Sexuality and Gender in Educational Documents in the State of São Paulo

Fábio Martins Gaioli¹
Ana Paula Leivar Brancaleoni²
Caio Samuel Franciscati da Silva³
Rosemary Rodrigues de Oliveira⁴

Abstract: Research on sexuality and access to education that there are, for example, school subjects and permanence of LGBTQIAP+ school studies. This study aims to verify possible conceptions of sexual and gender diversity in documents oriented to basic education in the State of São Paulo (Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: Guia prático para educadores and Resolução SE 8, of January 31, 2018) and their possible to the teaching action related to thematic contributions. The results point to the silencing of sexual and gender diversity and, in a broad context, indeterminacy of the concepts of diversity, difference and tolerance.

Keywords: Educational policies. Curriculum. Sexual diversity. Gender. Heteronormativity.


Sexualidade e gênero em documentos educacionais do estado de São Paulo

Resumo: Investigaciones sobre sexualidad y educación indican que las políticas públicas dirigidas al acceso y permanecía de estudiantes LGBTQIAP+, en el ámbito escolar no se dan de manera satisfactoria, ya que falta, por ejemplo, subsidios para la acción docente en el tema. Este estudio tiene como objetivo verificar posibles concepciones de diversidad sexual y de género en documentos orientadores para la educación básica en el Estado de São Paulo (Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores e Resolução SE 8, de 31 de janeiro de 2018) y sus posibles contribuciones a la acción docente relacionada con el tema. Los resultados apuntan al silenciamiento de la diversidad sexual y de género y, en un contexto amplio, a la indeterminación de los conceptos diversidad, diferencia y tolerancia.

voltadas para acesso e permanência de estudantes LGBTQIAP+ no meio escolar não ocorrem a contento, pois há, por exemplo, ausência de subsídios para a ação docente relativa à temática. Este estudo objetiva verificar possíveis concepções de diversidade sexual e de gênero na Educação Básica do estado de São Paulo (Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores e Resolução SE 8, de 31 de janeiro de 2018) e suas possíveis contribuições para com a ação docente relativa ao assunto. Os resultados apontam para silenciamentos da diversidade sexual e de gênero e, em contexto amplo, indeterminações dos conceitos 


1 Introduction

Sexuality is inherent to human life, developing from birth to old age, and it is not possible to confuse or reduce it to genitality (MAIA and RIBEIRO, 2011). The definition of sexuality proposed by Organização Mundial de Saúde (OMS) configures it as a central aspect of the human being throughout life and includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors (OMS, 2006).

Although biological and genitalized conceptions of sexuality and gender hegemonically predominate, it is urgent to point out that, according to Butler (2002), there is no pre-discursive body and sexuality; they are always invested and built in culture, political and social relations. Thus, the hegemonization of biological conceptions has historical backing. The way sexuality is conceived participates intimately in relations of domination, as it establishes the parameters of intelligibility of each epoch. Anyone who breaks these parameters will suffer social sanctions.

Thus, when it comes to sexuality and gender, with broad regard to guiding documents and public policies, it is not enough to just mention the terms or understand that these issues would be present in texts and prerogatives. It is essential to position and detail that conceptions of sexuality and gender are assumed, as well as regarding people who are dissidents of the heteronorm and, therefore, how diversity is

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understood and projected to be dealt with.

Studies such as those developed by Castro, Abramovay, and Silva (2004), Louro (2009), Bento (2011), and Madureira and Branco (2015) have pointed to a repetitive heteronormative investment curriculum that supports practices of naturalization of heteronormativity in school environments. According to the authors, students who do not identify with heteronormative patterns are targets of continuous physical and symbolic violence, which culminate in their expulsion/evasion from their school environment.

Pertinent literature indicates that while the differences and inequalities linked to sexual and gender diversity are reinforced by the abnormality discourse, these themes are also on the threshold of school institutions, either by the invisibility suffered by those who escape the heterosexual norm or due to the teachers’ formative deficiencies working with these issues.

In regards to the heteronormative pattern, 20 years ago, Berlant and Warner (2002, p. 230) already defined it as: “institutions, structures of understanding and practical orientations that not only make heterosexuality appear coherent — that is, organized as sexuality, but also privileged”.

Research on Prejudice and Discrimination in the School Environment (BRASIL, 2009) investigated attitudes, beliefs, and values that the school community (principals, teachers, employees, students and parents) presents in relation to seven thematic areas of discrimination (ethnic-racial, disability, gender and sexual, generational, socioeconomic and territorial orientation), indicating prejudice as a reality in Brazilian public schools. The thematic area that presented the highest values for the weighted index percentage of agreement with discriminatory attitudes were the ones that express discrimination regarding gender (38.2%) and, in the fourth position, gender identity (26.1%). The same research also reveals that the percentage index of social distance — which evaluates the distance individuals wish to maintain from specific social groups — was the highest for homosexuals, with 72%.

Given this reality, we observe at the federal, state and municipal levels the elaboration and approval of public policies that intend to guarantee the access and permanence of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Pansexual, among others (LGBTQIAP+) students in the school environment. However, such inclusive policies result in “perverse inclusions” (FERNANDES, 2016), since
training processes aimed at teachers, coordinators, and managers that subsidize them to work with sexual and gender diversity issues have not yet been established.

From this angle, Fernandes (2016) points out that a school that claims to be a democratic and emancipatory territory must exhaustively and positively promote rights for the community. This fact reminds us of the importance of training processes for the various target audiences (principals, teachers, employees) that, among other aspects, enable actions of the school community that truly combat the evasion/expulsion of LGBTQIAP+ students from school.

In this context, the disclosure of the document “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores” (NUNES, 2018) [Dialogues and restorative practices at school: a practical guide for educators], the result of a partnership between the Secretaria da Educação do Estado de São Paulo (SEE-SP) and the Ministério Público do Estado de São Paulo (MP-SP) [Secretariat of Education of the State of São Paulo (SEE-SP) and the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the State of São Paulo (MP-SP)], as well as Resolução SE 8, of January 31, 2018 (SÃO PAULO, 2018), published via the electronic address http://www.educacao.sp.gov.br, become subject to scrutiny, since both documents comprise guidelines that will assist teachers in mediating conflicts in the school environment.

We emphasize that issues related to sexuality and gender appear significantly from the conflicts that occurred at school. Thus, the present investigation aims to verify the presence, or the absence, of the terms sexuality and gender, as well as the possible conceptions about the theme, in the official documents cited. We also intend to analyze, to what extent, the document “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores” (NUNES, 2018) [“Dialogues and restorative practices in school: a practical guide for educators” (NUNES, 2018)] may or may not subsidize the teaching work regarding actions related to sexuality and gender.

2 Theoretical Framework

Louro (2000, p. 5) exhorts us by stating that “sexuality is not only a personal issue, but is social and political” and permeates different human dimensions suffering interference from biological, social and cultural factors. In the present work, the concept of sexuality does not only refer to human reproduction, but encompasses multiple dimensions related to gender, identity, affective-sexual orientation, eroticism
and emotion. In Louro’s words (2000),

sexuality involves rituals, languages, fantasies, representations, symbols, conventions... Deeply cultural and plural processes. In this perspective, nothing is exclusively “natural” in this field, starting with the very conception of the body, or even of nature. Through cultural processes, we define what is - or is not - natural; we produce and transform nature and biology and, consequently, we make them historical. Bodies make sense socially. The inscription of the genders - female or male - in bodies is always done in the context of a particular culture and, therefore, with the marks of that culture. The possibilities of sexuality - of the ways of expressing desires and pleasures - are also always socially established and codified. Gender and sexual identities are therefore composed and defined by social relations. They are shaped by the networks of power in a society (p. 6).

Despite this broad adopted sense, sexuality is inserted in a logic that defends it as an immutable, a-historical, and binary dimension, disregarding the field of sexuality as a regime of truths crossed by power relations, clashes, and disputes. Concerning the points of view of health, morality, and hygiene, the most conservative sectors of society understand sexuality from an essentialist conception of sexual identities supported strictly by biological principles (ALMEIDA, CASTRO and AMORIM, 2011).

According to Louro (2009), this conception supports the “process of heteronormativity, that is, the production and compulsory reiteration of the heterosexual norm,” which states that all people are, or at least should be, cisgender and heterosexual (LOURO, 2009, p. 90). Thus, the ideology of the heteronormative pattern underpins the bases of the processes of regulation of sexual gender identities, imposes socio-cultural models of sexualities based on binarism, performing according to these two values, endowed with powers to produce what they name, the naturalness of gender and sexual identities (BENTO, 2011).

Consequently, all people who escape from heteronormativity are placed on the margins of society and, therefore, experience difficulties of coexistence and are unable to fully use the services provided by the areas of health, education, etc., since the various institutions present in society reproduce the heteronormative values that permeate the universe in which they are inserted, including school (LOURO, 2009).

Elaborated according to heteronormative assumptions, the school space is configured as a violent place for people who disagree with heteronormative patterns and fertile terrain for the dissemination and reproduction of discrimination (POCAHY and DORNELLES, 2010; BENTO, 2011). From this angle, the sexuality of children and adolescents is perceived and worked on in school institutions from the control and
prevention, emphasizing the biological body to the detriment of other constituent elements of sexuality (CASTRO, ABRAMOVAY, and SILVA, 2004; MALDONADO and SUDÉRIO, 2021). As such, the school seeks to guide and/or frame students in a single vision — the hygienist — that reduces the body to the concepts of asepsis, control, and prevention, delegating to a single teacher, the science, what they consider “competent knowledge.” In many cases, due to this orientation, the study of the body is delegated to the field of biology. Teachers from other areas are exempt from any responsibilities regarding students’ sexual education, even if this is subliminally carried out by comments, observations, and even by silence when situations considered sexualized occur or prejudices materialize in games and other expressions (CASTRO, ABRAMOVAY and SILVA, 2004, p. 38-39).

In this scenario, the literature points out that many teachers do not realize that, even unintentionally, they work with themes related to sexuality to reinforce heteronormative assumptions. Caetano (2013) refers to the curriculum, understood as:

school pedagogies and pedagogical technologies (architecture, textbooks, clothing, media, etc.), with strong ties to culture and obeying a certain logic of planning, building, teaching, and regulating corporeality, producing modes of subjectivization and architecting forms and configurations of being and living in school and, logically, in society (p. 66).

According to Madureira and Branco (2015), when they transgress the heterosexual pattern and question the mechanisms of normalization, students are activated by the school, which seeks to minimize and/or eliminate the “discomfort” generated by these positions. The authors show that these standardization mechanisms are often presented as discrimination, homophobic “games”, and even physical aggression.

In 2016, a report was published that presents analyses and results of the first virtual national survey conducted in Brazil with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, and transgender adolescents and young people on their experiences in educational institutions related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression. The young respondents reported experiences involving hostile educational environments for LGBTQIAP+ students. A total of 60.2% of research participants feel insecure due to their sexual orientation in the school environment. Universally, 42.8% were unsure about how they express their gender, and 14.2% of young people do not feel safe expressing their gender/gender identity (ABGLT, 2016).

Bento (2011), in turn, points out that the discrimination suffered by LGBTQIAP+
students is not accompanied by actions of welcoming professionals in the educational institution through inclusive curricular components regarding LGBTQIAP+ issues, provisions in the school regiment in response to incidents involving aggression and violence, as well as works carried out by teachers and/or the school community that discuss sexuality beyond the biological perspective, including in the curriculum information related to LGBTQIAP+ issues, such as learning about historical LGBTQIAP+ events and positive examples of LGBTQIAP+ people, i.e., that deal with respect for diversity.

For Bento (2011), these situations exemplify silencing practices in which prejudices and discrimination, because they are not problematized, develop normative mechanisms, also highlighting that the repeated discrimination suffered by LGBTQIAP+ students can harm their academic performance and, often, lead them to a process that is incorrectly called by many as school dropout.

In 1996, with the promulgation of the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN) [National Curriculum Parameters] and, mainly, with the publication of the Tema Transversal Orientação Sexual (BRASIL, 1997) [Transversal Sexual Orientation Theme], the approach to sexuality and gender in the school curriculum were made official. However, numerous criticisms were pointed out by experts, such as the centralizing and prescriptive character of the document; highly hierarchical hidden curriculum; absence of structural conditions for teachers to deal with such an approach in schools; absence of actions that minimize the deficiency of teacher training; subordination of gender themes to the body/health/disease trinomial; little relevance of the sexual diversity topic; emphasis on the perspective of rights and the construction of an abstract idea of citizenship; the veiled character of the mention of gender, without explicit reference to the expression of gender, sometimes reductionist and/or with the presence of gender stereotypes; among others (VIANNA, 2018).

Silva, Brancaleoni and Oliveira (2019, p. 1539) state that, although many researchers have criticized the PCNs due to, among other aspects, the “treatment of sexuality from a biological perspective and the superficial approach to gender issues, the official document corresponds to the legitimation of the approach to sexual and gender diversity in school,” presenting itself as an innovation in terms of public policies. The PCNs signaled a path of struggle and resistance, making sexuality official as one of the school competencies, safeguarding the teacher’s performance (LEÃO and
However, despite this advance, actions of control and interference from conservative sectors in general dispute the conceptions and place of gender and sexual diversity in educational public policies, advocating for their silencing. Orlandi (2007) addresses the issue of silence and social voices, explaining that the curtailment of some words aims to interdict some meanings. Thus, the prohibition of discourse also constitutes the prohibition of occupying certain positions as a subject:

In authoritarianism, there is no reversibility possible in the discourse, that is, the subject cannot occupy different positions: he can only occupy the ‘place’ that is destined for him to produce the meanings that are not forbidden to him. Censorship immediately affects the subject’s identity (Orlandi, 2007, p. 79).

In 2017, after the coup against President Dilma Rousseff, a fourth version of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) [Base for National Common Curriculum (BNCC)] was presented, the new official document that regulates an organic and progressive set of essential learning for students in the country, a matrix common to all education systems (Brazil, 2017; 2018). During the BNCC homologation ceremony, the Minister of Education, Mendonça Filho, stated that “the basis is plural, respects differences, respects human rights, there is no imprisonment to the ideology of gender or the like” (I.E., 2017, emphasis added). According to him, “We are not stuck in the sterile debate that is often taken over by radical ideologies.”

The BNCC and the document Temas Contemporâneos Transversais na BNCC [Transversal Contemporary Themes at the BNCC] — proposals for implementation practices (Brazil, 2019b) present themselves as successors to the PCNs and remove gender and sexual diversity from the curriculum. According to Gaioli and Brancaleoni (2021), with this curriculum setting, it is minimal or almost null to open a discussion that covers historical, artistic, cultural, political, affective, and emotional issues on the subject, foundations necessary for the development of a broad understanding of the sexuality and gender themes, as well as the ability to recognize and deconstruct prejudices (p. 5).

The documents from Temas Contemporâneos Transversais da BNCC [BNCC’s Transversal Contemporary Themes (TCTs)] (Brazil, 2019a; 2019b) seek to improve learning by contextualizing what is taught, with items of interest to students and relevance to their development, so that students do not end their education by seeing
only abstract content and out of their reality, but that they learn about the themes that are relevant to their performance in society.

In the BNCC, the TCTs are divided into six thematic macro areas: health; economy; environment; multiculturalism; citizenship and civism; science and technology, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Transversal Contemporary Themes at BNCC.

In the TCTs of the BNCC document, the term “transversal” refers to the location of these themes in the curriculum: they are subjects that do not belong to an area of knowledge but pervade all. ‘Contemporaneity, ‘according to the official document, is configured with the intention to meet current and intensely experienced demands by communities, families, students, and educators (BRASIL, 2019a).

From Figure 1, it is possible to observe that the theme of sexuality is not present among the 15 transversal themes of TCTs, which indicates that, for the Federal Government, sexuality is not a subject of interest to students, being unnecessary for the training towards the exercise of citizenship and critical performance in society.

Thus, investments and efforts are still needed so that the transversal perspective of working with sexuality is widespread in all schools. From this perspective, it is desirable to offer training to teachers so that they acquire instruments for working with themes related to sexuality from broad contexts that, among other aspects, will favor the creation of interpersonal bonds between teachers and students and the relationship between related content and the students’ daily lives, in addition
to the establishment of partnerships between school, family, and the community of school environments (CASTRO, ABRAMOVAY, and SILVA, 2004; RAKOWSKI and OLIVEIRA, 2021).

3 Metodological route

Following the qualitative paradigm that guided this work, we adopted documentary analysis as a methodological procedure. Documents, in addition to containing information related to human behavior, constitute communication devices saturated by the historical and social reality of the context of their production and turn to specific objectives. It should be noted that the documents represent a natural and safe data source, which is maintained over time and allow consultation by several researchers. Perspectively, data from documents also indicate underlying problems that may be explored in later studies with or without the complementation of other methodological procedures for data collection (FLICK, 2009).

The collection of materials analyzed by this investigation comprises two official documents of the state of São Paulo, published in 2018. The first, entitled “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores” (NUNES, 2018) [“Dialogue and restorative practices at school: a practical guide for educators” (NUNES, 2018)] and produced by the Ministério Público do Estado de São Paulo, corresponds to a guide aimed at the school community, specifically teachers, coordinators, and managers, in which the advantages of adopting restorative practices for conflict resolution in the school environment are highlighted, as well as indications of activities for the development and establishment of non-violent communication and appreciation of the culture of peace. The second document, in turn, refers to Resolution SE 8, of January 31, 2018 (SÃO PAULO, 2018), which provides for the Projeto Mediação Escolar e Comunitária [School and Community Mediation Project], emphasizing the process of choosing mediating teachers in the São Paulo state public education network, as well as the authority of these teachers.

We justify our choice for these documents because, in broader research developed by Gaioli (2020) and Gaioli and Brancaleoni (2021), in which this study is inserted, both materials were indicated by the Diretoria Regional de Ensino (DRE) [Regional Board of Education] in the countryside of the state of São Paulo as components of a documentary collection used by official agencies connected to diversity, school, and family mediation. Thus, the materials that can be analyzed are
among the guiding documents for the elaboration of formative processes of teaching with regard to, broadly, diversity and issues related to sexual and gender diversity.

Both documents were analyzed according to the Discursive Textual Analysis, which, according to Moraes (2003), is a process that aims at the emergence of understanding the material under scrutiny through a recursive sequence, namely: the unitarization that encompasses the textual deconstruction of the documents’ corpus under scrutiny; the categorization that aims at establishing relationships between the elaborated units; and the capture of the new emerging, in which the understanding developed throughout theorizing is communicated and validated.

With that in mind, we conclude that Discursive Textual Analysis is not presented as a linear analytical procedure, but it is configured as a cycle of destabilization of textual materials that seek a new order and the communication of new emerging understandings that occur throughout the research. Thus, Discursive Textual Analysis is constituted as an open, analytical process that favors investigative thinking, since the studying reality is not immediately liable to description and analysis but is uncertain and unstable, so that the work of the researcher consists in the weaving of translations of this reality constituted by discourses in constant movement (MORAES, 2003).

The documents elected by this investigation were analyzed in their entirety, and through Discursive Textual Analysis, we sought to infer, initially, the following interpretative lines: a) possible conceptions of sexuality and gender mobilized by said official documents; b) possible relationships between sexual and gender diversity and conflict resolution in the school environment; c) possibilities of said documents, with emphasis on the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores” (NUNES, 2018) to subsidize teaching activities regarding sexual and gender diversity.

In this first comprehensive process, the reading and reviewing documents subject to scrutiny sought to deconstruct and unitarize the text through categories established a priori: sexuality, gender, and gender identity. This procedural choice is justified in light of authors who support the theoretical foundation of this research and, among other elements, point to the need for conceptualizations that distance themselves from heteronormative understandings to support educational proposals that are truly inclusive. However, as will be explored in a later section, this comprehensive movement proved to be unsuccessful, since the documents analyzed
did not explicitly and/or implicitly present the previously established units of analysis.

Therefore, in line with the cyclical character of Discursive Textual Analysis, a new process of reading and meaning was necessary so that the units constructed through the text’s deconstruction and unitarization occurred through absences revealed by immersive reading. The emerging units of analysis were reorganized and grouped into two macro-categories of analysis: silencing and generalities. In silencing, we point to how the absences found in the first immersive movement can contribute to echo heteronormativity in the school space. In generalities, we indicate how the generic treatment of tangential concepts, sexual, and gender diversity — such as difference, tolerance, and conflict — can crystallize discriminatory and exclusionary practices in public schools in São Paulo.

4 Results and Discussion

The documents analyzed, especially the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola: guia prático para educadores” (NUNES, 2018), have interesting proposals for conflict resolution in the school environment, such as: the adoption of restorative rather than punitive practices in the face of problems identified at school; the involvement and cooperation between the school institution and the community; and the partnership between the educational sector and public departments and/or agencies for the protection of children and adolescents. It should be noted that the document “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas na escola” (NUNES, 2018) also presents suggestions for didactic-pedagogical activities and practices that may subsidize educators with regard to conflict resolution.

However, there are elements that draw our attention when we consider the audience to which these documents are destined, as well as the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide our view on such documents. The first aspect to be considered refers to the fact that the guiding document is prepared by a prosecutor from the state of São Paulo, Dr. Antônio Carlos Ozório Nunes, without any citations of collaborations from teachers, coordinators, managers, and/or researchers in the educational area. From this angle, the text, although directed at educators,
presents a limited perception of school reality, even with positive and collaborative intentions because, when considering the São Paulo state public school system, we found the existence of multiple realities, whether related to school infrastructure or referring to the audience diversity that constitutes São Paulo state schools.

When analyzing the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018), seeking among its guidelines subsidies that help educators solve conflicts related to sexual and gender diversity, we found silencing. References to the concepts of sexuality, sexual diversity, and gender do not appear in the document, either explicitly or implicitly. Such silencing is worrisome, since the pertinent literature characterizes the school space as a violent environment towards those who disagree or break with heteronormative patterns (LOURO, 2005; ORLANDI, 2007, BENTO, 2011; POCAHY and DORNELLES, 2010; FERNANDES, 2016).

Thus, such silencing may echo the concepts of diversity, difference, and tolerance, crystallizing heteronormative patterns in the school environment that, among other aspects, may disseminate attitudes and/or practices that culminate in processes of exclusion of students who are dissidents of heteronormativity (BENTO, 2011; LOURO, 2005).

When considering broad guidelines recommended by the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) for resolving conflicts in the school environment, we find the generality by which the document deals with terms such as difference and tolerance, not presenting appropriate conceptions. This absence may result in heteronormative approaches in response to conflicts linked to sexual and gender diversity. This is because the established intelligibility standards are heteronormative, and for there to be problematization and ruptures about them, it would be necessary to register dissent and disagreement with gender binarism and heteronormativity in the guidelines presented by the document (LOURO, 2005; BENTO, 2011).

As for the term difference, it is not problematized in the analyzed document, as observed in the excerpt in which the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) display some characteristics for the conduct of dialogues by the educator:

building empathy: empathy is trying to imagine and feel the suffering that the other person is going through and how difficult it is. Empathy is established
among people who see themselves, accept themselves and respect themselves as human beings, with all their differences (p. 48).

Or, when the document characterizes the restorative circles:

The circle is an important geometrical form for pedagogical meetings, for school activities in general and for conflict resolution. The circle establishes a deep connection between people; it explores differences, rather than eliminating them, and constitutes a space for collective construction of knowledge and analysis of social reality, as it allows for joint reflection, confrontation of ideas and exchange of experiences between participants (p. 67)

By not conceptually problematizing differences, the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) leave open questions about what is meant by difference and from which reference it is situated. We believe that such problematization is necessary because the understanding elaborated by the educator may result in ethnocentrism that praise certain values to the detriment of those considered different from a certain desired normality.

Silva (2013) warns us that affirmation processes also produce the denial of difference, a problem that could be worked on, according to the author, in an inversion of this treatment. By this logic, difference should be approached as something prior to the production of identities, so that problematizations that lead to questions about what difference is and what and/or who determines it occur (SILVA, 2013).

The term tolerance, in turn, is also mobilized by the document without development and is commonly expressed alongside values considered desirable for the development of restorative practices, as exemplified in the excerpt below:

Many of these values will reflect on the school’s relationship coexistence, providing opportunities for interaction and reflection on them, allowing the integral development of all. Examples of some of these values: justice, equality, dialogue, generosity, altruism, tolerance, and citizenship, among others (NUNES, 2018, p. 72).

We consider it essential that documents aimed at educators present meanings and problematizations of concepts that express values, since their definitions may be limited to those expressed in dictionary entries, as in the electronic address https://www.dicio.com.br/tolerancia/, which presents tolerance as “action of tolerating, accepting or supporting, with indulgence; leniency.” If the concept of tolerance is understood in such a shallow way, practices or activities aimed at deconstructing
prejudices and discrimination may result in indulgent looks to students who do not fit the heteronormative standards. With this understanding, we see that Bento (2011) and Madureira and Branco (2015) warn us that this model of indulgent tolerance based on a heteronormative matrix leads the school community not to realize that the symbolic and/or physical mechanisms of normalization will hinder the permanence of the student in school, culminating in their evasion/expulsion.

Regarding the use of the term *diversity*, it is noteworthy how Nunes (2018) associates it with contemporaneity and instability during the presentation of the five decentralizing policies that, according to the author, contribute to the establishment of assertive communication and restorative practices:

I - Seek to understand the reasons for the problems and, from there, have a diagnosis of the scenario and know how to act to transform it;
II - Expand the spectrum of knowledge both to learn and to seek problem solving;
III - Learn to deal with the multiple scenarios of continuous change, uncertainties, diversities, and instabilities, characteristic of the current era in all human contexts;
IV - Create and cultivate intervention variables that increase the options for action and potential solutions;
V - Create or take advantage of self-organization processes, including the strengthening of local partnerships and the construction of community networks for problem solving (NUNES, 2018, p. 12).

The argument expressed in the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) opens up interpretative possibilities that may lead the educator to understand that diversity did not exist in the past. In the context of sexual and gender diversity, this fact goes against the notes in the relevant literature, especially when we consider the evasion/expulsion of students who do not fit the heteronormative model (LOURO, 2015; BENTO, 2011; POCAHY and DORNELLES, 2010, FERNANDES, 2016).

It should also be noted that the proximity of the concepts of *diversity* and *instability* can crystallize negative ideas that the educator has about the issue. In this way, elements that are amid the concept of *diversity* (ethnicity, gender, sexuality, culture, etc.) can be understood as threats to the desired stability for the school environment and, in this way, diversity can be reaped to achieve homogeneity. This understanding supports conflicts related to heteronormative standardization and is mobilized by those who oppose the existence of sexual and gender diversity.

When considering the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES,
2018), a document that is constituted as a guide for school mediation work, we find that the conceptualization of conflict is also absent. In the document, it is only demarcated that conflict is inherent to human coexistence that is present in school institutions, and its resolution is necessary for the establishment of a culture of peace. However, it indeterminates what conflict is and when it harms living in society.

In the context of sexual and gender diversity — and in the broader context of diversity — the characterization of situations considered as conflict is essential, especially when we consider documents aimed at teachers, pedagogical coordinators, and managers.

According to Bento (2011), the school environment is marked by heteroterrorism, characterizing those who escape the imposed standards as abject and polluting and, consequently, naturalizing normative processes that may hurt, symbolically and physically, the subjects (BRASIL, 2009). By this logic, the heteronormative matrix of our society may prevent the visualization of conflicts related to sexual and gender diversity by the school community, which may cause such problems to not be seen as important or susceptible to interference by teachers, pedagogical coordinators, and/or managers (BENTO 2011; FERNANDES, 2011; GAIOLI and BRANCALEONI, 2021).

This situation remains when we look at Resolution SE 8, of January 31, 2018 (SÃO PAULO, 2018), which provides for the Projeto Mediação Escolar e Comunitária [School and Community Mediation Project], in the state school system of São Paulo. Its objective is to promote and implement the culture of peace in school units through actions that stimulate and improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in Basic Education in the state.

The document highlights the importance of the mediating teacher and deals with the process of choosing the teacher, as well as their attributes. This professional would have the function of coordinating, planning, and executing measures and actions of prevention, mediation, and conflict resolution at school.

It is noteworthy that the document does not mention diversity and tolerance in its text, and the concept of difference is used generically in Article 3:

Article 3 - The characteristics and skills of those responsible for the implementation of the mediation actions of said Project are:
I - Recognize oneself, in your professional performance, as a protagonist and
transforming agent;
II - Put yourself in the place of the other, knowing how to listen and observe their perspectives, values, and ways of thinking and acting;
III - Be articulate and establish dialogues with everyone, communicating with objectivity, coherence, and cohesion;
IV - Identify how the relationship of the social, cultural, and economic aspects of the community affects the development of the educational process;
V - Improve their ability to learn and develop, create, transform and innovate;
VI - Understand the characteristics of society as a whole, identify its heterogeneous and plural composition, and respect differences (SÃO PAULO, 2018).

In a more specific context, mentions of the terms sexuality and gender are also absent in the aforementioned resolution, so the considerations made for the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) are also related to the state document. However, it is necessary to highlight items I and IV of Article 4 of SE Resolution 8, of January 31, 2018:

Article 4 - It will be up to those responsible for the implementation of acts of mediation:
I - act in a proactive, preventive, and mediating way, developing, in the face of conflicts in the school routine, collaborative and restorative practices of a culture of peace;
II - promote the inclusion of attitudes based on ethical and democratic principles;
III - articulate with the school team in the construction of preventive actions related to the rules of coexistence that involve the school community;
IV - collaborate, with the School Council, managers, and other educators, in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the pedagogical proposal;
V - assist the school team in pedagogical actions related to the culture of peace;
VI - plan and organize systematic school assemblies to resolve collective conflicts;
VII - develop actions with the Student Union;
VIII - to inform parents or guardians about the role of the family and its importance in the educational process;
IX - map and establish contact and partnership, in conjunction with the school team and regional managers, with the bodies that are part of the Social Protection and Rights Network as well as with cultural, social, health and educational institutions, whose performance covers the territorial area of the school unit, referring students and/or parents or guardians, in accordance with the detected need;
X - engage in their continuing education, recognizing the importance of self-assessment and professional improvement (SÃO PAULO, 2018).

The items mentioned proclaim that it will be up to the mediating teacher to identify conflict situations and plan activities for their resolution. However, Resolution SE 8, of January 2018 (SÃO PAULO, 2018) is also deficient in conceptualizing conflict, imputing to the mediating teacher its interpretation.

This situation is worrying when we consider items I to IV of Art. 6º that establish the order of priority for choosing the mediating teacher and § 7 of Art. 7º that they
advocate:

Article 6º - For the implementation of the culture of peace, the school units that participated in the project in 2017, as well as those considered with a high degree of vulnerability and those that have a recurrent record of serious occurrences in the Sistema de Registro de Ocorrência Escolar - ROE [School Occurrence Registration System - SOR], of the School Protection System, indicated by the Regional Education Officer, with the appropriate justifications, and ratified by this Folder, will have a Professor Mediator Escolar e Comunitário - PMEC [School and Community Mediator Teacher - SCMT], for the exercise of mediation duties, observing the provisions of articles 3º and 4º of this resolution, and according to the following order of priority:

I - Readapted teacher, verified the compatibility of their list of attributes established by the Comissão de Assuntos de Assistência à Saúde - CAAS [Health Care Affairs Committee - HCAC];

II - Professor holding a position, with attaché status, fulfilling hours of permanence in the composition of the working day;

III - Teacher occupying a function of activity, who is working hours corresponding to the minimum workload of 12 (twelve) hours per week;

IV - Teacher with regular classes assigned, whose total workload can be completed in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Sole paragraph - The readapted teacher may only exercise the function of Professor Mediator Escolar e Comunitário - PMEC [School and Community Mediator Teacher - SCMT], in a school unit of their classification, and, in case of a diverse school, must previously request the change of the headquarters of exercise, under the terms of the relevant legislation.

Article 7º - The Professor Mediator Escolar e Comunitário - PMEC [School and Community Mediator Teacher - SCMT], referred to in article 6, shall perform their duties by the corresponding workload regarding Full Teaching Workday or Initial Teaching Workday, according to the needs of the school unit.

(…)§ 7º - Those responsible for the Gestão Regional do Sistema de Proteção Escolar [Regional Management of the School Protection System], accompanied by a member of the Comissão de Atribuição de Classes e Aulas [Commission for the Assignment of Classes and Classes] and, after hearing the school’s management team and observing the provisions of the caput of article 6º of this resolution, will elaborate their own criteria for evaluation and classification of registered teachers for reserve accreditation at the level of the teaching board, in accordance with the requirements set forth in this resolution (SÃO PAULO, 2018).

Observing the absence of guidelines for the establishment of criteria for the choice of mediating teachers, we believe that this function may be configured, on a small or large scale, as an element for the expansion of hours/class of teachers from the São Paulo school system.

Added to this fact, the characteristics observed in the analyzed documents, especially in the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018), point to the lack of subsidies for the mediation of conflicts linked to sexual and gender diversity. The pertinent literature indicates that its topic is often approached in an uncertain way from biologizing views and attitudes that reinforce heteronormative patterns and silencing voices, even if this is not the intention of the teacher (ORLANDI,
2007; BENTO, 2011; CAETANO, 2013; MADUREIRA and BRANCO, 2015; GAIOLI and Brancaleoni, 2021). It is noted that the absence of subsidies for the work with conflict resolution in the context of sexual and gender diversity may contribute to the maintenance of heteroterrorist practices in the school environment.

5 Final considerations

By identifying the official documents “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) [Dialogues and restorative practices in schools] and Resolução SE 8, of January 31, 2018 (SÃO PAULO, 2018) as guidelines for the elaboration of formative processes of teaching with regards to diversity and sexuality, we propose to analyze to what extent the terms sexuality and gender appear in the analyzed documents, and whether they do or do not favor teaching works with these themes.

We observed that the “Diálogos e práticas restaurativas nas escolas” (NUNES, 2018) silences before resolutions related to sexual and gender diversity. Additionally, in the documents, there are gaps in conceptualizations and clarifications of key concepts for working with the great theme of diversity, such as difference, tolerance, conflict, and the concept of diversity itself.

This gap may make it difficult to work with “problematic” situations related to sexual and gender diversity in the school environment, since the configuration of the cited document may favor the naturalization of symbolic and physical standardization processes, violating subjects who are not framed in heteronormative patterns. It is also worth noting that the absence of a definition for the term “conflict” in both documents greatly interferes with the understanding of conflicts that can be mediated and how the mediating teacher would act in relation to students and/or the school community with regard to the resolution of conflicts proposed by the documents.

However, the approach to sexuality and gender becomes problematic because, according to the text, the theme is commonly neglected in the school environment and, considering the materials analyzed by this investigation, the standardization processes will continue to be standardized. By not identifying situations of physical and/or symbolic violence against sexual and gender diversity, conflicts subject to mediation will not be “seen,” and consequently, attitudes that culminate in processes of exclusion of students who do not comply with heteronormative standards will be disseminated.
The silencing of the questions does not offer subsidies for the teaching work, abandoned to the previous conceptions that it carries with it. From this angle, we also found a basic problem in the treatment of “problematic” situations related to sexual and gender diversity since, by situating them in the dimension of conflict, their institutionalization and judicialization occur.

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