

ARTICLE

SEX EDUCATION IN THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE COMMON NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: FROM OPENING TO SILENCING AROUND THE THEME¹

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze how sex education is inserted in the different versions of the National Common Curricular Framework (BNCC) and present teachers' perceptions about the context of narratives and disputes that intermediated its construction. This qualitative study used BNCC as a data source and semi-structured interviews with eight elementary-school teachers. We produced data using the Discourse Analysis technique, guided by the policy cycle formulated by Stephen Ball and Richard Bowe, whose procedures demonstrated that the incisive action of conservative political groups culminated in regressive policies in the field of sexuality, failing to show important dimensions in the final document. We understand that the omission of these issues in the curricular references favors the persistence of intolerance against sexual diversity and weakens the fight against prejudice and discrimination rooted in our society.

Keywords: sex education, BNCC, opening, silencing, teacher's perception.

A EDUCAÇÃO SEXUAL NAS DIFERENTES VERSÕES DA BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR: DA ABERTURA AO SILENCIAMENTO EM TORNO DA TEMÁTICA

RESUMO: O presente estudo tem por objetivo analisar de que maneira a educação sexual se insere nas diferentes versões da Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) e apresentar a percepção de professores sobre contexto de narrativas e disputas que intermediaram sua construção. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo, que teve como fonte de dados a BNCC e entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas com oito professores que lecionam no ensino fundamental. Os dados foram produzidos por meio da técnica de Análise do Discurso, orientada pelo ciclo de políticas formulado por Stephen Ball e Richard Bowe, cujos procedimentos demonstraram que a atuação incisiva das bancadas políticas conservadoras culminou em políticas regressivas no campo da sexualidade, deixando de evidenciar dimensões importantes no documento final. Compreende-se que a omissão dessas questões nos referenciais curriculares favorece a persistência da intolerância contra a diversidade sexual e enfraquece o combate ao preconceito e discriminações arraigados em nossa sociedade.

Palavras-chave: educação sexual, BNCC, abertura, silenciamento, percepção de professores.

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LA EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL EN LAS DISTINTAS VERSIONES DE LA BASE NACIONAL CURRICULAR COMÚN: DE LA APERTURA AL SILENCIO ALREDEDOR DEL TEMA

RESUMEN: Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar cómo la educación sexual se inserta en las diferentes versiones de la Base Nacional Curricular Común (BNCC) y presentar la percepción de los profesores sobre el contexto de narrativas y disputas que intermediaron su construcción. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo, que tuvo como fuente de datos la BNCC y entrevistas semiestructuradas con ocho docentes que enseñan en la enseñanza básica. Los datos fueron producidos utilizando la técnica de Análisis del Discurso, guiados por el ciclo de políticas formulado por Stephen Ball y Richard Bowe, cuyos procedimientos demostraron que la acción incisiva de los grupos políticos conservadores culminó en políticas regresivas en el campo de la sexualidad, sin mostrar dimensiones importantes en el documento final. Se entiende que la omisión de estos temas en las referencias curriculares favorece la persistencia de la intolerancia contra la diversidad sexual y debilita la lucha contra los prejuicios y discriminaciones arraigados en nuestra sociedad.

Palabras clave: educación sexual, BNCC, apertura, silenciamiento, percepción de profesores.

INTRODUCTION

The starting point of this study is the inquiries that arose in moments of the academic trajectory of research in debate participation that mediates the construction of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-*Base Nacional Comum Curricular*). In these moments, the controversies over the inclusion/exclusion of gender and sexuality questions in the preliminary verses of BNCC gained space in the media, showing how the conservative discourse attempted to construct a narrative that defined the gender and sexuality questions as the *great enemies to be combated by families in schools*.

This wave of censorship that goes back to the first discussions of the elaboration of the second National Education Plan (Project of Law 8.035/2010) was passed by a discursive explosion on the implementation of the School Project without Homophobia (*Projeto Escola sem Homofobia*). More recently, in the BNCC approval process, it has managed to roll back important achievements in the field of human rights obtained in recent decades, greatly deepening social inequalities.

Realizing how much these discursive formulations could impact the daily lives of schools, which are challenged daily by issues of gender and sexuality, this scenario was converted into a research project that, among other purposes, aimed to investigate sexual education materialized in curricular documents and from the perspective of elementary school teachers in the current context of narrative and discourse disputes.

Such a perspective derives from two fundamental elements: the relevance and the interest of the topic in the educational context. Relevance because it is a topic whose educational policies are fundamental to transform the debate on sexuality, allowing its understanding as a human phenomenon, which is manifested in different ways and cannot be subject to universal moral determinisms. Interest because it is a topic inherent to the professional activity of the researcher, being a privileged school or location to work on the subject, considering its central role in the promotion of social changes.

Acting as a teacher for just over twenty years in the public education network, the researcher could verify daily how the absence of a sexual education perspective in the school curriculum impacts learning, in the context of differences and lack of respect for sexual diversity, above all because the perception of not belonging to the school environment is the cause of anguish, constraint and, frequently, escape.

Do not discuss these topics in the classroom means to walk in the opposite direction to what is understood by education in our current days. Contrary to the fact that we preach ultraconservative and repressive speeches,

[...] working on gender at the schools means reflecting on: inequalities between men and women and the negative implications of these inequalities, for both; the responsibility of both the man or boy and the woman or girl in preventing pregnancy and STD contamination; the high rate of discrimination and violence against women and racial, religious and sexual minorities; and sexual abuse against children and adolescents. It also means raising awareness about human rights, sexual rights reproductive rights, and different types of families. Working on gender in the schools helps to understand the oppression exerted on men (men don't cry, etc.), it is educating people to respect diversity to eliminate all types of prejudice and discrimination, whether racial, sexual, or religious, among others, and it is to educate to overcome machismo and sexism (the division: that is for men, that is for women) (Figueiró, 2016, p. 2).

On the other hand, the invisibility of the theme in the school curricula is proposed and encouraged by those who ignore the secular principle of education. The stereotypes of male chauvinist, sexist, misogynistic, and oppressive culture can only be surpassed if sexual education in schools is channeled to overcome inequality, promote respect for diversity, and enable students to express their feelings, doubts, and fears about these topics (Figueiró, 2018).

Thus, this study aims to analyze how sexual education is inserted in the different versions of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC-*Base Nacional Comum Curricular*) and to present the perception of teachers on the context of narratives and disputes that mediate their construction.

INSTRUMENTS, COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND DATA ANALYSIS

Regarding methodology, a qualitative approach was adopted, which includes bibliographical research, document analysis, and a set of semi-structured interviews with teachers who teach in elementary schools for data collection. The advantage of the semi-structured interview over other research techniques is that it allows the capture of in-depth information, in addition to providing the opportunity for the insertion of new questions, if necessary. Furthermore, “the qualitative interview scenario enables the free expression of interests, beliefs, expectations, memories, desires, and motivations of the interviewed subjects in the thematic information that circulates” (Godoi; Mello; Silva, 2006, p. 316).

To interpret the data, we used Discourse Analysis (DA) of French lines developed by Michel Pêcheux, oriented towards the policy cycle formulated by Stephen Ball and Richard Bowe. According to Orlandi (2010), the French DA school draws from three main theoretical objectives: Linguistics, Marxism, and Psychoanalysis. Work on language, or discourse, on ideology and how these categories relate to each other to give meaning. It seeks to understand the senses produced by the subjects interpellated in the socio-historical context and provides tools to access the ideological mechanisms, in a certain way silenced, exposing their articulations of production of senses to reveal or inexistence (Orlandi, 2010).

The approach to the policy cycle is a method for analyzing educational policies, currently conceived by five elements that are mutually articulated: a) context of influence; b) context of text production; c) context of practice; d) or context two results; e e) the context of political strategy (Mainardes, 2006).

The context of influence, states the same author, is the place where public policies are normally undertaken, political discourses are designed and disputes about the social purposes of education acquire legitimacy. The context of text production refers to political texts resulting from disputes and agreements between the groups that develop policies. The context of practice concerns the conditions of each institution to implement certain policies, which vary according to local specificities. The context of the results refers to the changes that occur in the practice and structure of the school, as well as the conditions of access, equality, and social justice. Finally, the context of political strategy comprises the social and political activities that can be developed to deal with the inequalities generated by the policy investigated (Mainardes, 2006).

Unlike what the legislation provides, schools are also configured as policy-making bodies, both by giving their meanings to government policies and by using their autonomy to define their actions. In this sense, this study is inserted in the logic called by Ball as the context of practice, that is, in the daily lives of teachers participating in the research.

The research had the participation of many teachers who work in the state and municipal public network of São Paulo. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the interviews were conducted by a videoconferencing application between September and October 2020. Opting for eight teachers was because the final years of elementary education have eight different and mandatory curricular components in their curriculum.

The interviews were guided by a script composed of analysis items, creating five major themes: 1) profile of the teachers interviewed; 2) teachers' understanding of sexual education; 3) sexual education and educational policies; 4) sexual education and curriculum; and 5) teacher preparation to work with sexual education.

The interviews were carried out in a single meeting per teacher, each on different days and times. The dialogues were recorded in audio with the consent of the interviewees and varied between 28:34 minutes and 1 hour and 28 minutes in length, totaling eight hours and four minutes of conversation.

We chose not to identify the teachers interviewed nor the names of the schools where they work because we understand that the interviewees will feel more willing to talk about their personal and professional experiences about the research topic.

The teachers are named by the letter P, followed by numbers from 1 to 8 (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8), with the respective numbers attributed according to the sequence in which the interviews were carried out. Five female teachers (P3, P4, P5, P6 and P8) and three males (P1, P2 and P7) were part in this study. All participants in this research are effective teachers in the state and/or

municipal schools of São Paulo. Except for P2, P4 and P5, who do not accumulate positions, the other teachers have a double working day between the state network and the municipal network of São Paulo or with another network.

Box 1 shows the characterization of the profile of the teachers participating in the study, with the following information: gender, level of study, length of teaching activity, and number of classes they currently have.

Box 1 – Profile of interviewed teachers

Teacher	Gender	Initial study (undergraduate)	Additional training	Teaching activity time	Education network in which they work	Level of the classes in which they teach	Weekly workload
P1	M	mathematics/ accounting sciences/pedagogy	teaching/specialization in mathematics teaching	5 years	municipal	4th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9 th grades	70 hours
P2	M	biological Sciences	-	10 years	state	6 ^o and 7 ^o grades	40 hours
P3	F	history	union formation (APEOESP)	25 years	state/municipal	6 ^o , 8 ^o , and 9 ^o grades	60 hours
P4	F	Languages (Portuguese Spanish)	-	3 years	municipal	9 ^o grade	30 hours
P5	F	Artistic education	-	11 years	state	7 ^o , 8 ^o and 9 ^o grades and 2 ^o of high school	40 hours
P6	F	Languages (Portuguese – English)/ pedagogy	specialization: educational psychology; media in education; learning management/master's degree in education	3 years	state/municipal	2 ^o grade of high school; 1 ^o to 9 ^o grades	60 hours
P7	M	physical education	school physical education study group (USP)	10 years	state/municipal	3 ^o , 5 ^o , 8 ^o and 9 ^o grades	40 hours
P8	F	geography/pedagogy	specialization in education in focus and psychopedagogy	11 years	municipal	6 ^o and 9 ^o grades	70 hours

Source: Created by the author.

In terms of professional training, all interviewees have a full degree in the respective areas in which they work, and four interviewees (P1, P3, P6, and P8) have at least one complementary training at the graduate or specialization level. As for continued training, the time factor was mentioned by six of the interviewees as the predominant element in the failure to increase their participation in improvement courses in education.

Tardif (2014) argues that the knowledge that serves as the basis for the teaching profession is made up of elements that precede initial training. For the author, the knowledge that underpins the work of teachers is related to identity, life experience, and the teacher's social cycle.

Therefore, within the scope of the organization of schoolwork, what a teacher knows also depends on what he/she does not know, on what he/she is supposed to not know, on what others know in his/her place and his/her name, on the knowledge that others oppose or attribute to it (Tardif, 2014, p. 13).

In other words, teachers' knowledge is social, incorporated into the context of professional socialization and progressively modified depending on social conditions (imposition of dominant culture, inculcation of pedagogical ideologies, professional struggles), most of the time, influenced by factors external to the school (Tardif, 2014).

SOME SEXUAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORKS IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN NATIONAL CURRICULAR REFERENCES

Many problematizations are observed in the theoretical field of sexual education such as the divergence regarding the most appropriate term to refer to such issues as an object of pedagogical work. When carrying out readings that discuss sexual education in the school environment, it is common to find different terms being used by researchers to name their work. Sometimes publications are observed that use the term *sexual education*, sometimes *sexual orientation*, others use the term sexuality education or even the terminology *education for sexuality*. Likewise, there is no consensus on the definition of sexuality terminology, which varies depending on the culture or area of knowledge that investigates it.

Maia and Ribeiro (2011) define the term *sexuality* as a set of cultural concepts that involve feelings, attitudes, and perceptions related to the sexual and emotional lives of people. These concepts imply the expression of values, emotions, affection, gender, sexual practices, and extrapolation or the concept of genitality.

Based on the studies of Jeffrey Weeks, Louro (1997, p. 26) agrees that “[...] sexuality has as much to do with words, images, ritual and fantasy as it does with the body.” For the author, this definition enables us to understand sexuality for all the categories of body, sex, gender, and sexual roles. In other words, it means saying that sexuality was constituted from regulatory discourses that establish knowledge and produce *truths* to be analyzed.

The term *sexual education*, in the understanding of Ribeiro (2013, n.p.), “[...] constitutes a space to debate issues of sexuality from a didactic, scientific, academic perspective [...]”, including knowledge relating to anatomy, human physiology, gender relations, sexual rights, and citizenship.

For the author, the term *sexual education* is the most appropriate to refer to the pedagogical dimension of *sexuality*, as “[...] it is better known, popularly rooted and well defines both a field of pedagogical intervention and an area of educational science” (Ribeiro, 2017, p. 12). The pedagogical dimension of sexuality comprises “[...] the ways of teaching, learning, the creative skills of speaking, reflecting, informing about the multiple facets and situation of sexuality” (Nunes, 1996, p. 219).

According to Furlani (2012),

[...] the main role of sexual education is, firstly, to destabilize the “single truths”, the restricted hegemonic models of normal sexuality, showing the game of power and interest involved in the intentionality of their construction; and, later, present various sexual possibilities present in the social, cultural and political aspects of human life, problematizing how they are signified and how they produce their effects on people's existence (Furlani, 2012, p. 69, author's emphasis).

This is based on the perspectives defended by Ribeiro (2013, 2017) and Furlani (2012) that this article assumes an understanding of sexual education and analyzes how this is inserted in the different versions of BNCC.

Regarding the term *sexual orientation*, Ribeiro (2017) clarifies that it was disseminated at the end of the 1970s by psychologists who began to have more significant participation in research related to sexuality, being adopted and made official by the National Curricular Parameters as synonymous with *sexual education*. According to the author,

[...] from the 2000s onwards, the more accentuated and broader insertion of the LGBT movement in society brought a conceptual broadening. Sexual orientation was also understood as the direction or inclination of affective-sexual desire, a different meaning from the resembled sexual education. Thus, even to avoid confusion, there was a natural path toward replacing Sexual Orientation with Sexual Education (Ribeiro, 2017, p. 11).

Nowadays, the term *sexual orientation* is used to talk about how a person feels about emotional-sexual attraction. If this attraction is directed towards someone of the same sex, it is called homosexual orientation. If, on the contrary, it is channeled towards someone of the opposite sex, it is called heterosexual. Being directed towards both sexes, it is called bisexual attraction, and is therefore not a rational choice for the subjects, given that each person's social experiences encompass a series of complexities.

The first attempts to implement sexual education in Brazilian schools, these initiatives date back to the beginning of the 20th century, as evidenced by studies by Bueno and Ribeiro (2018), Figueiró (1998, 2001), Ribeiro (1990) and Rosemberg (1985).

Bueno and Ribeiro (2018) describe that sexual education in Brazil is highlighted by episodes of transformation. According to the authors, the first episodes date back to the 1920s, with the publication of books that addressed issues relating to human sexuality. As a result of the influence of medical-hygienist conceptions of the 19th century, some of these works referred to the following subjects: the profile of Brazilian women, pathologies, and sexual impotence in men. Produced by doctors, teachers, and priests, the writings were intended to guide the sexual practices of individuals, and the focus of this context was “[...] the fight against masturbation and venereal diseases, in addition to preparing women to be a wife and mother” (Bueno; Ribeiro, 2018, p. 50).

According to Figueiró (1998), the first sexual education works in Brazil were motivated by concern for women's health and the need to know more about them, while maintaining their subservient position of men in society. In the school curriculum, the same author reports that the first initiatives to include sexual education took place in 1930, at Colégio Batista in Rio de Janeiro. The initiative lasted from 1930 to 1954 until the teacher responsible for the project was sued and fired for inappropriate behavior during classes. The author does not provide details about the reasons that led to the teacher's dismissal, but she reports that, before the 1960s, such experiences only took place in Protestant schools without religious ties.

For the author, the Colégio de Aplicação of USP was one of two places with the greatest repercussions in the insertion of sexual education in basic education. The experience was conducted by Professor Maria José Werebe and carried out between 1963 and 1968 through the guidance of groups outside of regular classroom hours.

The groups were mixed, composed of boys and girls of the first and second grades (6th and 7th years of middle school), with a science teacher – responsible for the biological information – and a counselor who led the discussions. The project was organized in four cycles. Each cycle comprises about nine meetings, which discuss topics of interest and needs of the students, trying to maintain a favorable environment in the subject matter (Figueiró, 1998).

According to Bueno and Ribeiro (2018, p. 52), “[...] the project contains individual attention, group work, work with the parents and training.” All project participants attended a weekly study seminar, which encouraged exchanges of experiences and contributed to demystifying and addressing topics considered taboo. In other words, the experience was good with the objective achieved: the insertion of sexual education in the educational process (Figueiró, 1998).

However, the military regime imposed by the 1964 coup d'état produced a context of reduction in the manifestations of sexuality, which led to a political crisis in the Colégio de Aplicação of USP, culminating in the censorship of the debate on sexuality and the persecution of teachers. “Sexuality, still associated with ‘subversion’, then appears as a controversial issue and the target of repression and investigations, especially when linked to the education of children and adolescents” (Bueno; Ribeiro, 2018, p. 52).

The moralistic and authoritarian ideology and the political persecution that plagued the country at the end of the 1960s hindered new experiences. Schools and teachers were repeatedly monitored by the State, and those who dared to continue with projects in this area maintained such initiatives in a semi-clandestine regime, until in 1970 these attempts ceased to exist (Rosemberg, 1985).

The conspiracy of silence that surrounds the field of sexual education in Brazil remains until 1978. “In this year, in the context of recent signs of a loosening of the Military Dictatorship, the 1st Congress on Sexual Education in Schools is taking place” (Bueno; Ribeiro, 2018, p. 53). From then on, the theme was resumed, leading to the holding of other scientific events as well as the implementation of pilot projects in schools.

Between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the first radio and television programs related to sexuality appeared led by women. According to Bueno and Ribeiro (2018), Maria Helena Matarazzo and Marta Suplicy – both with specific training in human sexuality – were two personalities who stood out in Brazil:

Maria Helena Matarazzo worked on a daily radio program about Sexual Education on Rádio Globo and two telephone sexual guidance services. Marta Suplicy spoke openly about sexuality on a Rede Globo program, TV Mulher (Bueno; Ribeiro, 2018, p. 54).

With the advent of AIDS in the 1980s, sexual education projects were reinserted in schools to respond to a preventive emergency. From then on, many doors were opened and, as a result, important issues were brought up and discussed. However,

[...] sexuality was worked on not because they believed it was important for the integral development of the individual but because people began to have the view that sexual education should be discussed in a way that dealt with the problems that were appearing, such as teenage pregnancy, drug use by teenagers and due to the concern of parents and educators with the emergence of AIDS, which was also beginning to “threaten” young people and change all concepts and ways of experiencing their sexuality (Ribeiro, 1990, n.p.).

This period was also highlighted by advertising campaigns to prevent HIV-AIDS, which mistakenly positioned homosexual men as the major (or perhaps the only) vectors for the spread of the virus. “At that moment, the LGBT movement, which had been organizing since the end of the 1970s, began to play a fundamental role, carrying out actions to combat prejudice and encouraging solidarity with HIV-positive and sick people” (Araújo et al., 2018, p. 14).

From 1980 to 1990, according to Bueno and Ribeiro (2018), the following events stood out: a) the creation of sexual education projects in the city of Campinas (1984–1998) in the Working Group for Teacher Training and Training in Sexual Orientation, which was later included in the Municipal Organic Law in 1990; b) the inclusion of sexuality in the curricula of municipal schools in the states of São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul; and c) the work of NGOs in schools, in teacher training courses, in the production of guides, videos, manuals and other educational materials for schools.

Among these institutions, there are the *Instituto Kaplan*, the *Centro de Educação Sexual* (CEDUS), the *Centro de Orientação e Educação Sexual* (CORES), the *Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar de AIDS* (ABIA), the *Comunicação em Sexualidade* (ECOS) and the aforementioned GIPOS. (BUENO and RIBEIRO, 2018, p. 55). In 1985, the first Extension Course in Sexual Education was offered at the *Universidade Federal da Bahia* (UFBA), which later became the *Programa de Educação Sexual* (PROEDSEX/UFBA), maintaining its activities until the 2010s (Araújo et al., 2018).

From 1990 onwards, there was also a boost in the development of public policies aimed at young people. The construction of masculine and feminine from a sociocultural perspective, and not as an exclusive attribute of nature, began to be worked on by non-governmental organizations and universities. In this decade, the concept of gender began to be part of Brazilian sexual education. It is worth clarifying here that the term gender used repeatedly in this article refers to the identity of the subjects. As stated by Louro (1997), the identities of subjects are plural, changeable, and may even be contradictory.

The National Curricular Parameters (PCN) were the first initiative of the Ministry of Education aimed at the inclusion of issues related to sexuality in Brazilian schools. *Sexual Orientation* – a term used by psychologists who participated in the preparation of the PCN – was official in school curricula and presented to be incorporated into all areas of knowledge, in an integrated and transversal way.

The introduction of sexual education emerges during a set of changes impelled by the promulgation of the Statute of Childhood and Adolescents in 1990 and of a new Law of Guidance and Bases of Education, reinforced by international commitments assumed by the Brazilian government at the Cairo Conference, held in 1994, at the Pequim Conference, held in 1995.

Both the Cairo Conference and the Beijing Conference resulted in global agreements to improve the lives of the population. Among the commitments made at the Cairo Conference, Brazil committed to promoting gender equality, eliminating violence against women, guaranteeing reproductive rights, and reducing maternal and child mortality. At the Beijing Conference, barriers to women's participation in all spheres of public and private life were put on the agenda, increasing their involvement in the areas of poverty, education, health, economy, decision-making, media, and environment.

In this context, under the influence of international multilateral agencies, the Brazilian government launched the National Curricular Parameters and the inclusion of sexual orientation in the school curriculum was official. In the PCN, *sexual orientation* is premised on transmitting content that deals with the body, the social role of men and women, respect for oneself and others, discrimination, and stereotypes attributed to and experienced in relationships.

The PCN laid the foundations for sexual education to be implemented in schools across the board, but there was no investment by the government bodies in teacher training so that the topic could be consolidated in the educational environment.

In the first decade of the 2000s, the actions implemented by the Brazilian government in the field of sexuality were the result of social movements² that emerged at the end of the 1970s and public policies undertaken throughout the eight years of the Lula government's mandate (2003–2011)., which produced changes in conceptions regarding sexual diversity.

Among the measures planned to combat prejudice against sexual diversity, the Brazil without Homophobia Program (BSH-*Programa Brasil sem Homofobia*) and the School without Homophobia Project (ESH-*Projeto Escola sem Homofobia*) stand out, which occurred through agreements signed by the MEC with some NGOs. The BSH, launched in 2004, is the Brazilian milestone in combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. According to Oliveira Júnior and Maio (2017), in addition to the primary role of establishing a dialogue between civil society and the State regarding the treatment of sexual diversity, the BSH seeks to recognize and repair the citizenship of the LGBTQIAP+ population³.

The ESH – launched to combat violence against gays, lesbians, transvestites, and transsexuals in school institutions –, in addition to training educators to deal with issues related to gender and sexuality, produced a set of teaching materials to be distributed in public schools, called the Anti-Homophobia Kit. The Anti-Homophobia Kit, pejoratively called the gay kit by its detractors, consisted of didactic-pedagogical instruments that attempted to deconstruct stereotypes about the LGBTQIAP+ population and establish a democratic coexistence with differences.

Developed over two years, the Kit would consist of a set of teaching materials including Boleshs (School without Homophobia Bulletins), a publicity poster, a presentation letter for managers and educators, Notebook (School without Homophobia) and Audiovisual Resources: Fear of What? Doll in a Backpack, Torpedo, Finding Bianca and Probability (Oliveira Júnior; May 2017, p. 133).

At the time of the exhibition of the material, the protesting speech in a mocking tone by the then Secretary of Education André Lázaro, when he was speaking to congressmen and representatives of entities supporting the production of the material, instigated political groups and civil society to act in contrary to the adoption of the Anti-Homophobia Kit.

From then on, a discursive explosion in digital and television media began to draw society's attention to the dangers of the supposed educational material produced by the MEC encouraging same-sex practices. Even people who did not have access to the material reproduced the parliamentarian's speech, stating that the aforementioned Kit taught people how to be homosexual (Furlani, 2011a).

Despite the investment of 1.8 million in the production of materials for schools, in research, seminars, and continuous training activities for teachers, the government gave in to pressure and suspended the distribution of the material. At the time, President Dilma Rousseff argued that *it was not the government's role to advertise sexual options* (Furlani, 2011b).

Likewise, in the BNCC approval process, gender and sexuality issues were strongly resisted by ultra-conservative sectors and the evangelical bench in the chamber, culminating in the suppression of terms that promoted the visibility and rights of the population. The inclusions and removals of these terms in the different versions of the BNCC will be discussed in the following topic.

² These are the Brazilian LGBT Movement and the Unified Black Movement, which, at that time, were articulated in defense of visibility and the fight for civil rights (Fachini, 2011).

³ Acronym used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and pansexual people. The sum symbol at the end of the acronym represents the understanding that gender and sexuality diversity is fluid and can change at any time.

The perspective of Sexual Education in the BNCC versions

The release of the first version of the BNCC took place in a political context in which disputes were intensifying resulting in the impeachment process of President Dilma Rousseff. At the time, the topic of the curriculum was widely disseminated by the media, and discussions predominated in which the understanding that

social, political, and ethical rights and the integral formation of subjects would be the guide of its construction process and, as the basis is a parameter to inspire curricula, this should be guided by the search for equity, welcoming diversity and agreements and documents that had already been produced for Basic Education (Micarello; Frade, 2016).

Neira, Alviano Júnior and Almeida (2016) observe that the first version of the BNCC was prepared by a team composed of teachers appointed by the National Council of Education Secretaries (CONSED-*Conselho Nacional dos Secretários de Educação*), the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (UNDIME-*União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais da Educação*) and professionals from 35 universities. To establish a dialogue with actual currents of curriculum theorization and produce a document that incorporated cultural, religious, gender diversity, etc., the team was based on state and Federal District curricula (Neira; Alviano Júnior; Almeida, 2016). To meet local educational needs,

As a reference, we worked with a parameter that the BNCC occupied a maximum of 60% of the workload of each component, with the other 40% reserved for the diversified part, the responsibility of the education systems (Valladares et al., 2016, p. 9).

In the process of preparing the document, there were legitimate manifestations of disagreement regarding what was considered essential, secondary, and fundamental in terms of knowledge. For conservative groups, the BNCC texts were far away from what was necessary in terms of obtaining knowledge. Progressive groups also gave their opinion against the document and criticized the proposal, which did not show any marketing or favorable intention toward neoliberal policies (Neira; Alviano Júnior; Almeida, 2016).

Regarding sexuality and gender issues, the first version of the BNCC envisioned the possibility of addressing these themes at different stages and areas of knowledge. As seen in Box 2, terms equivalent to such themes are widely disseminated in several passages of the document:

Box 2 – Sexual education in the first version of the BNCC

BNCC FIRST VERSION		
Curricular component Stage/year	Location	Mentions relating to the terms gender and/or sexuality
child education	Guiding principles	“As a result, the focus of pedagogical work must include the formation by the child of a plural vision of the world and a perspective that respects the cultural, ethnic-racial, gender, and social class diversities of people , supporting the peculiarities of children with disabilities, with high abilities/giftedness and with developmental disorders” (Brasil, 2015, p. 19).
art	Curricular component learning objectives	“To know, enjoy and critically analyze different artistic and cultural practices and productions in their social environment and different societies, in different times and spaces, respecting differences in ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other diversities ” (Brasil, 2015, p. 86).
physical education 1st, 2nd and 3rd years elementary school	Curricular component learning objectives	“ To carry out games in the community and regional context, recognizing differences in gender , ethnic-racial, religious, social class and appearance and/or body performance. To carry out singing circles , rhythmic games and dances present in community culture based on principles of justice, equity, and solidarity, with an emphasis on egalitarian and gender relations ” (Brasil, 2015, p. 101).
physical education	Curricular component	“ To contribute in a supportive manner, in the collective resolution of problems experienced in games, recognizing differences in gender , ethnicity,

4th and 5th years of elementary school	learning objectives	religion, social class, appearance, and body performance, based on the principles of justice, equity and solidarity” (Brasil, 2015, p. 102). “ To identify and analyze situations in which discriminatory actions of any nature are evident, such as gender , social class, ethnic-racial origin, religious nature and bodily appearance in dances belonging to the culture, region and state” (Brasil, 2015, p. 103).
physical education 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of high school	Curricular component learning objectives	“ To get involved and cooperate in the production of sports practice contexts guided by equity and solidarity principles, seeking to provide opportunities for everyone’s participation and enjoyment, regardless of performance level, gender or any other characteristic” (Brasil, 2015, p. 111).
sciences 9th year High school	Units of knowledge and learning objectives	“To understand the physical, physiological, and behavioral changes that occur during the puberty process. For example: To recognize changes in the body that occur with adolescence; to recognize responsibilities arising from such changes, related to social behaviors and sexuality ” (Brasil, 2015, p. 182).
biology	Fundamentals of the component in high school	“It can be said that young people cannot do without conceptual knowledge in Biology to be well informed, giving opinion and making decisions about a series of issues in the contemporary world, which involve diverse themes, such as ethnic-racial identity and racism; gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, and homophobia; pregnancy and abortion ” (Brasil, 2015, p.187).
biology 2nd year high school	Units of knowledge and learning objectives	“To understand that the phenotype results from complex relationships between genetic, epigenetic and environmental processes [...] From this point on, questions about human characteristics can be discussed, such as the different explanations for homosexuality ; or the results of experiments with identical twins who developed in different cultural and social environments” (Brasil, 2015, p. 200).
sociology 2nd year high school	Learning Objectives	“Compreender a perspectiva socioantropológica sobre sexo, sexualidade e gênero ” (Brasil, 2015, p. 300). “To understand the socio-anthropological perspective on sex, sexuality and gender ” (Brasil, 2015, p. 300).

Source: Created by the author.

There were significant changes from the first version to the second version of BNCC. On the approach to the questions of gender and sexuality, Box 3 shows that the second version expands the information and clarifications on these themes in the three stages of education and the learning objectives in various areas of knowledge:

Box 3 – Sexual education in the second version of the BNCC

BNCC SECOND VERSION		
Curricular component Stage/year	Location	Mentions relating to the terms gender and/or sexuality
child education	Introductory text	“ The body expresses and carries with it not only physical and biological characteristics but also marks of our social belonging that affect who we are and the experiences we have about gender, ethnicity or race, class, religion, and sexuality” (Brasil, 2016, p. 70).
biology high school	Component structure	“Young people cannot do without conceptual knowledge in Biology to be well informed, position themselves, and make decisions about a series of issues in the contemporary world, which involve diverse themes, such as ethnic-racial identity and racism; gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, and homophobia; pregnancy and abortion ” (Brasil, 2016, p. 150).
art 1st to 5th years elementary school	Learning Objectives	“To reflect on personal and collective bodily experiences developed in class to problematize issues of gender, body and sexuality ” (Brasil, 2016, p. 237). “To reflect on the theatrical experiences developed in class, to problematize issues of gender, body and sexuality ” (Brasil, 2016, p. 239).

art 6th to 9th years elementary school		<p>“To appropriate different dance concepts and procedures to problematize issues of gender, body and sexuality” (Brasil, 2016, p. 397).</p> <p>“To reflect on the theatrical experiences developed in class to problematize issues of gender, body and sexuality” (Brasil, 2016, p. 399).</p>
art high school		<p>“To reflect on philosophical, ethical, social, media and political aspects that emerge from the practice of dance, focusing on issues of the body, beliefs, gender and sexuality” (Brasil, 2016, p. 545).</p>
middle school final years	Fundamentals	<p>“During this period of life, students modify social bonds and affective bonds, intensifying their relationships with age peers and learning regarding sexuality and gender relations, accelerating the process of breaking with childhood in an attempt to build one’s values” (Brasil, 2016, p. 321).</p>
foreign language middle school final years	Fundamentals	<p>“During this period of life, students modify social ties and emotional ties, intensifying their relationships with their age peers, the construction of their values and learning regarding sexuality and gender relations” (Brasil, 2016, p. 368).</p>
sciences middle school 8th grade	Learning Objectives	<p>“(EF08CI09) To relate the organic, cultural, affective and ethical dimensions of human reproduction, which imply care, sensitivity, and responsibility in the field of sexuality, especially from puberty onwards” (Brasil, 2016, p. 447).</p>
religious education high school 9th grade	Learning Objectives	<p>“To develop questions regarding human existence and the limiting situations that makeup life, articulating socio-environmental, geopolitical, cultural, religious, gender and sexuality issues, among others” (Brasil, 2016, p. 485).</p>
biology high school	Fundamentals	<p>“Young people cannot do without conceptual knowledge in Biology to be well informed, give opinion and make decisions about a series of issues in the contemporary world, which involve diverse themes, such as: ethnic-racial identity and racism; gender, sexuality, sexual orientation and homophobia; pregnancy and abortion” (Brasil, 2016, p. 597).</p>

Source: Created by the author.

Thus, the second version of the BNCC shows a proposal in which voices from different social segments in different regions of the country were able to argue in favor of their convictions and plead for the inclusion of affirmative policies adopted by the State in other areas with different characteristics and scope.

As seen in Box 4, the analysis of the third version highlights adjustments in the document's introductory texts, expands the mentions related to gender and/or sexuality in curricular components not mentioned in previous versions, such as geography and history and, at the same time, eliminates the explicit mention of these terms of early childhood education, physical education components, religious education and foreign language.

Box 4 – Sexual education in the third version of the BNCC

BNCC THIRD VERSION		
Curricular component Stage/year	Location	Mentions relating to the terms gender and/or sexuality
basic education	Introductory text	<p>“Thus, equity requires that the school institution be deliberately open to plurality and diversity and that the school experience be accessible, effective, and enjoyable for everyone, without exception, regardless of appearance, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other attributes, ensuring that everyone can learn” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 11).</p> <p>“Finally, it is up to education systems and networks, as well as schools, in their respective spheres of autonomy and competence, to incorporate into curricula and pedagogical proposals the approach to contemporary themes that affect human life on a local, regional and global scale, preferably in a transversal and integrative way. Among these themes, the following stand out: [...] health, sexuality and gender, family and social life, consumer education, financial and tax education, work, science and technology and cultural diversity” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 13).</p>

basic education	General skills	“9. To exercise empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation, ensuring respect and promoting respect for others, welcoming and valuing the diversity of individuals and social groups, their knowledge, identities, cultures, and potential, without prejudice of origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability/need, religious conviction or any other nature , recognized as part of a collective to which they must commit” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 19).
Elementar and Middle School	Fundamentals	“[...] During this period of life, as CNE/CEB Opinion 11/2010 clearly points out, social bonds and affective bonds are expanded, 'intensifying their [students] relationships with their age peers and learning regarding sexuality and gender relations, accelerating the process of breaking with childhood to build one's values' ” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 56).
art 6th to 9th years middle school	Skills	“To reflect on personal and collective bodily experiences developed in class or experienced in other contexts to problematize issues of gender, body and sexuality ” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 165).
sciences 8th year of elementary School	Skills	“ To select arguments that highlight the multiple dimensions of human sexuality (biological, sociocultural, affective and ethical) and the need to respect, value and welcome the diversity of individuals, without prejudice based on differences in sex, gender identity and sexual orientation ” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 301).
geography elementary School	Specific skills	“6. To build arguments based on geographic information, debate and defend ideas and points of view that respect and promote socio-environmental awareness and respect for biodiversity and others, without prejudice of origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability/need, conviction religious or any other type ” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 318).
history 9th year of middle school	Skills	“ To identify the transformations that occurred in the debate on gender issues in Brazil during the 20th century and understand the meaning of changes in approach to the topic” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 379). “To evaluate population dynamics and the constructions of ethnic-racial and gender identities in recent history” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 381).

Source: Created by the author.

In the BNCC versions presented so far, there were not only mentions of the terms *gender*, *sexual orientation*, and the multiple dimensions of *sexuality* but also a more critical and reflective view of sexual diversity.

However, with the justification that the gender issue had provoked a lot of controversy, the MEC eliminated the terms gender and sexual orientation from the official version and subsequently committed to drafting a document with specific guidelines on the topics currently suppressed.

As seen in Box 5, in the official BNCC version, the explicit mention of the topic of *sexuality* appears very timidly only in the science component and is restricted to the context of the eighth year of elementary and middle school:

Box 5 – Sexual education in the official version of the BNCC

BNCC OFFICIAL VERSION		
Curricular component Stage/year	Location	Mentions relating to the terms gender and/or sexuality
sciences middle school 8th year	Skills	“ To select arguments that highlight the multiple dimensions of human sexuality (biological, sociocultural, affective and ethical)” (Brasil, 2017b, p. 349).

Source: Created by the author.

The analysis of the previous table shows a series of setbacks, especially when compared with the guidelines recommended by the PCN. While in 1997 the Sexual Orientation Curricular Parameters were made official to be implemented in school curricula, twenty years later the situation reveals a profound restriction around this topic.

Knowledge about the anatomical and physiological aspects of human reproduction, although extremely important, is not sufficient to provide a systematic intervention capable of modifying the attitudes and behaviors of children and adolescents about sexuality. In our view, an educational process

committed to sexual education cannot only be cognitive, given that social and emotional issues intervene in this process.

The skills to be developed on issues related to sexuality are outlined as follows:

(EF08CI08) **To analyze and explain the transformations that occur during puberty** considering the action of sexual hormones and the nervous system.

(EF08CI09) **To compare the mode of action and effectiveness of different contraceptive methods and justify the need to share responsibility in choosing and using the most appropriate method for preventing early and unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).**

(EF08CI10) **To identify the main symptoms, modes of transmission, and treatment of some STDs** (with an emphasis on AIDS), and **to discuss prevention strategies and methods.**

(EF08CI11) **To select arguments that highlight the multiple dimensions of human sexuality** (biological, sociocultural, affective, and ethical) (Brasil, 2017b, p. 348-349).

Although the last skill mentions the need to highlight the *multiple dimensions of human sexuality*, the analysis of the BNCC in its entirety reveals a perspective of sexual education centered on the biological dimension to minimize public health problems.

According to the investigation by the portal *De Olho nos Planos*, “[...] of the 235 contributions sent in writing to the 3rd version of the Base, 75 explicitly mention 'gender' and/or 'sexual orientation', with 23 against and 51 in favor the inclusion of themes” (De Olho nos Planos, 2018, n.p.).

Even though most contributions were in favor of the inclusion of the themes in the curricular references, in the official version of the document, the excerpts that defended respect for the diversity of individuals in differences in sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation were banned from all the curricular components that included this mention.

For Ximenes (2017), there was no transparency in the debates that culminated in the official version of the BNCC. According to the same author, the confidential version of the BNCC, sent by the MEC for approval, incorporated the conservative bias of the School Without Party Movement's bills (*Movimento Escola sem Partido*), which resulted in the exclusion of discussions of gender and sexuality in schools. To assume that these themes are taken to school to instill homosexuality in students is to demonstrate a complete lack of knowledge of the school context and its conflicts, which exist precisely because the school is plural and diverse (Souza; Oliveira, 2017).

According to Manhas (2016) and Ratier (2016), the *Movimento Escola sem Partido* (ESP), founded in 2004 by the lawyer and attorney for the state of São Paulo Miguel Nagib, initially presented incoherent proposals, particularly in the advances achieved in the issue of human rights, did not generate many concerns at the time of its first demonstrations. However, in recent years, ESP has become embodied and gained visibility at the same rate as fascist movements, such as *Revoltados Online*⁴, which try to impose on the country a life project based on individual impressions and experiences.

ESP uses manipulative discourse, adopting distorted and frightening information. It disqualifies the school and teachers, proposing that students act as whistleblowers against teachers who bring, among other issues, the debate on sexual and gender education to the school (Penna, 2017). Its objective is to subvert the distinction between formal education (offered by the private sector) and informal education (carried out within social spheres) through ideological and misleading fallacies, based on opinion polls without scientific proof that defends the omission of critical thinking, problematization and the possibility of democratizing the school (Manhas, 2016; Ximenes, 2016).

The pressure from groups linked to ESP to silence the teacher, possibly assuming that, by not discussing these issues, they will not enter the school, is, according to Louro (1997), a utopian presumption, given that sexuality is stamped on the lives of children and young people.

They are part of the students' conversations, they are in the graffiti in the bathrooms, in the jokes and pranks, in the emotional connections, in the relationships; and not just there, they are also in fact in the classrooms – admittedly or not – in the speeches and attitudes of teachers and students (Louro, 1997, p. 135).

⁴ Online virtual community created by Marcelo Reis in August 2010 on the Facebook platform and other social networks to demonstrate against the current federal government.

Understanding how gender relations are constructed and established in our society is of fundamental importance for any proposal for curricular organization. These themes need to enter schools because they are part of society. Thus, there is no doubt about the great contribution of these reflections to the learning of values and attitudes that contribute to overcoming human alienation.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE CONTEXT OF NARRATIVES AND DISPUTES THAT INTERMEDIATED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BNCC

In the political sphere, the field of sexual education has been the subject of intense ideological disputes, in which the presence of conservative groups has managed to roll back important achievements in the educational field in recent decades.

The invention of *gender ideology* and its supposed *threat* to the traditional Christian family has been one of the focuses of convincing these groups to block the discussion of topics related to gender and sexual diversity in schools, among other positions that represent restrictions on fundamental rights and guarantees.

Furlani (2016) explains that the concept of *gender ideology* is a narrative that has its origins within the Catholic Church and the International and National Pro-life and Pro-Family Movement (*Movimento Internacional e Nacional Pró-vida e Pró-Família*), to contain political and social changes resulting from the concept gender, especially in the field of educational policies, health, and human rights. In Brazil, the *gender ideology* narrative was disseminated by the Inter-American Observatory of Biopolitics (*Observatório Interamericano de Biopolítica*), a website run by Professor Felipe Nery that brings together materials and representatives who strive to propagate a social panic against gender studies, public policies aimed at women and the LGBTQIAP+ population (Furlani, 2016).

According to the same author, in the understanding of these institutions, there is a conspiracy articulated by organizations and countries with left-wing, Marxist tendencies, linked to the workers' party, which intends to institute policies that attack the traditional Christian family - made up of father, mother and children -, single, normal and hegemonic model.

Among the objectives of these offensives, disputes over the definition of basic education curricula acquire centrality, specifically due to the importance they have in defining teacher training policies and the organization of school space.

As previously reported, this wave of censorship dates to the first discussions on the elaboration of the second National Education Plan (Bill 8,035/2010), goes through a discursive explosion on the occasion of the presentation of the Anti-Homophobia Kit and, more recently, in the debates that intermediated the construction of the National Common Curricular Base.

On these occasions, ideological narratives had repercussions on the national scene, provoking incisive debates in Brazilian society, and resulting in the removal of topics concerning gender/sexual diversity in the official version of the BNCC. In the approved version, sexuality is kept very timidly only in the science component and restricted to the context of the eighth year of elementary and middle school.

With the non-explicit mention of the terms *gender* and *sexual orientation*, the idea spread that, if they are not included in the base, these topics could not be addressed in the classroom, culminating in an atmosphere of censorship and silencing around such issues.

In this discussion, the associations between the regression of sexualities and gender equality agendas in curricula and the presence of conservative religious groups in the decision-making spaces of the Brazilian State were unanimous in the statements of the interviewed teachers.

For P3 and P6, the scenario of political regression puts several social advances at risk:

It's a big setback that Brazilian society is going through, right, in the name of conservatism, which is very bad because it is rooted in religious issues, so we have a religious group that is lighting up (sic) on economic issues it has already turned on (sic), right, they are already powerful, they already have control of the economy, but they also want to take ownership of political decisions and for that they raised a flag of morality and conservatism that crosses all those development policies that Brazil was having (P3).

I understand that these discussions have a lot to do with the great advance of neo-Pentecostal churches in our society, basically that. [...] They want to place these discussions within the democratic process, which is perfectly acceptable, I am not questioning that, the problem is that the other groups are no longer winning this debate (P6).

In his arguments, P8 draws attention to the fact that the impositions of religious moralities are not in line with the ideals of an egalitarian society:

[...] I see this whole intrusion as part of an ideological basis even though they have other principles, other precepts than... which does not match the freedom to talk about sexual education, right, which even for me goes against even the question of the secular State. I think this oppression is very much linked to whoever is in power now, you know? This wave of conservatism, this whole thing. It has an ideological face, it represents a lot of the thinking of those in power now, which for me is not in line with the demands of a free and educated society in all aspects (P8).

P7 associates the scenario of political regression established in Brazil with the speeches given by the former president, at different moments in his political career:

It depends a lot on the moment we are living in, right, on the president who was elected, on the speeches that are suspended in society, right, that being gay is a crime, right, at the end (sic), I think it goes very much in line with these discussions (P7).

Whether through lectures or the dissemination of videos on the internet, since the time he served as a federal deputy (1991–2018), Jair Bolsonaro has positioned himself against any public policy that incorporated the approach to gender and sexuality in the public sphere and the scope of education. The influence of these discursive productions enunciated by the former president is also mentioned by P5 when commenting on the censorship that generated controversy in the inclusion/exclusion of gender and sexuality issues in the BNCC versions:

Look... I think that mainly, with the current government, several sectors are suffering from the issue of censorship, right? And working on sexuality has always been a taboo in society. So I think it will always be a fight between science and conservatism, society, and right (P5).

The statements described above take us back to a very striking speech given by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro, shortly after the announcement of the results of the presidential election, on November 9, 2018. On that occasion, the president-elect addressed his voters to talk about his government's plan and present his *team of ministers*, which, in his words, would *save the country's economy*. In one of the excerpts of his speech, the president commented on the lack of definition of the minister of education, as it is a *complicated ministry*. He then mentioned a text about the language used by homosexuals and transvestites used in the 2018 National High School Exam (ENEM-*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio*), in which he was indignant and categorized it as being permeated with *gender ideology*.

In his speech, reproduced below, there is a retrograde idea of sexual education:

When the son goes to school, it's not to learn how to have sex [...] when the father sends the son to school, it's because he wants him to learn something. We know that education is provided by parents, instruction comes from the school, and we want to change that [...] we want normality (Bolsonaro, 2018).

The perspective of sexual education expressed in the president's speech, which involves defending order and moralizing customs, not only reinforces the perspective of denying pluralism but also disqualifies sexual diversity. The regulation of sexualities by religious and fundamentalist precepts increases the dissemination of a sexist message, full of stigmatized views. This position feeds intolerance, monopolizes *certain truths*, and opens the doors to a religiosity contaminated with hatred and full of misunderstanding.

Conservative religious activism in strategic political decision-making situations is also observed in the comments of P1 and P2:

[...] I believe that a large part of this censorship that occurs so that this topic is not so widespread in schools, right, in the reference documents is the influence of religion, which is very present in Brazilian politics today. So in all

aspects of... the... foundation of these documents, there is a very large influence from these benches that are... Christian, so-called Christian, evangelical (P1).

It is a more religious censorship, focused on religious issues than on education issues. Because the person who puts this censure isn't noticing, they're not following the growth [...] that children's sexual lives are growing, right? Unwanted pregnancies, STDs that are appearing... Nowadays children are already talking about dating, about kissing on the mouth, right (P2).

The religious and fundamentalist precepts that underpin the debate on issues linked to sexuality are also mentioned by P3 and P8 when remembering the controversial statements by Damares Alves – a former minister in the Bolsonaro government –, responsible for the Women, Family, and Human Rights portfolio. Therefore, see the comments from P3 and P8:

So, our family minister and human rights minister is one of those responsible for creating myths concerning what we want kids (sic) to understand correctly, she says that we are in favor of pedophilia, that we are in favor of these monstrosities. Well, if we want to educate to have complaints, we cannot be in favor. When they dismantle all the public policies related to what happens in Brazilian society, it seems to me that they are much more in favor than they think, right, because it is... when they say that they are conservative we can never stop asking: but what do they want to conserve? [...] So we need to contextualize and debate these issues so we can understand exactly which way public policies are going (sic), right? But the media plays an important convincing role and people end up forgetting that they also think, you know, they swallow what governments and advertisements say, they think it's right and that's it! (P3).

I can't impose my ideology, I don't know... against a greater reason, just because they say (sic) that it's not right. So, it has a lot to do with who is in government, and who is in power at the moment. When I see the minister, the sinister one, Damares, putting her thoughts together, I keep thinking about what cave she came out of. The word is this "cave"! (P8).

The criticisms from P3 and P8 refer to two statements by former minister Damares Alves that had intense repercussions in the media. The first took place at the beginning of 2020, with the proposal to include sexual abstinence as a public policy to prevent teenage pregnancy and other situations of risk to reproductive and sexual health. In a statement published by the newspaper *O Globo*⁵, the department headed by Damares justified that *the early onset of sexual life leads to antisocial or delinquent behavior and separation from parents, school, and faith, among other consequences.*

Such statements led several Brazilian entities to take a stance against the minister's proposal. The Brazilian Society of Pediatrics (SBP) argued that the minister's proposal, in addition to being ineffective, had no scientific support, as the only effective tools to reduce teenage pregnancy rates are access to education and information, together with actions of qualified health services. "Abstinence is only healthy if it is a genuine choice by the teenager and not an imposition or the only option offered" (Silva, 2020, n.p). In other words, this is a problem with deep roots, which can be minimized with sexual education and not with simplistic or ideological measures.

The second controversy that P3 and P8 referred to occurred at the beginning of 2019 with the release of a video on social media, recorded shortly after the end of minister Damares Alves' inauguration speech, in which she expressed the following conviction: *boy wears blue and girls wear pink*, this being the mark of a new era in Brazil. In her speech, the minister reaffirmed her intention to end the abuse of ideological indoctrination of children and adolescents in Brazil and that the revolution was just beginning (Quinalha, 2019).

Given the repercussions of these statements, former minister Damares justified that it was a stance against *gender ideology*. In the former minister's view, *gender ideology* would be an element that indoctrinates children and would bring about the destruction of the traditional Christian family – made up of father, mother, and children and understood as the only normal model – and, therefore, would need to be combated. The dissemination of sexist messages, full of simplistic terms and stigmatized views,

⁵ Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/sociedade/ministerio-de-damares-defende-em-nota-tecnica-que-inicio-precoce-da-vida-sexual-leva-delinquencia-24212017>. Access on: Jan 10 2021.

They are reflected in the lives of the effeminate boy who wears pink and is bullied, the trans girl who can't go to school, and the women who are beaten by their husbands. This is not diversionism. This is a concrete effect of ideology on people's lives (Quinalha, 2019).

Fallacies such as those uttered by members of the predecessor government have become the banner of religious political groups, which disagree with the approach to gender and sexual diversity issues in public spaces, such as schools. These groups see any thought different from theirs as a threat, which must be combated with discipline and repression.

Sexist socialization not only redefines the social roles of men and women unequally but also constitutes a powerful instrument for projecting these same gender and sexuality positions, among possible ways of being, living, and experiencing bodies (Louro, 1997).

On the controversy surrounding the inclusion/exclusion of gender and sexuality issues in the process of preparing the BNCC, P4's speech stands out when commenting on the symbolic meaning of national curricular documents and their role in legitimizing teaching practices:

I followed the Base issue a little bit, you know, which removed the word gender and has the word sex, right? [...] if it is not in a national document, it is automatically saying that it is not legitimate to talk about it, right? [...] these are questions that not only us as adults, but also teenagers, bring up from a very young age. So if we don't have a document that supports this, how are we going to work, right? [...] We know that a cisgender woman will be seen in society in one way, a transgender woman in another [...] it is very problematic that we do not have this space at school as legitimate (P4).

The speech in question and the other comments discussed so far refer to the thoughts of Arroyo (2011) when he points out that the curriculum has become the most standardized and disputed territory of all time.

According to the author,

Our identities are based on clippings from the curriculum. We are licensed for a curriculum-cutting subject. Master's and students will be evaluated, approved, or failed, we will receive bonuses or punishments for results in teaching and learning the skills provided for in the curriculum. The fate of students is equally tied to the curriculum for their successes or failures and their normal or truncated paths. But their right to education is also guaranteed by the curriculum (Arroyo, 2011, p. 15).

For Louro (1997, 2003), the school not only reproduces or reflects conceptions of gender and sexuality widespread in society, but it is responsible for producing them. Using school experiences collected in academic articles as an example, the author explains that schools practice the *pedagogy of sexuality* through strategies for disciplining bodies. For the author, "such pedagogy is often subtle, discreet, continuous, but almost always efficient and lasting" (Louro, 2003, p. 17).

In this sense, Britzman (2003) criticizes the way sexuality is organized in the curriculum. According to the author, most of the time, the discussion around this topic only contemplates the knowledge of facts with an emphasis on what is right or wrong and, therefore, linked to normative discourses that "defend an appropriate cultural form and an appropriate age for sexuality" (Britzman, 2003, p. 104). From this perspective, states the author, some groups are not included in the description of what is considered appropriate.

For Ribeiro (2017), Brazil is currently experiencing a potentially dangerous moment in which the rupture of the democratic rule of law achieved throughout our history is preached. The offensive of the religious field has managed to attract substantial contingents in street protests and mobilize discourses that aim to maintain their interests to promote regressive policies in the field of sexuality and reproductive rights. This activism under the guise of religious preaching that attacks human rights, and the educational field has set back around eighty years the advances made in public policies, especially those aimed at issues of gender equity (Ribeiro, 2017).

Genders and sexualities with their multiple relationships with identities are present in social life and everyday school life. As Furlani (2016) points out, gender studies exist to study LGBTQIAP+ subjects, understand the expression of their identities, propose concepts and theories for their existence, and help in the construction of a more egalitarian society for all.

Given the relevance and urgency of this theme being part of education in Brazil, it is necessary to expand the notion of sexuality teachers so that they can deal with the difficulties resulting from taboos and prejudices rooted in social life and contribute to the formation of people in its entirety.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to analyze how sexual education is included in the different versions of the BNCC, as well as the teachers' perception of the narratives and disputes that intermediated the process of preparing the curricular framework.

The examination of the different versions of the BNCC revealed that, from the first to the third version, there were significant changes in the approach to gender and sexuality issues at all stages of basic education. In general, there were not only mentions of terms now suppressed in the official version but also a more critical and reflective view of sexual diversity.

However, the incisive action of the conservative political benches culminated in the removal of the concepts of gender and sexual orientation, failing to highlight important dimensions in the final document, representing a profound setback, especially when compared to the guidelines recommended in the 1990s by the PCN.

Gender studies constitute a multidisciplinary field that encompasses several sciences. Each science, in its way, uses the concept of gender differently, whether to reflect on society, to explain reality, to question pedagogical understandings linked to sexuality, among other intentions. Even if certain terms are removed from curriculum documents, humanity will continue to express its diversity and seek acceptance in society.

Regarding regressive policies in the field of sexuality at BNCC, the presence of conservative groups in the decision-making spaces of the Brazilian State was unanimous, in the perception of the teachers participating in the research. All teachers participating in the research consider that sexual education at school is of fundamental importance to promote reflection and generate changes in behavior regarding the reproduction of inequalities in the school environment.

The removal of terms related to sexuality from curricular references, in addition to not eliminating tensions arising from human diversity in schools, favors the persistence of intolerance and violence, weakening the fight against prejudice, sexual abuse, and violence against the LGBTQIAP+ population.

In addition to overcoming common sense, understanding sexual issues can help people understand sexuality, by deconstructing taboos, prejudices, and values historically rooted in society.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I declare that there is no conflict of interest in the present article.