*” (Cis lesbian woman, 17). The young gay man was also the victim of several events of sexual violence, reporting that “*my neighbor put his penis in my mouth and threatened me.*” Although the trans woman mentions vague recollections of having suffered sexual violence, she

did not detail how it happened, but she expressed them in the lines of her narratives.

In the context of prejudice and discrimination, several excerpts illustrate moments that produced suffering in the trajectories of the young protagonists. Their reports confirm the statements of Braga et al. (2018) and Silva (2017), for which prejudice, discrimination and suffering can lead to illness processes in the field of sexuality and mental health, such as depression, anxiety, isolation, abusive use of alcohol and/or other drugs and even suicidal ideation. Brazilian studies with different methodologies have shown that violence and its various manifestations are present in the daily life of LGBT youth.

In the population of men who have sex with men, approached by the Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) method, the survey found an association between sexual violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, symptoms of sexually transmitted infections and suicidal ideation (Sabidó et al., 2015).

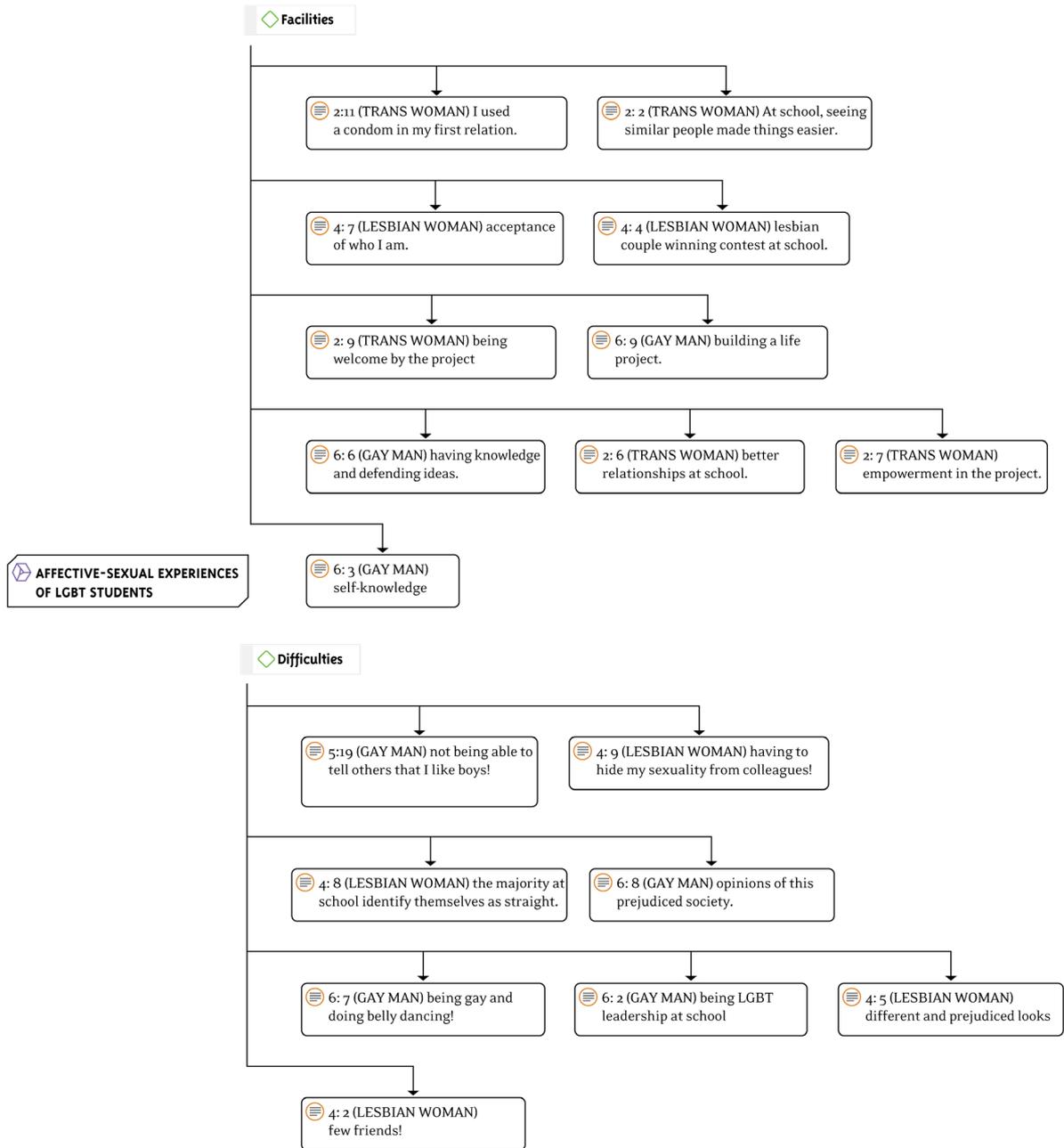
The data collected agrees with epidemiological studies that, from the 1980s, already showed a higher frequency of suicidal ideation among LGBT young people, when compared with heterosexuals. Population-based studies with various methodological designs (Russel; Joyner, 2001) subsequently reaffirmed the results of these studies. Other authors have shown that some factors are associated with suicide attempts, some of them reported by the participants of this study, such as feeling hopeless, lack of family support and depression, among others (Mustanski; Liu, 2013).

### **Category III: Affective-sexual experiences of young LGBT students**

Although the experiences of sexuality and affectivity are far from being indeed a right for the LGBT population, the school scenario with spaces for youth protagonism can strengthen and deconstruct prejudices aligned by histories of denial of rights and disregard for sexual and gender diversity.

The young women reported facilities and difficulties in experiencing their own sexuality and affectivity, bringing reflections and challenges in coping with violence, as Figure 3 shows.

**Figure 3 – Category III: Affective-sexual experiences of young LGBT students with subcategories: facilities and difficulties of experiencing sexuality and affectivity in the context of life trajectories**



Foucault's theoretical contributions (1988), and more expressively, the emergence of the Queer Theory, postulated the need to break with sexual and gender binarism in academic analysis. The very conceptualization of sexuality in contemporary discussions arises from reflections influenced by post-structuralism that gradually removes the reading of the control of male sexual power from the center of the debate and gives voice to the female through the recognition of otherness. In the context of feminist re-readings of reality (Rubin, 1984), which preceded the queer theoretical perspective (Butler, 1990), we recognize that discursive practices around sex and gender are socially constructed and no longer seen as "natural", in the essentialist perspective. In this view, issues of gender, sexuality, desire, feelings, pleasure and self-recognition as sexed beings begin to promote new directions, having relevant political implications.

The greatest difficulties of the trajectories of the young women transpired in statements related to their own identity and the impact of violence, prejudice, stigma, discrimination and suffering experienced, including in the family space. The young gay man reported that there was never a familiar listening about his desires, and he always had to endure prejudiced looks from those closest to him. This fact evidences the existence of exaltation to compulsory heteronormativity, with the imposition of a silencing that intimidates and prevents the assumption of sexuality, isolates and represses tastes.

Although with all these difficulties, the approach and insertion of the young interviewees in the project became a channel of strengthening their identities, as observed in some statements: *"having been welcomed and learning to share knowledge by the project"*, *"I found here others similar to me, which facilitated my empowerment"* (Trans woman, 20), *"in my first time, I used*

*a condom, because I learned its importance in the project"* and *"here I started to build my life project"* (Cis gay man, 20) and *"I was surprised to win a contest at school on Valentine's day even though I'm a lesbian"* (Cis lesbian woman, 17). In this space, the young people faced the possibility of having a voice about their experiences in sexuality and affectivity, revealing and deconstructing myths and prejudices around the theme as part of the social role of the school.

In the United States, despite many difficulties, such challenges have been assumed by school administrators based on federal civil rights legislation<sup>1</sup>, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities (Kurt; Chenault, 2017). For Duque and Teixido (2016), it is necessary to go beyond the concern with sexual and gender orientation of students, and such an effort should involve the entire school community. In the international sphere, several countries refer to violence in the school environment in the form of bullying, highlighting homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia. This also occurs in Catholic countries, in which the policy of preventing violence in schools specifically includes awareness of gender determination (Duque; Teixido, 2016).

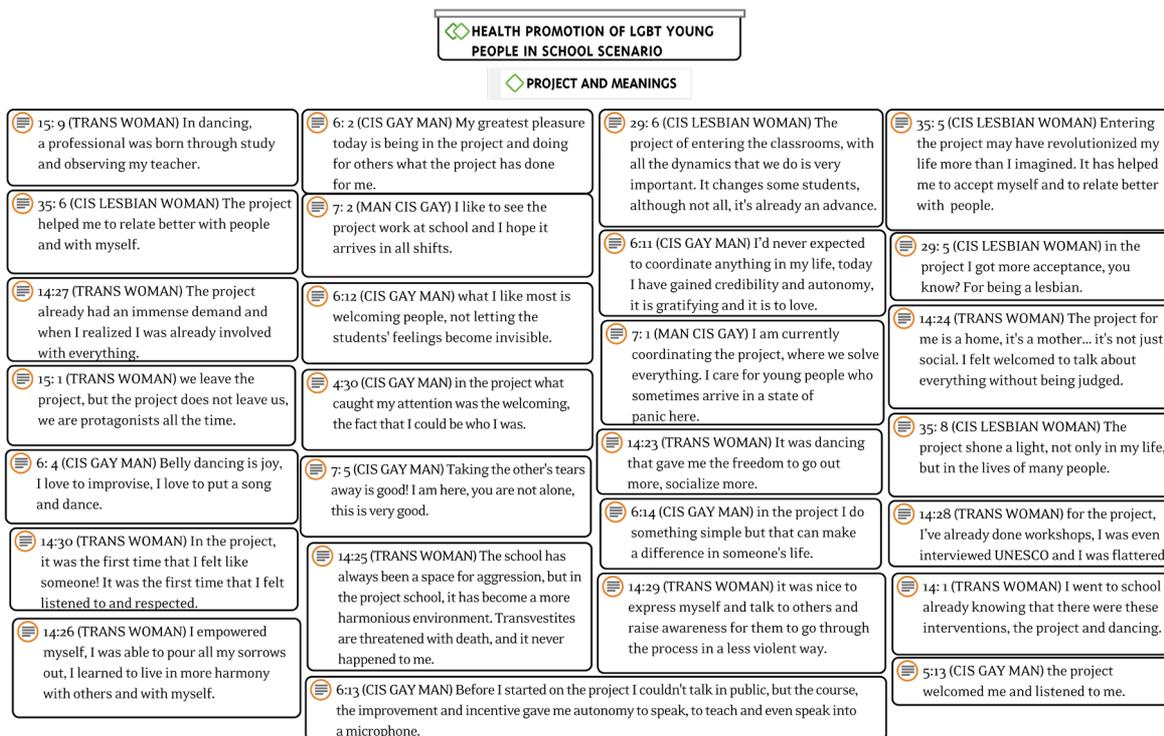
#### **Category IV: Health promotion of LGBT youth in school settings**

LGBT youth in leading actions support processes to strengthen health promotion in schools. This category responds to a part of the research objective, by understanding and identifying interfaces between the research scenario project and health promotion in school context. We sought to understand to what extent this initiative promotes health in school and in the life of LGBT youth. The following is the network that summarizes the subcategory project and meanings and subsequent dialogue with literature.

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<sup>1</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Civil Rights landmark that outlawed gender discrimination in American schools.

**Figure 4 – Category IV: Health Promotion of young people in school setting, with the subcategory Project and meanings**



From the narratives of the three LGBT young people, we identified pain, suffering and loneliness, resulting from processes of violence, prejudice and discrimination, however, it is possible to understand other meanings of these stories. The approach of the three young women to the school that, since 2001, accounts for attempts to mobilize for spaces favorable to health, is plausible of analysis. Thus, the subcategory shown depicts the rise in the quality of life of young people at a certain stage of their trajectory.

The reports show the convergence between the school project and a reception space: “*in the project, what caught my attention was the reception and the fact that I could be who I was*” (Cis gay man, 20) and “*I felt welcome to talk about everything and not be judged*” (Trans woman, 20). The young women express the feeling of transforming the school into a more collaborative and welcoming space. This finding agrees with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 agenda, which proposes to ensure healthy living and well-being for all people

and ages (UNESCO, 2017). The project has also helped in understanding identity and, as a result, they have a better relationship with themselves and with each other: “*this project has helped me to connect better with people and with myself,*” and “*the project helped me to accept being a lesbian*” (Cis lesbian woman, 17); “*I have learned to live in harmony with myself and with others*” (Trans woman, 20), comparing the relationships of those who often reported loneliness and social isolation as a barrier to the society.

Active listening, in which voices echo for freedom of expression and citizenship, was also a convergent account in these lines: “*the project welcomed me and listened to me*” (Cis gay man, 20); “*it was the first time I felt listened to and respected*” (Trans woman, 20). The emptying of what hurts can be a therapeutic process, and the project ended up fostering this type of space in their lives (Barreto, 2008). Finally, they had the process of perceiving themselves as protagonists of self-care actions and struggle for individual and collective rights. The project strengthened previously muted voices:

*“we leave the project, but the project does not leave us, we are protagonists all the time”* (Trans woman, 20); *“currently I am in the coordination of the project, we solve everything here”* (Cis gay man, 20) and *“the project of entering the classrooms is very important, it changes some students”* (Cis lesbian woman, 17).

The participants narrated some singularities, such as the trans woman who highlighted *“in the project, it was the first time that I felt like a person”*, translating the recognition and appreciation of their existence in counterpoint to the social invisibility experienced by trans women, starting from the assumption that they fit into the deviant pattern of gender (Butler, 2002), being denied affective coexistence and belonging in conditions of visibility. On the other hand, the lesbian woman pointed out that the project has revolutionized her life more than she imagined. The cis gay man declared himself involved in the purpose of welcoming his peers so that they do not suffer what he suffered, and is happy to overcome barriers in the communication process: *“before I started in the project, I could not speak in public, and today I have autonomy to teach and speak in a microphone.”* All these aspects support a life more guided in health, rights and citizenship, strengthening guidelines of the pedagogy of autonomy as a necessary knowledge for the educational process (Freire, 2019).

Also according to UNESCO, peer education and youth protagonism underpin other possible narratives of young leaders, to face difficulties arising from a verticalized education, which promotes the exclusion of potentials in favor of hegemonic controls.

Therefore, education processes that address these issues in schools converge with one of the domains of health promotion: the formulation of “healthy” public policies. From an intersectoral perspective, education systems need to recognize reality and social demands, ensure rights and provide the safe and equitable environment that promotes a citizen culture of peace and equity for young people.

## Final remarks

The possibility of systematizing some of the experiences and the meanings attributed by the three young people to their experiences as participants in

school projects to promote sexual and reproductive health contribute to the strengthening of this theme as a relevant subject in school scenarios. Giving light to the recognition of small actions can dislodge frames of extreme apathy and exclusion for new possibilities of construction and insertion of sexual diversity in the daily life of school, in addition to being a training opportunity for students and educators who produce recognition, respect and inclusion of LGBT youth in the context of schools. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to inspire new airs and looks at a minority that cries out for citizenship and recognition of rights.

The study showed that experiencing affective and sexual issues with appropriate information should be a right of all people, regardless of race, color, creed or social class. Young people aware of their rights, strengthened by their convergences and valued in their singularities, can inspire other lives in the participatory construction of new horizons against prejudice and sexual and gender discrimination through education.

Finally, we highlight that this study addressed the analysis of lives that intersect in the context of a given project, constituting a controlled experience in time and space, which could be a limitation to transcend similar experiences in everyday life environments, outside research spaces. However, the approach of these experiences opens up a repertoire of interventions that can contribute to minimize suffering and prejudice, unravel and overcome stigmas and strengthen citizenship processes in schools.

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### Authors' contribution

Freitas collected the data and processed it with Bermúdez. All the authors designed the project, analyzed the data and wrote the article.

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