

# Sexuality in undergraduate courses and the interface with teacher education policies<sup>1</sup>

Juliana Lapa Rizza<sup>2</sup>  
Paula Regina Costa Ribeiro<sup>2</sup>  
Maria Renata Alonso Mota<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate some policies of teacher education in order to think about the effects of truth that such policies have produced; and analyzed, starting with some dialogue with the elements of the sexuality device proposed by Foucault, the fields of knowledge in which the disciplines addressing sexuality in federal universities appear in a relationship with schools. Research data were collected from a mapping conducted in the universities, in the five geographical regions of Brazil, and they have shown a remarkable presence of discipline in teacher-training undergraduate courses. In addition to the mapping, we have also reviewed some educational policies, in other to think about how much they have impelled such debate around sexuality in teacher education. Based on the analyses undertaken, it was possible to realize that although the disciplines offered are more significant for teacher-training courses, just a few of them focus the school environment. Among the degree courses, Pedagogy emerged as the field of knowledge that prioritizes the discussions on sexuality, as we have found a significant number of disciplines delivered in that course. Concerning educational policies, they have propelled the debate around differences and diversity, which makes them a topic discussed in the discipline programs. These movements to analyze curricula in teacher-training course allowed us to problematize the displacements that the device of sexuality has been going through nowadays.

## Keywords

Sexuality – Teacher-training courses – Educational policies – Discipline programs.

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1- Translate to English by Luiz Ramires Neto.

2- Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (FURG). Rio Grande, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Contatos: ju\_rizza@yahoo.com.br; pribeiro@furg.br; mariarenata.alonso@gmail.com



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## Introduction

Nowadays, one realizes a effervescent debate about sexuality. A variety of social institutions and field of knowledge have sought to explain and discuss sexuality. “There seems to be among all a will to get to know about the bodies, the pleasures, the sensations [...]” (RIBEIRO, 2006, p. 109).

Although for sexuality the hypothesis of repression shows historically more obvious, it was not exactly silence, “around and related to sex there is a real discursive explosion” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 23). Perhaps the vocabulary, due to the banning of some words, when, who and where it could be talked about, had some aspects that drew attention, but “what is really at stake is rather that [sex] *is placed in discourse*, that is, the emergence of mechanisms through which one increasingly attempted to incite sex [...]” (GADELHA, 2009, p. 65).

Concerning education, which is the main focus of this study, since the 18th century it is possible to see the production of a discursive web around sexuality; the pedagogical institutions, in turn, “concentrated the forms of discourse on this topic; different points of implementation were established; contents were codified and speakers were qualified” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 36). Thus, in such discursive production about sexuality, the school appears then as “one of the institutions in which mechanisms of the device of sexuality are deployed; through technologies of sex, the bodies of the students can be controlled, administrated” (ALTMANN, 2001, p. 578), by means of strategies of power and knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

With the purpose of “proliferating, innovating, attaching, inventing, penetrating in the bodies in a more and more detailed manner and of controlling the populations more and more globally” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 118) this device of sexuality starts to act, around the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of repressing, the forms of interfering with the life of the individuals were multiplied in what concerns their sexuality; thus, this device of sexuality enhances the appreciation of the body as an object of knowledge engendered by power relations, thus producing forms of control and government.

In this perspective, sexuality cannot be understood as an essence, a given of nature, that is, something that concerns the issues related to the biological materiality of the individuals or, also, something that needs to be find out, unveiled. According to Foucault, sexuality is a historical device in which:

[...] to the great network of the surface in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement of discourse, the making of knowledge, the reinforcement of controls and resistances, they string together, according to great strategies of knowledge and power. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 116-117).

Sexuality understood as a device, as proposed by Foucault, is always inscribed in a power game, which produces knowledge which, in turn, set up other power relations. The

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**3-** According to Foucault, power and knowledge are intertwined, that is, “there is no power relation without the contribution of a field of knowledge, as well as, reciprocally, every knowledge establishes new power relations” (MACHADO, 2007, p. xxi).

device is then formed from “strategy for the balance of power, sustaining types of knowledge and being sustained by them” (FOUCAULT, 2007a, p. 246). Thus, it is formed in a given historical moment and has the purpose to meet an urgency, “correcting and interfering with the production of subjects as well as with their control” (BARROS, 2014, p. 28).

Besides, the device is set up by a network that is established between some elements, as follows:

[...] discourses, institutions, architectonic organizations, regulatory decisions, legislation, administrative measures, scientific wording, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions. In short, what is said or not said are the elements of the device. (FOUCAULT, 2007a, p. 244).

Through these mechanisms, which are put in place based on the device of sexuality, education has produced and exercised a pedagogy of gender and sexuality, that is, by establishing ways of experiencing sexuality and putting in action technologies of government. Upon the elements of the device and the network resulting from what is said and what is not said about sexuality, manners are determined about how subjects are to deal with and experience their sexuality.

By producing some dialogues with Foucault’s concept, our proposal it so think how much this device of sexuality that is present at school seems to increasingly become more visible and able to stated in words. These are educational policies, such as the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* [(PCN), national curriculum parameters] or, more recently, the *Diretrizes Nacionais para a Educação em Direitos Humanos* (national guidelines for education in human rights), the government programs that encourage continued training of teachers in order to problematize the sexuality of children and teenagers, as it the case of the course on gender and diversity at school, the intense production of materials to be utilized as subsidies for teachers in such discussions, as for example, the videos and primers<sup>4</sup> produced in the scope of the project School with No Homophobia, among other movements that may be pointed out as elements that have enabled visibility and the wording of this device.

Another element that has drawn attention to this power that the device of sexuality seems to achieve nowadays is the movement that discusses it on higher education. We have in mind the appearing of disciplines that have problematized sexuality in the Brazilian federal universities. The disciplines are provided by means of different undergraduate course and they address issues related to gender, health, body care and diversity in several dimensions – sex, race, ethnicity, gender – social, political, economic, historical and cultural aspects.

In the study we have conducted, it was possible to realize that these disciplines are offered both to regular undergraduate courses and to teacher-training courses. However,

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**4-** Named as *the gay kit* by the Evangelical and Christian politicians in the House of Representatives, these materials were vetoed in 2011 by President Dilma Rousseff; as a result they were not sent to the schools and were accessible only through websites.

the courses intended for teacher training have a remarkable number of disciplines that discuss sexuality, in a total of 27 teacher-training undergraduate courses.

Based on this significant amount of disciplines in teacher-training courses, our objective is to investigate some policies of teacher education in order to think about the effects of truth that these policies have been producing. In addition, in dialogue with what is said and what is not said, that is, with the elements of the device of sexuality proposed by Foucault, we will analyze the fields of knowledge in which the disciplines offered appear associated with the school environment. Then, our attempt is to “look at the empirical material, as devices for the production of truth<sup>5</sup>, as their objective is to determine and regulate the ways of dealing with and experiencing sexuality” (BARROS, 2014, p. 33).

## **Producing the research data**

Sexuality has, over time, become a strong topic to be problematized in the Brazilian federal universities. This fact is knitted to the social demands that aim to promote citizenship, human rights and to minimize violence and discrimination against the minority social groups – lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, women, Black people, Indians, among other social segments – and the policies of teacher basic training which have prioritized to establish an educational agenda where these topics are included in the debate.

In higher education, these discussions have emerged through disciplines, either mandatory and/or optional, found in the curricula of a variety of undergraduate courses<sup>6</sup> in the federal universities.

Based on this fact of today we have sought to outline a diagnostic of the present situation, that is, the rise of disciplines that discuss sexuality in federal universities in Brazil. We called this procedure a mapping, since we did a survey in all the five Brazilian geographic regions – North, Northeast, Center-West, Southeast and South – of the federal universities accredited in the website of the Ministry of Education (MEC).

In the IES (acronym for Higher Education Institutions) link in the portal of the Ministry of Education we found the space e-mec, in which it is possible to access all the federal universities duly accredited with MEC and the courses provided by each one of them. After listing the institutions and the undergraduate courses offered by the former, we reached the websites of the mentioned universities in order to investigate the disciplines that each undergraduate course was providing. To search for the disciplines, we defined some key words, as follows: gender, diversity, sexuality, sexual education and sexual orientation; as soon as they were found in the name of a discipline, they were selected to be included in the study as containing discussion on sexuality.

In addition to the mapping, we also reviewed some documents, including: the *Diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a formação de professores da educação básica*

**5-** By sharing the concept of truth with philosopher Michel Foucault, we have the purpose of “seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses that in themselves are not true or false” (FOUCAULT, 2007a, p. 7), that is, they are produced amidst power/knowledge relations.

**6-** In the study, we have considered teacher-training, regular degree, and technology courses.

(national curriculum guidelines for elementary school teacher training), in higher education, teacher-training course and full undergraduate course, the *Diretrizes nacionais para a educação em direitos humanos* (national guidelines for the education in human rights) and the *National Education Plan (PNE)*, Act No. 13,005 as of June 5th, 2014, in order think over how much these educational policies have boosted this debate with some real effects being achieved.

Based on the collected data, we do not expect to problematize these discourses about sexuality in the mentioned disciplines in order to find if they have an ideology or some kind of sexual morality. To the contrary, our purpose is to think about:

[...] its tactic productivity (which reciprocal effects of power and knowledge does it provide?) and its strategic integration (which scenario and balance of power does it make necessary its use in such or such situation of the several confrontations produced?). (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 113).

## **Public policies enhance the device of sexuality in teacher-training courses**

When we take a look at history, it is possible to see nowadays, in some elements including the public policies, governmental programs and actions in different spheres – on federal, state, and local level – the rise of a scenario with discussions on sexuality in educational institutions. This crossing between sexuality and the educational field, although it may seem recent to some people, had already been pointed out in the studies by Michel Foucault, when he problematizes the will to know about sexuality.

In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century schools, it was enough “to pay attention to the architectural devices, to the regulations of discipline and to all internal organization: it is continuously about sex” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 34). From different devices and strategies, the discourse on sexuality was being made in the educational sphere.

Lately, these discussions have been sharper due to some governmental movements which are aimed at the investment, for example, through continued teacher training in basic education in public schools, as is the case of the course on gender and diversity in the school. Besides, the debate on issues involving diversity, human rights, violence and discrimination against minority social groups have been included in some public policies.

Among these movements we have briefly highlighted, in relation to these discussions, there is a significant trail in history, which is always picked out and (re)presented in studies that address issues related to sexuality and school. We have in mind the last decade of the 20th century when the discussion around sexuality began to be conducted through an educational public policy regulated by the *National Curriculum Parameter (PCN)*, in the *transversal axis Sexual Education* (1997).

This public policy was devised and implemented with the purpose of defining guidelines for basic education and, more specifically, elementary and middle schooling. However, this boundary seems to be being blurred and/or overextended, so that discussions around the transversal aspect of some topics reach other levels of education.

Sandra Unbehaum advances this discussion in her doctoral dissertation by seeking to understand, from leaders and co-leaders of research groups listed in the Directory of Research Groups in the Lattes Platform, in the website of the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), the aspects involved in entry of gender issues as topics in the programs of elementary school teacher-training courses offered by Brazilian public universities.

According to Unbehaum, from the testimony of participants in her study “the transversal nature of gender issues arises as a strategy of action undertaken by a professor-researcher in the topic” (UNBEHAUM, 2014, p. 105), that is, the transversal approach of sexual education, proposed by the PCN, is associated with the presence, in the undergraduate course, of a professor who does research and/or problematizes the issues of gender or also the type of discipline that is taught. This study expresses an advancement of the discussions, in this case related to gender, so that the educational policies that have been discussing/presenting issues around gender are producing effects beyond basic schooling.

In addition, setting up the Office of Continued Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI)<sup>7</sup> may be seen as an important element to think about some of the conditions that have allowed a heated debate about these topics in teacher education. It is through the actions of this Office, by discussing some topics, including sexuality, that the subject gets a significant visibility and turns out to be a topic in Higher Education. As a result, as “topics and individuals were channeled towards the Ministry of Education’s governmental agenda who were excluded from it. “[...] we observe the conversion of old complaints into proposals of federal public policies” (VIANNA, 2012, p. 134).

Among the public policies that have risen nowadays and which intertwined the propositions with the discussions proposed by SECADI, we would like to highlight three of them as they have proposals for Higher Education, more specifically, for the teacher-training courses, which is the focus of this study whose goal is to look at the movements taking place in the federal universities with a remarkable number of disciplines being offered to discuss sexuality in teacher-training courses.

The first educational policy is the *National curriculum guidelines for basic schooling teacher-training*, on higher education level, in teacher-training and full regular undergraduate courses, which presents some principles and grounds that must be complied with and following in the structural and curricular organization of the educational institutions.

These guidelines, like other educational policies, are underpinned on the propositions about teacher education found on the *Act of Guidelines and Bases for the National Education (LDB)*, Act 9,394 of December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1996. Based on the provisions set forth in LDB, these guidelines propose, in Art. 2, in regard of the curricular organization, that the educational institutions must be attentive to the guidance for the formation of the teacher’s pedagogical practice, including what is provided by paragraph II: “welcoming and dealing with diversity” (BRASIL, 2002).

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**7-** When created, SECADI had the name of Office of Continued Education, Literacy, and Diversity (Secad), later on the topics related to inclusion were put as demands of this office, then the official name also changed with an “I” for inclusion.

The word diversity, and sometimes also difference, correlated terms but which are not synonyms, can be recurrently found in some educational policies, as for example, in paragraph II of the *National curricular guidelines for teacher education*.

According to Junqueira (2014), diversity seems to have become a watchword, even more so after reaching the political arena, but it is important to think over some aspects, such as: “What and whom are we talking about? Who was left out? Did someone get more to the center or more to the edge? How the different social categories are represented in the discourses about diversity?” (JUNQUEIRA, 2014, p. 4).

Public managers when proposing these educational policies are often worried with indexes only, the increase in the number of students completing elementary/middle school and high-school and, for such, they believe that in order to ensure students will not drop out actions are necessary, according to those managers, intended for the diversity of individuals that today attend school (JUNQUEIRA, 2014). This is the discourse we have found in some guidelines, as for example, in the *National Education Plan*, Act No. 13,005 of June 25th, 2014, in which we also find the discussion about the importance of devising the pedagogical practice based on the education towards diversity. In order to achieve goal 13 of PNE, whose objective is to improve the quality of Higher Education and expand the number of teachers with M.A. and PhD stable in the level of schooling, some strategies are outlined, including the ones below that we would like to highlight:

13.4) improve the quality of the teacher-training courses by applying an proper assessment tool approved by the National Commission for Higher Education Assessment – CONAES, integrating them to the demands and needs of the basic school systems, in order to allow undergraduates to acquire the skills necessary to lead the pedagogical process of the future students, combining general and specific formation with didactic practice, in addition to education for the ethnic-racial relations, diversity and the needs of people with disabilities. (BRASIL, 2014).

Thus, it important to emphasize that if we want an education for the ethnic-racial relations, for diversity and for the needs of the people with disabilities, that is, to devise an all-inclusive educational policy, it requires a “permanent investment on behalf of subverting the hegemonic values and the power relations that guide the structure of the school” (JUNQUEIRA, 2014, p. 6). It is not enough to just work on promoting and respecting diversity and difference if teachers are not willing “to break their commitments with a normalizing education, which (re)produces and reiterates the precepts of classism, of whiteness, of heteronormativity, of body-normativity etc.” (JUNQUEIRA, 2014, p. 7).

Developing a curriculum that acknowledges the new social demands that are getting to the schools has become a discourse in solid growth, so much that this topic is highlighted in an educational policy exclusively intended for this approach. We have in mind Resolution No. 1, of May 30th, 2012 which sets forth the National guidelines for the education in human rights.

Art. 3 provides the principles upon which the education in human rights shall be based. Our emphasis is on paragraph III, “acknowledging and appreciating the differences and diversities” (BRASIL, 2012). In addition to that paragraph, the document in general

proposes the discussion around human rights in education, on different levels of schooling – from basic to higher education – with the purpose of ensuring that our rights will be enforced with no discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, social class, health status, religion, and other identities that define the human beings.

We are living in a moment where the priority has been:

[...] a school process in which all levels (including teacher-training courses) is minimally articulated with public policies that are able to fight and minimize injustices and social inequalities. (FURLANI, 2009, p. 298).

Besides, there appears the need to consider public policies to promote affirmative actions for the groups that historically in the minority. Thus, promoting education in human rights, as proposed by these guidelines, enables to work on a culture of respect towards the other, in order to ensure a dignified human conviviality. By intertwining education and human rights the intent is that the schools may mobilize actions in order to minimize the prejudices and discriminations that are deeply rooted in our society, to de-stabilize the situations when the difference is not acknowledged and respected.

The proposal is to include this debate in Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPP) of every school and in their regiments, in the Institutional Development Plans (PDI); in the Pedagogical Programs of the undergraduate courses and, generally, in the higher education institutions, both in teaching, research and academic extension. For such, Art. 7 presents some possible ways of articulating education in human rights with the curricula of basic and higher education, including: in transversal fashion with interrelation between the topics discussed in the classroom and the human rights; as the contents of a discipline already taking part in the curriculum or also with the articulation between transversal perspectives and disciplinary dimensions.

In the basic and continued teacher-training courses, education in human rights shall be compulsory, as set forth by Art. 8:

The Education in Human Rights shall guide the basic and continued training of all educational professionals, and it is a compulsory curriculum component in the courses intended for such professionals. (BRASIL, 2012).

As for the other fields of knowledge, this discussion must also be conducted, but it is not deemed as mandatory, as one can see in Art. 9: “The Education in Human Rights shall be included in basic and continued training of all professionals from the different areas of knowledge” (BRASIL, 2012).

These educational policies propose the debate around diversity and difference in the pedagogical institutions; as a result, it is important to highlight that the word diversity has been utilized in a significant number of public educational policies, and more so, as already mentioned, since SECADI was set up, for this office has as one of its objectives “to appraise differences and diversity” (BRASIL, 2016). This discussion is characterized as a field of tension, since some affirmative actions and/or policies as they prioritize diversity



as a strategy of inclusion and belonging for individuals socially marked as different, it ends up leading to the reverse, that is, exclusion.

It is known that a society like ours, made up of differences including those related to gender, ethnicity, generation, sex, social, sexual, racial, “promoting the culture that acknowledges diversity may represent more than an irrevocable commitment of ethical order” (JUNQUEIRA, 2007, p. 59). However, there are a number of divergences because promoting a pedagogy of inclusion, considered on general level, there are no problems. The conflict settles in “when one has to discuss what is to be done, how it should be done, when it should be done, who is qualified to do it” (SEFFNER, 2009, p. 127).

At this moment the public school emerges as a powerful social place to promote diversity. It is through the school that governmental actions have sought to provide the grounds for actions intended to promote and acknowledge diversity. An education underpinned on this perspective allows to accomplish a school that is democratic, inclusive and based on citizenship, thus breaking the “fate of being a place of exclusion” (SEFFNER, 2009, p. 129).

However, it is necessary to be careful not to fall into the traps of the public policies which propose diversity as a one of their principles/guidelines, focus of action, and finally, as the background upon which education must be supported. Most of our training and also our experiences as teachers seems to produce a pedagogical knowing that leads us to perspectives that are aimed at making everything homogeneous, all that is the same remains and all that is different disturbs, that is, must be excluded. “Historically, school was marked with principles of homogeneity, and many believe that you can only teach productively in homogeneous classes” (SEFFNER, 2013).

According to this view, it is important to invest significantly in implementing and strengthening these educational policies which intend to include the debate proposed by education in human rights within the teacher-training courses, so that our teachers-to-be feel committed in the making of an education that acknowledges difference and diversity. Otherwise, if “the topics of difference are absent from the basic and continued teacher training and are not explicit and well-coordinated in the guidelines for the educational systems” (JUNQUEIRA, 2014a, p. 7), seeking to challenge prejudices and discriminations will not take remarkable effects.

Besides, it is necessary to include specific points in the debate about human rights in the basic teacher training, such as, for example, the sexual rights and the discussions concerning gender issues, so that it will not be limited to generic problematizations without any accuracy. Thus, it will be possible to talk about sexuality in teacher-training courses going far beyond prevention, risky sexual behaviors or also based on a sexual morality. Therefore, more than:

[...] respect and vague plurality, it is worthwhile discussing and shaking dominant codes of meanings, de-stabilizing power relations, cleaving processes of hierarchization, disturbing classifications and questioning the production of reified identities and unequal differences. (JUNQUEIRA, 2014a, p. 5).

## **What teacher-training courses? What discussions are promoted in their interface with the schools?**

To understand how the device of sexuality is formed, Foucault emphasizes that, unlike the repressive hypothesis produced about sex, there has been since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the making of a network of discourses around this topic. This network is established among the discourses, the institutions, the laws, the scientific wording, the moral and philosophical issues, and other elements, said and not said, as they make up the device and have allowed “an intensification of the body, its appreciation as an object of knowledge and as an element in the power relations” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 118).

This “institutional incitement to talk about sex and talk about it more and more” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 24), although it may seem something of the present, due to the effervescence of discussions that we learn about today, as it was possible to realize when we analyzed some educational policies, was already there in other moments of the history. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for example, the way schools were organized, “the regulations set forth to surveil the retirement and sleep, everything talks in very long-winded ways about the sexuality of children” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 34).

Around sexuality and education there was not a silence but rather a web of discourses about this topic, defining knowledge, speakers and counterparts authorized to make a speech. An incitement to discourse that made the sexuality of children and adolescents to “become an important focus around which a number of institutional devices and discursive strategies were provided” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 36).

School, therefore, over time, has been an institution powerful in proliferating and controlling these discourses about sexuality and, today, it is possible to detect other movements, which have enabled a repetition and an update of the device of sexuality. This device is produced by a network of discourses which are related to issues of knowledge about sexuality, to power relations, and to processes of subjectivation of the subjects, leading to ways of living sexuality. Thus, the device activates different strategies, resulting from this web of discourses, with the purpose of controlling, managing, conducting and governing the behavior of individuals in regard of their sexuality.

Thus, the repetition of the device of sexuality takes place in the sense that we continue to qualify the speakers and counterparts, including teachers, psychologists, and doctors, and some institutions, including the school, that continues to be a privileged space to talk about sexuality, allowing the bodies of the subjects to be surveilled, controlled and normalized.

The update of the device, in turn, results from the remarkable visibility that sexuality has achieved in the media, both TV and the press, the pride parades of LGBT people – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender –, the educational policies mentioned previously, the disciplines in higher education for teacher-training courses, object of this study as they have been proposing a debate based on promoting diversity and difference, amidst other aspects that can be pointed as conditions to give rise to such update of the device of sexuality.

Following this update of the device of sexuality, resulting from the different elements that make it up and which go through changes, due to aspects of social, cultural,

historical, and economic nature, one is captured in the plots of this device which defines the way everyone is supposed to live their own sexuality.

Concerning the educational field, we are living in historical moment where the promotion and acknowledgment of diversity and difference have entered the sphere of discourse. Discourses were intensified and diversified, other fields of knowledge were called on to speak about the sexuality and the “‘truths’ produced by these several fields are under dispute in many levels, which lead us to construct, today, a more complex vision of sexuality and the genders” (LOURO, 2009).

Out of the mapping, there were 60 institutions in the whole, and we managed to access only 44 disciplines provided in each semester; out of them, 38 universities deliver disciplines, corresponding to 86 percent and only six do not provide any, equivalent to 14 percent.

Out of the total undergraduate courses researched in these universities, in 82 of them we found disciplines dealing with sexuality, 27 of them in teacher-training courses and 55 in standard undergraduate courses. Besides, out of the total undergraduate courses, 39 provide more than one disciplines and the 43 remaining courses deliver only one discipline about sexuality.

A total of 137 disciplines were offered by the teacher-training courses, and we withdrew from this amount those provided to more than one undergraduate course in the same institution. However, it is important to emphasize that the undergraduate course was counted in the total courses in which disciplines of sexuality were delivered. Spread across the Brazilian universities existing in the five geographical regions of the country, we have the following overview: in the North region, just one discipline; in the Northeast region, 36 disciplines; in the Center-West region, 31 disciplines; in the Southeast region, 30 disciplines and in the South region, 39 disciplines.

Another remarkable piece of information: out of the total 137 disciplines provided, 117 are optional and only 20 are mandatory. The discussions about sexuality significantly found in the optional disciplines bring us to bear thoughts about some tensions between the curriculum and the pedagogies of sexuality. “Can sex be educated and can education be sexed?” (BRITZMAN, 2007, p. 93).

Curriculum is not only the place where knowledge is embodied, by means of an intense list of contents that must be covered in perspective of merely cognitive aspects. Instead of just conveying knowledge, this cultural artifact produces and determines what is knowledge and what is not knowledge:

[...] which ways of knowing are valid and which ways are not, what is right and what is wrong, what is moral and what is immoral, what is good and what is bad, what is beautiful and what is ugly, which voices are authorized and which voices are not. (SILVA, 2008, p. 195).

Even though remarkably present in the teacher-training courses, may sexuality be considered a topic appropriate for debate in this kind of higher education courses? We raise this question because, for us, the knowledge considered legitimate/important to be covered in teacher-training courses are provided in a mandatory manner, while the type

of knowledge that supplements the basic training appear as optional disciplines. Then, although it is visible nowadays that the movement to set an agenda for the debate of sexuality not only in the Brazilian federal universities but also in other levels of education, it is important that we think about these relations, “in Foucault’s sense that the curriculum, as the embodiment of knowledge, is closely linked to power” (SILVA, 2008, p. 197).

In relation to the keywords utilized in the study, out of the 137 disciplines, 82 speak of gender, 34 of sexuality, 26 of diversity, 8 of sexual education and only two of sexual orientation. In this aspect, it is important to emphasize that some disciplines have more than one keyword in their name.

These disciplines are offered in different teacher-training courses, and in some of them a greater number of disciplines is provided. The courses and the respective number of disciplines offered are : Pedagogy (58)<sup>8</sup>; Social Science (41); History (20); Biological Science (9); Psychology (6); Physical Education (5); Physics (4); Mathematics (4); Geography (3); Science of Religion (2); Dance (2); Musical Education (2); Foreign Language English and Spanish (2); Modern or Classic Foreign Language (2); Modern Foreign Language and Vernacular (2); Chemistry (2); Performing Arts (1); Performing Arts with Qualification in Theater (1); Agrarian Science (1); Computer Science (1); Rural Education (1); Rural Education with Qualification in Languages (1); Intercultural Indigenous (1); Interdisciplinary in Human Science (1); Interdisciplinary in Rural Education (1); Vernacular Languages and Literature (1) and Theater (1). It is important to stress out that in this count the disciplines provided to more than one undergraduate course were kept so that it would be possible to obtain the total number of teacher-training courses in which disciplines of sexuality are found.

Based on the data produced, we do not claim to problematize these discourses around sexuality in the disciplines in order to realize if they present ideologies or are some kind of sexual morality. On the contrary, our purpose is to think about:

[...] its tactic productivity (which reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they provide) and its strategic integration (what scenario and which balance of power makes it necessary to use them in such or such event of the several confrontations produced). (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 113).

From the analysis of the disciplines that are related to the school space, it was possible to perceive how educational policies for teacher training, also analyzed in this study, have operated and produced effects in the curriculum of undergraduate courses. Some of these policies have emerged emphasizing the importance of the debate and inclusion in schools of topics such as gender and the promotion of diversity and difference. Reflexes of these propositions can be perceived in the programs where these topics have also become central.

Being in center or visible, it something that happened to sexuality over time and has a history. Thus, it has undergone changes, which can also be perceived through the programs, for example, with the topics that become issues of debate regarding sexuality.

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**8-** The numbers in parenthesis correspond to the number of disciplines offered that were found in the curricula researched.

Around the 1980s, when sexuality began to be discussed in various social spheres, including the school, it had the concern of fighting diseases, including AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The focus was therefore on biological materiality and disease risk.

Thus, a strong investment was made by governmental actions aimed at stimulating projects with this focus on health, body care and prevention. As a result, the early discussions about sexuality in the educational sphere “had the effect of bringing it closer to ideas of risk and threat, placing its association with pleasure and life in the background” (LOURO, 2009, p. 34), that is, it was on a preventive approach to sexual practices that the debate about sexuality began to be promoted in the schools. It was through disciplinary devices on the bodies of children and adolescents that the schools began to exercise a pedagogy of gender and sexuality (LOURO, 2007).

Nowadays other topics are addressed which made the device of sexuality undergo some displacements, which, in turn, made possible an update of this device; that is, this science of sexuality, which has produced, through power/knowledge relations, a web of control and observations about the sex of the individuals, has undergone some displacements, as there is no more such an intense preoccupation with body health. Other elements have entered this discursive web about sexuality, such as gender, diversity, difference, taboos, beliefs, interrelations with issues of race, ethnicity, generation, among others that can be found in the discipline programs.

So, when analyzing the device of sexuality “from contemporary power techniques” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 164), we seek to think about the regime of power/knowledge/pleasure that the discourse of sexuality has produced and its interface with the school environment, problematizing the presence of discipline in Higher Education and also the educational policies as they are some of the elements, among many others that have allowed the updating and also the repetition of this device, now increasingly visible and enunciable in the present time.

## **Anyway...**

Based on the analyses and discussions produced, our proposal was to investigate the effects of truth that have been produced by some educational policies and to analyze some of the discipline programs that have been significantly offered in teacher-training courses in Brazilian federal universities with the purpose of discussing sexuality. We focused our attention on disciplines in order to problematize their relationship with the school space, since our intent is to investigate teacher training courses.

Among the conditions that allowed the rise of this approach to sexuality in academic disciplines, the guidelines present in the educational policies we analyzed can be pointed out as one of these conditions, that is, from the analysis of the documents undertaken in this study, it was possible to perceive that they have boosted the debate about diversity and difference, somehow capturing the individuals and placing them in the making and promotion of a more plural school.

Thus, these educational policies “have been emphasizing the curriculum and indicate today the making of an agenda of policies intended for sexual diversity through the creation of a great deal of projects and programs” (VIANNA, 2012, p. 127)

This relationship between gender and education becomes more visible around the 1990s as a result of the “advances in the systematization of claims aimed at overcoming, within the sphere of the State and public policies, a series of measures against discrimination against women” (VIANNA; UNBEHAUM, 2004). Even with all gender mainstreaming as a public education policy, we have advanced only in the direction of specific discussions about these issues and not as an integral topic of curricula and teacher training courses. So:

[...] it is necessary to include gender and all dimensions responsible for yielding the inequalities as key elements of a project to overcome social inequalities, as fundamental objects of structural and social changes.” (VIANNA; UNBEHAUM, 2006, p. 245).

Regarding the disciplines, although they are offered more significantly in teacher-training courses, based on the data produced it was possible to perceive that only in some of them the focus of discussion falls on the school. From this interface with the school ambience, these disciplines propose to think about the inclusion of a gender and sexuality perspective in schools, by making materials and organizing places for debate and questioning on these issues.

Among the regular undergraduate and teacher-training courses, Pedagogy has emerged a privileged field of knowledge for the discussions on sexuality, since we have found a significant number of disciplines being offered. Thus, the device of sexuality seems to repeat itself with the objective of controlling and, through mechanisms of management, “it engenders, in return, a permanent extension of the domains and the forms of control” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p 117) that operate on the children’s bodies.

When analyzing the disciplines, it was possible to perceive the effects of some educational policies, that is, issues about gender and promotion, recognition and respect for diversity and difference, as topics addressed by public policies, have also appeared as the object of debate in the disciplines. As such topics have been included in the curricula of teacher-training courses, we attempted to problematize the displacements that the device of sexuality has undergone. In addition to being more visible and enunciable, sexuality is no longer addressed only in the perspective of biological materiality and concern with diseases. In other words, through the exercise of power, a field of knowledge about sexuality has been produced, in which some terms reach the order of discourse, which results in an update of the device of sexuality.

Finally, as we see the school as sexed and gendered space, which has been devising, by means of the device of sexuality, ways of acting and living in society, rethinking this pedagogy of sexuality resulting from the teacher-training courses may allow, perhaps, that “we become more capable of disheveling it, reinventing it and making it more plural (LOURO, 2007, p. 33).

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**Juliana Lapa Rizza** does post-doctoral research in Graduate Program in Education of Science at the Federal University of Rio Grande – FURG. She is a PhD in environmental education by FURG. She is a member of the Research Group on Sexuality and School – GESE.

**Paula Regina Costa Ribeiro** is full professor at the Institute of Education in the Federal University Rio Grande – FURG. She is a Professor in the Graduate Program in Education of Science and Environmental Education. Scholarship holder for productivity 1C at CNPq. She coordinates the Research Group on Sexuality and School – GESE.

**Maria Renata Alonso Mota** is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Education in the Federal University of Rio Grande – FURG. She is a Professor at the Graduate Program in Education of FURG. She is the coordinator of the Study and Research Group on Child Education – NEPE/FURG/CNPq.