

## Mapping digital dating abuse in Brasil and Australia: a review on victimisation experiences from the Global-South

Mapeando o abuso digital no namoro no Brasil e na Austrália:  
uma revisão das experiências de vitimização do Sul Global

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**Abstract** *Technology plays a key role in young people's relationships. While its benefits are well known, less is known about its negative impacts and experiences, such as digital dating abuse. Most studies originate from North American and European countries and have not framed digital dating abuse as a multidimensional phenomenon. Exploring this social and public health issue in the Global-South is necessary because it significantly impacts youths' lives. I use Brown and Hegarty's framework of digital dating abuse as a wide range of harmful behaviours and a gender perspective to review the extant literature on adolescent victimisation in digital dating abuse in heterosexual relationships from a southern perspective. This perspective is demonstrated by drawing primarily from the scholarship of two countries in the Global-South, Brasil and Australia. I argue that digital dating abuse is a multifaceted and gendered phenomenon and suggest a qualitative approach across multiple southern countries aids researchers to compile and study adolescent digital dating abuse experiences, contexts and impacts. This contemporary phenomenon of adolescent digital dating abuse merits scholarly attention as a social and public health problem.*

**Key words** *Digital dating abuse, Gendered violence, Brasil, Australia, Adolescents*

**Resumo** *A tecnologia desempenha papel fundamental nas relações entre jovens. Embora seus benefícios sejam bem conhecidos, menos se sabe sobre seus impactos e experiências negativas, como o abuso digital no namoro. A maioria dos estudos vem de países norte-americanos e europeus e não enquadram o abuso digital no namoro como um fenômeno multidimensional. É necessário explorar esta questão social e de saúde pública no Sul Global que impacta significativamente a vida de jovens. Uso a concepção de abuso digital no namoro de Brown e Hegarty como uma ampla gama de comportamentos nocivos e uma perspectiva de gênero para revisar a literatura existente sobre vitimização de adolescentes por abuso digital no namoro em relacionamentos heterossexuais de uma perspectiva do Sul. Essa perspectiva é demonstrada na revisão que destaca estudos de dois países do Sul Global: Brasil e Austrália. Argumento que o abuso digital no namoro é um fenômeno multifacetado e de gênero e sugiro que uma abordagem qualitativa em vários países do Sul pode ajudar pesquisadoras a estudar experiências, contextos e impactos de abuso digital no namoro entre adolescentes. Esse fenômeno contemporâneo merece atenção acadêmica como um problema social e de saúde pública.*

**Palavras-chave** *Abuso digital no namoro, violência de gênero, Brasil, Austrália, Adolescentes*

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## Introduction

Globally, young people are the most digitally connected age cohort<sup>1</sup>, and technology plays a central role in their dating relationships and friendships<sup>2-4</sup>. For young people, building identities and relationships is deeply connected with technology<sup>5-7</sup>. Digital connections allow positive avenues for personal contact and services access, which have been crucial, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>8</sup>. However, the hyperconnectivity of young people, coupled with their age and relationship inexperience, can also make them more vulnerable to negative experiences, such as digital dating abuse (DDA)<sup>9-12</sup>. Although the benefits of using technology are well known, little is known about youths' experiences of DDA, particularly in Global-South countries like Brasil and Australia. Inspired by Connell<sup>13</sup>, Brasil is spelled with an 's' according to its national language, in contrast to the Anglophone spelling.

There are several reasons to develop a study on adolescents' experiences of DDA in Brasil and Australia. First, the extant research on DDA among adolescents originates from the Global-North, particularly in North American and European countries. As such, it is imperative to amplify youths' voices in DDA research from the Global-South and to compile their firsthand experiences and perspectives on DDA victimisation. Adolescents have agency and should be heard in matters that impact them<sup>14</sup>. This perspective is present in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>15</sup>, to which Brasil and Australia are signatories. This convention established that children aged under 18 years should be heard and given the opportunity to express their opinions in all matters affecting them. This perspective underscores children's agency and recognises them as competent social actors whose thoughts, opinions and experiences are valuable and worthy of public and scholarly attention<sup>16,17</sup>. Young people are the experts of their own lives, and what they have to say about their lived experiences is a valuable and original contribution to our understanding of intimate partner violence (IPV)<sup>17,18</sup> and DDA. Thus, it is necessary to research adolescents in both countries to understand their lived experiences and create responses and prevention of DDA according to adolescents' perspectives.

Second, this DDA review focuses on Brasil and Australia. It synthesises the literature from two southern countries, which are often overlooked in international scholarship. Despite several differences, these two countries have a lot in

common. They are part of what Connell named the 'southern tier'; both were colonised by European countries and 'share histories of violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples, creation of primary-export economies, attempts at industrialisation, and dilemmas about cultural and political dependence'<sup>19</sup> (p. 740). Further, Brasil and Australia are leaders in their regional areas—Latin America and Asian-Pacific, respectively. While the digital divide exists across and within countries<sup>20-22</sup>, recent studies from Brasil<sup>22,23</sup> and Australia<sup>21</sup> demonstrate that adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years in these countries are hyperconnected. As such, this review expands the southern criminology agenda in understanding gender-based violence in both southern countries<sup>24</sup>.

Third, both countries have identified technology-facilitated abuse as a serious issue that deserves legal attention. These concerns can be seen in recent legislative reforms and innovations to DDA responses in Brasil and Australia. For example, both countries have identified stalking and monitoring behaviours as serious concerns. Between 2015 and 2016, legislative reforms in the Australian state of Queensland aimed to recognise stalking in the context of IPV as an aggravator factor in sentencing<sup>25</sup>. In October 2022, an amendment bill was introduced into the Queensland Parliament, demonstrating its concerns about harmful technology-facilitated behaviours such as monitoring, tracking and surveillance behaviours<sup>26</sup>. In Brasil, a new crime of stalking—including stalking involving technology—was established in 2021. Like Australia, and perhaps even more attentive to the gendered drivers of IPV, the criminalisation of stalking in Brasil also included aggravating factors if the offence was committed against children, adolescents or elderly, if the offence was perpetrated against women in IPV contexts, or if the offence involved belittling or discrimination of womanhood<sup>27</sup>. While these legal changes are important, further research is required on DDA to generate empirical evidence to underpin prevention and responses.

Fourth, recent qualitative research from Brasil<sup>28</sup> and Australia<sup>29</sup> has demonstrated that technology is the most common means of perpetrating abuse among young people. This evidence outlines the need to explore DDA among adolescents in these countries further. These four reasons indicate that this cross-country review can illuminate further research and understanding of adolescents' experiences of DDA from the Global-South.

DDA encompasses an array of digitally harmful behaviours in intimate relationships, such as controlling, monitoring, threatening, humiliation and sexual behaviours<sup>30</sup>. DDA also comprises image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), defined as taking, distributing or threatening to share nude or intimate images, photos or videos without the permission of involved parties<sup>31</sup>. While DDA comprises a wide range of behaviours, this phenomenon has not always been explored as multidimensional in the extant literature. As a result, some forms of DDA may have been overlooked. To address this limitation, I use Brown and Hegarty's<sup>2</sup> framework to explore DDA research primarily from Brasil and Australia. Brown and Hegarty conceptualise DDA as a wide range of harmful digital behaviours that can be classified into four categories: (1) monitoring and control, (2) humiliation, (3) sexual coercion and (4) threats. I argue that this framework is beneficial in comprehending and exploring DDA as a multidimensional phenomenon. This framework can lead to a deeper understanding of DDA, as it ensures that various DDA behaviours that can be part of abusive relationships are covered, avoiding overlooking certain types of DDA experiences. Thus, the multidimensional and gendered approach used in this review can assist researchers in gathering deeper insights into adolescent DDA experiences.

Guided by this framework and a gendered perspective, I draw primarily on the existing literature from Brasil and Australia to understand adolescent victimisation experiences of DDA in heterosexual relationships from a southern perspective. This southern perspective is demonstrated through the literature from two southern countries, Brasil and Australia, which are often overlooked in international literature. I argue that understanding DDA as a multifaceted and gendered phenomenon across different countries from the Global-South merits scholarly attention as a social and public health problem. I use the term 'adolescents' to refer to people between 12 and 19 years, and 'young people' refers to a broader age range, which will be specified according to the literature analysed. I begin by discussing the use of technology in Brasil and Australia. Then, I provide a map to explore the diverse forms of DDA based on Brown and Hegarty's framework<sup>2</sup>. Finally, I highlight the need to contextualise DDA through a gendered lens and propose a research agenda in which youths' voices from Brasil and Australia are prioritised to understand and prevent this social and public health issue.

## Method

I conducted an online literature search using QUT Library, Google Scholar, Scielo to identify qualitative and quantitative research exploring adolescents' experiences of DDA published in English, Portuguese or Spanish. A variety of terms were used, which I will discuss below. As recent studies on the topic have shown the predominance of studies in the Global-North, my search focus was primarily on identifying and synthesising studies from two southern countries, Brasil and Australia. This review includes empirical peer-review articles, book chapters, theses, and reports published by organisations such as Anglicare, Avon/Data Popular, Promundo and UNICEF. Including a variety of resources is paramount as there is significantly less research on adolescent DDA in southern contexts compared to the research conducted in the Global-North, and considering that different ways of knowing should be acknowledged. This review sought to map the literature on DDA, understood as a multidimensional phenomenon. To this end, the empirical resources included should discuss at least one dimension of DDA related to adolescents' experiences (12-19 years). When the age group was not provided, but the resource had sufficient information to infer the discussion encompassed adolescent DDA, for example, referring to high school students or participants' experiences during a specific age, they were also included.

Various terms were used in English and Portuguese to identify empirical works with young people about their experiences of DDA, such as adolescents/young people/teenagers; teen/youth/adolescent; intimate partner violence/dating violence/dating abuse; digital/online/technology-facilitated abuse; sexting; revenge porn; cyberstalking. After reading the abstracts and considering the focus on DDA among the target age group, 44 empirical works from different countries were included: 18 Brasil, 10 Australia, 6 USA, 2 cross-country from the Global-South, 2 cross-country from the Global-South and Global-North, 2 cross-country from the Global-North, 1 Chile, 1 Belgium, 1 Norway, 1 UK. The table below includes these studies' methods, participants, country, age and DDA dimensions covered. Review and theoretical papers were used in this paper to underpin its theoretical and analytical sections. They are part of the reference list but were not included in the Chart 1.

**Chart 1.** Empirical studies with young people included in the review: monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), humiliation and threats (HT), sexual coercion (SC) dimensions.

Reference	Country	Method	Sample	Age group	Dimension
6 Hinduja & Patchin, 2020	USA	Survey	2,218 American middle and high school students	12-17	MCS;
7 Taylor et al., 2019	Brasil and Honduras	Interviews	147 (65 female, 82 males)	14-24	MCS;
9 Brown et al., 2021	Australia	Survey	527 (245 males, 278 females)	16-24	MCS; HT; SC
12 UNICEF, 2019	Brasil	Qualitative analysis of online interactions and survey	Online interactions 100 adolescent girls Surveys 14,000 adolescent girls	13-18	HT;
28 Campeiz et al., 2020	Brasil	Focus groups & semi-structured interviews	Focus groups: 39 adolescents (25 females, 14 males) Interviews: 15 adolescents (6 males, 9 females)	15-18	MCS;
29 Mackenzie & Mackay, 2019	Australia	in-depth semi-structured interviews	10 women	16-65	MCS; SC
30 Brown et al., 2020	Australia	semi-structured discussion groups	38 youths (23 women, 15 men)	16-24	MCS; HT; SC
41 Branson & March, 2021	Australia, USA, UK	Survey	817 (78.2% women)	18-73	HT;
42 Lara, 2020	Chile	Survey	1,538 high school and university students (59.5% females)	14-24	MCS;
44 Van Ouytsel et al., 2020	Belgium	Survey	446 secondary school students (71.0% girls, $n = 331$ )	16-22	MCS;
48 Cecchetto et al., 2016	Brasil	Focus groups, interviews	257 adolescent boys (21 interviews, 236 focus groups)	15-19	HT; SC
49 Oliveira et al., 2011	Brasil	Surveys, focus groups & semi-structured interviews	3,205 high school students (surveys) 519 adolescents (262 girls, 257 boys) participated in focus groups or interviews	15-19	MCS; HT; SC

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### Understanding DDA: mapping a wide range of behaviours

The prevalence of DDA varies significantly in the previous literature. Estimates of DDA victimisation and perpetration prevalence differ

dramatically depending on the methods, concepts and definitions used to capture this phenomenon<sup>32-35</sup>. For example, Brown and Hegarty's critical review of DDA measures<sup>32</sup> found perpetration rates from 3% to 94%. Caridade et al.'s<sup>33</sup> systematic review of DDA found victimisation

**Chart 1.** Empirical studies with young people included in the review: monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), humiliation and threats (HT), sexual coercion (SC) dimensions.

50 Aghtaie et al., 2018	Bulgaria, Cyprus, England, Italy and Norway	Semi-structured interviews	91 young people (67 females, 24 males)	13-18	MCS;
51 Lucero et al., 2014	USA	Focus groups	23 teens (10 males, 13 females high school sophomores)	N/A	MCS; SC
52 Hellevik, 2019	Norway	Semi-structured in-depth interviews	14 teenagers (12 girls, 2 boys)	15-18	MCS; HT; SC
53 Reed et al., 2021	USA	Survey with quantitative and qualitative analysis	703 (54.4% girls, 44.7% boys, and 6 participants identifying with another gender expression)	13-19	MCS;
54 Stonard et al., 2017	UK	Focus groups	52 adolescents (22 males, 30 females)	12-18	MCS;
55 Chung, 2005	Australia	Interviews	44 young people (25 females, 15 males)	15-19	MCS;
56 Chung, 2007	Australia	Semi-structured interviews	25 young women	14-18	MCS; HT;
57 Hobbs, 2022	Australia	Semi-structured interviews	17 young people (15 female, 1 male, genderqueer) 20 professionals working with young people aged 12-17	18-25	MCS; HT; SC
58 Campeiz et al., 2020	Brasil	Focus groups & semi-structured interviews	Focus groups: 39 adolescents (25 females, 14 males) Interviews: 15 adolescents (6 males, 9 females)	15-18	MCS;
59 Campeiz, 2018	Brasil	Focus groups & semi-structured interviews	Focus groups: 39 adolescents (25 females, 14 males) Interviews: 15 adolescents (6 males, 9 females)	15-18	MCS; SC
60 Instituto Avon/Data Popular, 2014	Brasil	Online self-completion survey	2,046 young people (1,029 women, 1,017 men)	16-24	MCS; HT; SC

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rates from 5.8% to 92%. This variability renders understanding DDA prevalence and comparisons extremely difficult. Scholars have called for consistency and robust instruments to address these problems<sup>32,36</sup>. Despite this disparity in prevalence data, it is argued that DDA is common in

dating relationships<sup>28,33,35</sup>. However, less is known about DDA prevalence in countries from the Global-South, as most existing studies were conducted in the Global-North.

The literature has identified different forms of DDA — often referred to as dimensions in

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61 Nascimento & Cord- eiro, 2011	Brasil	semi-structured interviews	22 young people and young adults (14 women, 8 men)	18-29	MCS;
62 Ribeiro et al, 2011	Brasil	Surveys, focus groups & semi-structured interviews	3,205 high school students (surveys) 519 adolescents (262 girls, 257 boys) participated in focus groups or interviews	15-19	MCS;
63 Boen & Lopes, 2019	Brasil	Survey	205 university students (140 females)	18-58	MCS;
64 Taylor et al., 2017	Brasil and Honduras	Interviews	147 (65 female, 82 males)	14-24	MCS; HT;
65 Carvalhaes & Cárde- nas, 2021	Brasil	Observation & in-depth interviews	3 young women and 3 young men (interview)	18-24	MCS;
68 Zweig et al., 2013	USA	Survey	3,745 7 <sup>th</sup> to 12th grade youths (1,765 males, 1,956 females)	N/A	MCS;
69 Barter et al., 2015	England, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Norway	Expert workshops, school-based surveys with young people, semi-structured interviews with young people, App development	Survey 4,564 Interviews 100 (67 young women, 24 young men)	14-17	MCS; HT;
70 Ferriani et al., 2019	Brasil	Focus groups and semi- structured interviews	Focus groups 16 students (9 females, 7 males) Interviews 7 students (3 females, 4 males)	16-17	MCS;
72 Henry et al., 2019	Australia	Stakeholder consultation, legislative analysis, national survey	National survey 4,274 (2,406 females, 1,868 males)	16-49	HT;
73 França et al., 2019	Brasil	Survey with open and closed questions	141 (84% females)	Mean age 24	HT; SC
74 França & Quevedo, 2020	Brasil	Survey with open and closed questions	141 (84% females)	Mean age 24	HT; SC

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quantitative studies—incorporated into the pattern of dating abuse<sup>9,31,36</sup>. Before outlining these different forms, it is imperative to note that there is no agreement on classifying a wide range of DDA behaviours, as there are several challenges in developing such a classification. First, as

with broader forms of gendered violence and harassment, the lived experience of abuse can be challenging to define in distinct categories<sup>37</sup>. Additionally, the rapid development of new technologies and usage shifts challenge researchers to categorise technologically facilitated abusive be-

**Chart 1.** Empirical studies with young people included in the review: monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), humiliation and threats (HT), sexual coercion (SC) dimensions.

75 Flach & Deslandes, 2021	Brasil	Focus groups	26 students from schools (22 women, 4 men)	15-18	HT; SC
76 Reed, 2015	USA	Survey	947 9th-12th grade students	13-19	HT;
77 Montenegro et al., 2019	Brasil	Focus group	20 adolescent girls from the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3rd high school years	N/A	HT;
78 Dragiewicz et al., 2021	Australia	Interviews	20 women	21-65	HT;
81 Baker & Carreño, 2016	USA	Focus groups	39 high school aged adolescents (21 boys, 18 girls)	14-19	HT;
82 Holt et al., 2021	Australia	Survey	1,328 adolescents enrolled in secondary schools	13-14	SC
84 Henry et al., 2017	Australia	Survey	4,274 (2,406 female, 1,868 male)	16-49	SC
86 Deslandes et al., 2022	Brasil	Analysis of videos produced by young youtubers that had intimate images distributed without their consent	20 videos (12 created by young women, 8 by young men)	N/A	SC
87 Henry et al., 2020	Australia, New Zealand, UK	Semi-structured interviews and survey	75 interview participants (the majority were young women aged 18-29 68.0%) Survey 6,109 (women 3,181, men 2,928)	Interviews 18+ Surveys 16-64	SC
88 Sousa et al., 2019	Brasil	In-depth interviews with school principals, six focus groups with high school girls, workshops	Six focus groups with high school girls 6 to 20 participants each	N/A	SC

Source: Author.

behaviours<sup>38</sup>. Despite these obstacles, naming phenomena is an important starting point to explore, recognise and prevent their occurrence<sup>37,39</sup>.

The dimensions proposed by Borrajo et al.<sup>40</sup> are currently the most used classification for investigating DDA. They classify DDA behaviours as either direct aggression or control and monitoring behaviours. Direct aggression refers to

behaviours enacted via technology to harm a partner. These include threats of spreading secrets and embarrassing information and threats of physical harm, sharing insults and humiliation via messages or social media posts, and the distribution of intimate images without permission. Control and monitoring behaviours encompass surveillance and invasion of privacy, including

excessive calls to monitor a partner's whereabouts, checking a partner's phone and social accounts without permission, and controlling a partner's digital interactions and updates on social networks. Several quantitative studies on DDA from countries such as Australia<sup>41</sup>, Brasil<sup>34</sup>, Chile<sup>42</sup>, Portugal<sup>43</sup>, Belgium<sup>44</sup> and Mexico<sup>45</sup> used Borrajo et al.'s questionnaire<sup>40</sup>.

Although this instrument was considered the most comprehensive among the existing tools available to researchers<sup>46</sup>, it paid little attention to sexual forms of DDA and only measured one form of sexual behaviour. As such, it fails to recognise the vast array of digital sexual behaviours and limits the understanding of this type of abuse and DDA as a whole<sup>36,47</sup>. In contrast, Brown and Hegarty<sup>2</sup> developed a framework that captures sexual behaviours and reflects several types of abuse aligned with findings from qualitative studies of youth DDA experiences from the Global-South<sup>9,48,49</sup> and Global-North<sup>50</sup>. They identify four dimensions of DDA: (1) monitoring and control, (2) humiliation, (3) threats and (4) sexual coercion. In the following sections, I will describe and provide examples of DDA behaviours within each dimension. While Brown et al.<sup>9</sup> have assessed DDA humiliation and threats as different dimensions due to their close links, I will review them together.

### Monitoring, control and surveillance

The literature from the Global-North identified controlling, monitoring and surveillance behaviours as the most reported form of DDA<sup>6,44,50,51</sup>. These studies have outlined that monitoring partners' whereabouts and activities through repeated or excessive calls and texts is common in intimate youth relationships<sup>33,52-54</sup>. Australian and Brazilian literature has revealed this same trend. Chung's<sup>55,56</sup> seminal research on young women's experiences of dating violence in Australia indicated that they received constant calls to their home phones, including in the middle of the night. Hobbs's<sup>57</sup> recent study on adolescents' experiences of dating abuse in the Australian state of Tasmania demonstrates that adolescent girls have received excessive calls and messages from their male partners. Similarly, pioneering and contemporary studies from Brasil demonstrated the same dynamics through modern means of communication, such as mobile phones<sup>28,49,58-62</sup>.

Partners checking mobile and digital accounts, such as emails, social media and apps,

has also been frequently reported by young people from both countries<sup>7,9,28-30,57-64</sup> and within the northern literature<sup>51,52</sup>. These studies have shown that young people have controlled their partner's digital interactions by asking them to delete photos and posts and block or delete friends from their social media, particularly those of the opposite sex<sup>7,9,28,52,54,65</sup>.

These controlling, monitoring and surveillance behaviours can be both covert and overt. For example, in Brasil and Australia, young people have demanded passwords for their partners' mobile and digital accounts<sup>9,28-30,57,60</sup>. They have also accessed partners' digital accounts without their knowledge or permission and deleted friends from their social media<sup>7,59</sup>. Similar controlling and monitoring behaviours have also been reported in the northern literature<sup>52-54</sup>. A less common behaviour reported within this literature is placing a tracking device on a partner's car to monitor their location secretly<sup>66</sup>.

Previous research on youth DDA from the Global-North has reported mixed findings on the gendered nature of monitoring and controlling behaviours. Data from several northern studies suggest that young women are more likely than men to engage in surveillance behaviours<sup>44,53,54</sup>. In contrast, Hinduja and Patchin<sup>67</sup> have documented that young men are more likely to engage in these behaviours than women. Other scholars have reported that young men and women control and monitor their partners reciprocally or at a comparable level in the Global-South<sup>7,9,42,64</sup> and Global-North<sup>51</sup>.

While mixed findings are found in the literature about youth engagement in controlling and monitoring behaviours, there is evidence that young women experience these behaviours at higher levels than young men. For example, Zweig et al.<sup>68</sup> found that although young women in the United States are more likely to engage in these behaviours, they experience them and other forms of DDA more often than young men. Further, several northern scholars<sup>69</sup> and from Brasil and Australia<sup>5,57</sup> have outlined that controlling behaviours enacted by young men are pervasive and frequently more severe than those mentioned about young women. Additionally, research in Brasil and Australia has shown that young women report that their male partner checked their mobile phones and asked for their passwords without providing access to their own<sup>29,59,61,64,70</sup>. Northern studies reported similar behaviours<sup>52,69</sup>. These experiences raise essential questions about the role of gendered contexts in DDA.

### Humiliation and threats

Humiliation involves actions that make victims feel embarrassed, diminished, ashamed or degraded<sup>30,71</sup>. In the context of DDA, humiliation behaviours include using text messages or digital devices to issue threats, put-downs and insults<sup>9,71</sup>. Some examples of humiliation behaviours from Brown and Hegarty's<sup>2</sup> scale included using a digital device to threaten to distribute intimate images, physically hurting the victim, or instructing their partner to hurt themselves. Unlike most previous studies, their scale has threatening behaviours as its own dimension<sup>9</sup>, although some forms of threats were included in the humiliation dimension. The threats dimension comprises behaviours like using a digital device to threaten to emotionally hurt the victim or damage things that are important to them, to threaten to physically hurt themselves if the victim does not do what the partner wants, and make the victim feel threatened if they ignore their partners' calls or messages<sup>2</sup>. In this section, I analyse humiliation and threatening behaviours due to their close links.

One threat that is commonly discussed in the Australian and Brazilian scholarship is the threat of sharing intimate images without consent, which is a form of IBSA<sup>12,30,72</sup>. In the context of DDA, this behaviour refers to threats enacted by a present or past partner to distribute intimate photos or videos often received or taken during the relationship. The threat of sharing intimate images is shaped by gender norms focused on policing women's sexuality and may lead to the fear of public humiliation<sup>12,73,74</sup>. This threat places young women in a vulnerable position as they may experience self-blame and can fear being ashamed and scrutinised by friends, family and the public<sup>12,75,76</sup>. Research on technology-facilitated violence among youths suggests that threats to share images are used to force adolescent girls to remain or engage in a relationship with young men<sup>5,48,49,60,76</sup>. For example, young women have received ongoing threats and pressure to send more photos, resulting in continuous abuse and feelings of constant fear and loss of control<sup>12,35,77</sup>. These findings align with Brown et al.'s<sup>9</sup> finding that young women in Australia feel significantly more fear and distress than young men when experiencing the threat of having their intimate images distributed without consent (75% of women reported that the threat was very or extremely fear or distress inducing, compared to 20% of men). Similar threats have also been discussed in northern studies<sup>69,76</sup>.

Research from Brasil and Australia has demonstrated that threats to distribute intimate images are common at the point of separation<sup>49,57,73</sup>. Separation is recognised as a risk factor for the occurrence and escalation of both traditional and digital forms of IPV against women and girls<sup>60,64,78,79</sup>. This risk factor is also identified internationally<sup>80</sup>.

The literature demonstrates that physical distance does not prevent the occurrence of digital threats. Research indicates that male partners have enacted severe threats against young women via phone, mainly via text messages, in Brasil and Australia<sup>57,64</sup>. Likewise, severe threats have also been reported in the Global-North<sup>52,81</sup>. The scholarship from Brasil and Australia demonstrates that adolescent girls have received death threats and other threats via phone calls and texts<sup>49,56,57,60</sup>, often in the context of separation. For example, Taylor et al.'s<sup>64</sup> research into adolescent IPV in Brasil and Honduras revealed that some young women (aged 14-24 years) in their study were threatened and controlled by incarcerated partners. These experiences outline the pervasiveness of DDA behaviours, as they can occur regardless of physical proximity<sup>64</sup>.

### Sexual coercion

The category 'sexual coercion' refers to behaviours including pressuring others to send nude images and sexually explicit messages or to engage in sexual acts and sexual discussions via digital devices or live video<sup>2</sup>. This dimension also encompasses distributing nude photos without permission (a type of IBSA) and receiving unwelcome nude images from current or former partners<sup>2</sup>. Several lines of evidence suggest that the distribution of intimate images without consent is the most documented form of DDA sexual coercion among young people in Brasil and Australia<sup>2,29,30,48,49,59,60,73-75,82,83</sup>. In Brasil, a study on violence against women found that 32% of young women and 41% of young men aged 16-24 years have received nude images of a woman they knew; but 11% of young women and 28% of young men reported that they had reshared these images<sup>60</sup>. In Australia, a national survey on IBSA demonstrated that 30.9% of young people aged 16-19 had been victims of IBSA<sup>84</sup>. They were also more likely to experience IBSA by a current or former partner (30%)<sup>84</sup>. Another recent Australian study on sexting and sexual image distribution among adolescents aged 13-14 years reveals that while 13.6% reported receiving intimate im-

ages, only 1.13% reported disseminating them without consent<sup>82</sup>. Considering similar findings, Australian and Brazilian researchers argue that most youths understand ‘resharing’ as a privacy violation<sup>75,85</sup> and that there is a need for education programs to reinforce this ‘normative and ethical sense of privacy in sexting’<sup>85</sup> (p. 538).

Research into IBSA in Brasil and Australia suggests that the distribution of these images often occurs after the end or attempt to end a relationship<sup>48,49,57,73,74,84,86,87</sup>. This trend has also been reported in the Global-North<sup>51,52</sup>. During this period, previous threats to distribute intimate images can be realised<sup>35,73,74</sup>. This brings attention to the escalation and further occurrence of digital abuse during this critical time.

Another significant aspect of sexual coercion is understanding the means used to acquire and distribute intimate images and the related dynamics, impacts and meaning of these acts. In both countries, young men have used different platforms to spread young women’s images. For example, Australian qualitative research on youth perceptions of DDA, involving focus groups with young people between 16 and 24 years, suggests that young men might use Snapchat to acquire photos<sup>30</sup>. These photos were described in southern and northern studies as a status symbol among peers, highlighting that some young men have used these images to assert their masculinity and gain public and peer status<sup>87</sup>. In contrast, this Australian study indicated that young women keep these images private<sup>30</sup>. In Australia, recent qualitative work on adolescent dating abuse showed that adolescent girls were threatened to have their photos shared by their partners if they did not delete posts they made on Facebook<sup>57</sup>. While young participants did not always mention IBSA, practitioners interviewed in the study mentioned that the distribution via Snapchat of intimate images of adolescent girls as young as 12-14 years was common and devastating<sup>57</sup>.

Focus groups’ research with Brazilian adolescents aged between 15 and 18 has described different impacts on the intimate image distribution of adolescent boys and girls<sup>75</sup>. Images from the former were described by participants as a ‘positive advertisement’ and status, while severe impacts were described for the latter. In Brasil, some

school principals highlighted that Facebook and WhatsApp groups, created to discuss school-related topics, had been used as channels for perpetrators to distribute these images<sup>88</sup>.

While quantitative studies found mixed findings on the gendered nature of these forms of abuse<sup>35</sup>, there is a growing body of evidence from Brasil and Australia that suggests IBSA is gendered, as young women are overrepresented as victims of these behaviours<sup>9,30,57,75,82,87</sup>. This overrepresentation needs to be understood in the context of gendered inequality, in which gendered double standards interweave the dynamics of IBSA.

## Conclusion

While the literature from Brasil and Australia has explored some DDA forms, particularly IBSA among young people, less is known about DDA more broadly. There is a growing body of research on DDA in the Global-South, however, contemporary DDA scholarship has been predominantly undertaken in northern countries. Overall, these studies explored adolescent experiences of DDA controlling, monitoring and surveillance behaviours; however, the intent and consequences of these experiences are not fully understood. This review outlines the prominence of quantitative studies on DDA. There is limited research on adolescent victimisation experiences of DDA, particularly exploring a wide range of DDA behaviours, impacts and the context of these experiences, especially in southern countries such as Brasil and Australia. Further qualitative cross-country studies are required to explore DDA as a multidimensional phenomenon across multiple southern countries and gather data to provide information about DDA victimisation experiences, gendered dynamics and further implications. Future studies should be youth-centred and not constrain the exploration of DDA experiences to quantitative instruments. In this sense, cross-country qualitative studies should be developed to understand youth experiences on their own terms and explore the gendered dynamics that permeate DDA experiences. Doing so will give us a deep understanding of DDA and a solid starting point to respond to and prevent it.

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## ERRATUM

### p. 3267

#### Where it reads:

They were also more likely to experience IBSA by a current or former partner (30%)<sup>84</sup>.

#### Reads up:

Thirty per cent of them had experienced IBSA from a current or former partner<sup>84</sup>.

### p. 3270-3272

#### Where it reads:

27. Brasil. Lei nº 14.132, de 31 março de 2021.
28. Acrescenta o art. 147-A ao Decreto-Lei nº 2.848, de 7 de dezembro de 1940 (Código Penal), para prever o crime de perseguição; e revoga o art. 65 do Decreto-Lei nº 3.688, de 3 de outubro de 1941 (Lei das Contravenções Penais). *Diário Oficial da União* 2021; 31 mar.
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### Reads up:

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