



**HISTORICIZATION OF SEXUAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL AFTER PNE AND
BNCC: BETWEEN CLASHES AND POSSIBILITIES**

***HISTORICIZAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO SEXUAL NO BRASIL PÓS PNE E BNCC: ENTRE
EMBATES E POSSIBILIDADES***

***HISTORIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL EN BRASIL DESPUÉS DEL PNE Y
DEL BNCC: ENTRE ENFRENTAMIENTOS Y POSIBILIDADES***



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How to reference this paper:

LEÃO, A. M. C.; LEÃO, A. M. C.; RIBEIRO, P. R. M.
Historicization of sexual education in Brazil after PNE and
BNCC: Between clashes and possibilities. **Doxa: Rev. Bras.
Psico. e Educ.**, Araraquara, v. 25, n. 00, e024002, 2024. e-
ISSN: 2594-8385. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.30715/doxa.v25i00.18581>



| **Submitted:** 11/10/2023
| **Revisions required:** 09/11/2023
| **Approved:** 12/01/2024
| **Published:** 14/03/2024

Editor: Prof. Dr. Paulo Rennes Marçal Ribeiro
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

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RESUMO: Os estudos voltados à temática da sexualidade atrelados ao âmbito escolar foram intensificados no Brasil a partir do início do século XX, e contou com inúmeros embates até ocorrer sua inserção em um documento educacional, com os Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN). Contudo, a despeito desta maior aderência a esta discussão, nos documentos norteadores educacionais, como o Plano Nacional da Educação (PNE) e a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), o mesmo não ocorre. Isto posto, o intento do presente estudo, de ancoragem qualitativa e de cunho documental, é analisar ambos os documentos, buscando articular a sua implicância à tematização da sexualidade. Os achados obtidos acenam que estes documentos não dão margem à abordagem da sexualidade e de gênero, sendo elaborados em um cenário de intensos debates contrários a esta tematização. Enfim, faz-se necessário produzir resistência, de maneira a se possibilitar ultrapassar os embates e avançar em prol da efetivação da educação sexual nas escolas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Sexual. Documentos Educacionais. PNE. BNCC.

RESUMEN: Los estudios centrados en el tema de la sexualidad vinculado al ambiente escolar se intensificaron en Brasil desde principios del siglo XX, y involucraron numerosos enfrentamientos hasta su inclusión en un documento educativo, con los Parámetros Curriculares Nacionales PCN). Sin embargo, a pesar de esta mayor adhesión a esta discusión, en los documentos rectores educativos, como el Plan Nacional de Educación PNE) y la Base Curricular Común Nacional (BNCC), no ocurre lo mismo. Dicho esto, la intención del presente estudio, con un anclaje cualitativo y de carácter documental, es analizar ambos documentos, buscando articular sus implicaciones para la tematización de la sexualidad. Los hallazgos obtenidos indican que estos documentos no permiten el abordaje de la sexualidad y el género, siendo elaborados en un escenario de intensos debates contrarios a esta temática. En definitiva, es necesario producir resistencia, para superar los conflictos y avanzar hacia la implementación de la educación sexual en las escuelas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación Sexual. Documentos Educativos. PNE. BNCC.

ABSTRACT: Studies focused on the theme of sexuality linked to the school environment were intensified in Brazil from the beginning of the 20th century, and involved numerous clashes until its inclusion in an educational document, with the National Curricular Parameters (PCN). However, despite this greater adherence to this discussion, in educational guiding documents, such as the National Education Plan (PNE) and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the same does not occur. That said, the intention of the present study, with a qualitative anchoring and a documentary nature, is to analyze both documents, seeking to articulate their implications for the thematization of sexuality. The findings obtained indicate that these documents do not allow for the approach to sexuality and gender, being prepared in a scenario of intense debates contrary to this theme. Ultimately, it is necessary to produce resistance, in order to overcome the conflicts and advance towards the implementation of sexual education in schools.

KEYWORDS: Sex Education. Educational Documents. PNE. BNCC.

Introduction

The reluctance to address sexuality in Brazil is not new, as this subject is fraught with myths and taboos. Opponents of the field articulate actions against its inclusion in the school environment, especially in the last decades, during which scientific studies in the field have flourished, revealing its relevance.

Ribeiro (2017a) warns about the regression that Sexual Education has undergone in the country since 2014, the National Education Plan's approval period. As the author analyzes, religious fundamentalists began to act from then on, with speeches and actions against the field, seeking to promote fake news and going against scientific advances. Shortly after the publication of this text (Ribeiro, 2017a), the country elects an extreme-right government that reinforces, intensely and alarmingly, the anti-sexual thought, which dominates the political-social scenario for four years. Even with the election of a progressive and democratic government, which replaces the right-wing government in 2023, we still perceive the influence of this anti-sexual thought that remains present in Congress and fundamentalist churches.

Therefore, the orchestrated movement persists, led by the ultraconservative wing of the deputies, which seeks, by all means, actions against sexual education and related areas. Today, at least, there is an official discourse, an active government, and a strong Federal Supreme Court that defends and supports agendas focused on human rights and citizenship, pointing out and containing extremism. The disregard for sexual rights is replaced by the indispensability of implementing sexual education. Furthermore, there is still a lack of understanding of its purposes, which aim to eradicate prejudices and taboos, to combat sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and violence against women and homosexuals, among other groups named as minorities.

Leão and Ribeiro (2012), in a study aimed at discussing educational policies in Brazil, more precisely, the legitimacy they give to the coverage of sexuality, explain that contemporary demands highlight the urgency of addressing this issue in the educational sphere.

Considering the above, this study aims to analyze the National Education Plan (PNE) and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) to verify if they provide space for the proper discussion of sexuality in the country's schools. This study aims to analyze the PNE and the BNCC, seeking to articulate the implications for the sexuality theme. The choice of these documents stems from the fact that they are guiding documents of a normative nature in the educational sphere.

The research is qualitative in nature, employing a method widely used in the human sciences to interpret, describe, and understand phenomena. It presents an exploratory character. One of its modalities is documentary research, which, as the term suggests, involves document analysis. It consists of a research technique that relies on reliable sources to conduct the analysis.

With this intent, an exploratory analytical descriptive study of the documents was carried out. Studies of this nature are aimed at dissecting a specific subject matter carefully and attentively. They also aim to analyze it in detail in order to be presented thereafter.

Development

It is valid to start this discussion by explaining that during the course of the National Education Plan (PNE) in the National Congress, the issue of gender was removed from the text, and the same occurred in many Municipal Education Plans (PME), signaling that due attention was not given to the scientific studies that unveil the relevance of addressing sexuality. This setback became more acute from 2016 onwards, after the impeachment of then-President Dilma Rousseff and the beginning of Michel Temer's government, when a wave of conservatism flooded Brazil.

Mendes (2016) elucidates that the Workers' Party government relied on a policy of consensus by approaching conservative sectors, which ended up making it unfeasible, as instead of becoming more democratic, these sectors forced the government to approve conservative measures, weakening more progressive sectors, resulting in the government's fragility. It was precisely these sectors that, in the following government, positioned themselves in favor of removing the term "gender" from the PNE. The researcher adds that the social actors in these sectors expressed their fears about a government that would develop policies for minorities, arguing that the ideas of gender inclusion and the discussion of Sexual Education belonged to Dilma's government.

In this context, "[...] conservative characters, at times, presented themselves as armed soldiers, defending a dictatorship against genders and sexualities present in education" (Tavano, 2021, p. 140, our translation). In other instances, they supported the development of the discussion of these issues in schools, as long as they were linked to normative, hygienist, and prophylactic aspects of sexuality.

The surveillance of these topics is present in educational policies and is closely monitored, especially by the conservative wing of society seeking support to create conflicts. In fact, since 2014, this wing has nuanced its efforts to continue discriminatory and repressive practices, attempting to influence what is published in the educational sphere, a trend that escalated after the 2018 election and Jair Bolsonaro's victory.

The proposal to work with sexuality and gender in schools aims to contribute to the formation of the student as a whole being, in which sexuality is inseparable, with sexual education being essential to foster critical and participatory citizens in society, and to contribute to the demystification of sexual stereotypes, so that they are aware of the harmful effects of prejudices, discriminations, sexism, machismo, and misogyny. Mendes (2016) argues that gender and sexuality should be included in the National Education Plan (PNE) as social markers of difference, in order to carry out work to combat inequalities.

The PNE, Law No. 13,005, of June 25, 2014, has a decennial periodicity and determines the guidelines, goals, as well as strategies of Brazilian educational policies (Paraíso, 2016). With the elaboration of the PNE, movements against the problematization of the gender issue were fueled, as before the approval of this plan, the initial text mentioned this issue, but in the vote of the Chamber of Deputies, this term was removed (Reis; Eggert, 2017).

The mentioned authors detail that throughout the drafting of the initial PNE project, the term "Gender" was used, clearly indicating the plan's intention to be an instrument for promoting sensitivity to gender equity. Nevertheless, they report that the Senate plenary removed this word from the text and from the wording of clause III, the phrase about gender equality and sexual orientation, and in the Chamber of Deputies, debates intensified about the phenomenon called "Gender Ideology," leading to the removal of this term from the document. The researchers explain that the term "Gender Ideology" was used by the conservative wing of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

In this scenario, a noisy dispute arose regarding the term "Gender," characterized by senators and deputies of this wing as ideology (Mendes, 2016). In a thesis discussing the removal of the terms "gender equality and sexual orientation" from the PNE, the author evaluates that these politicians made it clear that they were afraid to talk about sexuality in schools and, thus, contributed to the school encouraging homoaffectionate desire.

The words "gender" and "sexual orientation" were abolished from the PNE, and the phrase "*overcoming educational inequalities, with an emphasis on promoting racial, regional, gender, and sexual orientation equality*," which was in the original document, was altered, and

in its place, "eradication of all forms of discrimination" was inserted. This occurred because the PNE emerged in a scenario with reactionary movements unfavorable to such matters.

Junqueira (2017) evaluates that in recent years, in numerous countries, a reactionary movement has erupted, which found gender a theme of its mobilizations. As the researcher explains, expressions like gender, gender ideology, and gender theory, among others, are waved in alarmist tones and bring the risks of instilling fallacies and misunderstandings in institutions, politics, and everyday life, being used as powerful reactionary rhetorical devices to ignite controversies.

In an article about the ideology of Gender Ideology, Tavano and Leão (2020) discuss that there is a vast bibliography and structure supporting Gender Studies, but the more conservative wing of society has used subtleties to deconstruct the scientific discourse, employing mainly emotional and pseudoscientific discourse in an attempt to provide a foundation for their conservationist discourses "[...] with the aim of instilling in the interlocutor a sense of instability that such a theory could bring to the family and society" (p. 320, our translation).

Ribeiro (2017b) clarifies that Gender Studies are not based on common sense and dogmas, whereas Gender Ideology emerged in 2014, and was a term created to negatively label this recognized and rapidly growing scientific field, as a reaction from fundamentalist religious sectors that do not accept social advances that promote individual rights, especially those related to Sexuality and gender equality. In the words of the researcher, Gender Ideology is a conceptual error based on common sense and opinionated speculations, adding that "it is not Gender Studies that constitute an ideology, but rather the thinking of its detractors, who indeed act from an ideology" (Ribeiro, 2017b, p. 1, our translation).

In the broad field of Gender Studies and related fields, gender is a concept and not a theory, much less an ideology, presenting multiple meanings and critical implications (Junqueira, 2017). The author elucidates that this theory, Gender Ideology, exists, being "[...] a device of Vatican origin devised to promote an ultraconservative agenda, antifeminist and antagonistic to democracy and human rights understood on broader and more plural bases" (p. 46, our translation).

In Paraíso's analysis (2016), Gender Ideology spreads in Brazil due to conservative groups in political and religious power, and their objective, among others, is to halt the achievements of women's rights. Therefore, this so-called ideology aims to undermine all initiatives aimed at addressing gender, portraying it as a tool to instigate and dictate sexual

behaviors that clash with conservative values. Gender Studies, on the other hand, seek a methodical and contextual analysis of society, contributing to the establishment of equitable gender relations (Tavano; Leão, 2020).

In the face of the impasses generated by this issue in society, Reis and Eggert (2017, p. 20, our translation) analyze that it is necessary to defend gender equality, not from an ideology distorted by reactionary forces in the debate about Education Plans, but rather in the sense of "[...] eradicating gender inequities, which create a binary distinction between masculine and feminine, relegating the feminine to an inferior position, establishing inflexible gender roles for masculine and feminine identities [...]".

Produced to act as a device at the center of power strategy, Gender Ideology is linked to a political project of reformulation and legitimization of a certain vision of society, which is aligned with values and tendencies of an antidemocratic nature (Junqueira, 2017). It is a political label or slogan that is disseminated in different countries and is premised on a declared hatred, among other things, for struggles for equality of rights between men and women and for critical discussions about gender and sexuality in schools (Paraíso, 2016).

Reis and Eggert (2017) explain that there is widespread dissemination of what is called Gender Ideology, which is indeed a fallacy, being an area of study marked as responsible for the deconstruction of gender roles and the traditional family⁴. As Junqueira (2017) clarifies, manifestations of the so-called Gender Ideology include sexism, misogyny, and homophobia. Consequently, this discourse instills a moral panic in society, based on discourses without any scientific basis, which manipulate people without critical thinking (Reis; Eggert, 2017).

The reactionary movement against gender issues seeks to generate fear and panic, spreading the idea of imminent danger brought by this discussion in and around schools. Tavano and Leão (2020) warn that this ideology is usually accompanied by the words fear and danger, used in sensationalist textual constructions that warn of a possible global conspiracy seeking to transform the social and/or familial environment.

⁴ Tavano and Leão (2020, citing Perrot (2001), explain that the traditional family, as commonly known, corresponds to the couple with their children, being a product of the industrialization and urbanization of Europe in the 19th century, where there was a more evident definition of each gender, with the man taking on the role of financial provider for the family, and the woman, in turn, being the organizer of the home and responsible for raising the children. The mentioned authors argue that it is associated with the patriarchal family as an exemplary model of family for conservative circles. This family legitimizes and recognizes male power and, in turn, subordinates women (Leão; Lima-Neto; Whitaker, 2015). However, as Leão (2017, p. 21) points out, "the configuration of the family has accompanied the transformation of society, resulting in new arrangements and a distinct composition of the so-called 'traditional' family."

This movement employs fear-mongering tactics, using texts and headlines with messages aimed at alarming parents about what their children are exposed to in school regarding this topic and related subjects (Paraíso, 2016). Indeed, they use discursive strategies to present gender as a "non-truth," as a "tale," as a "distortion of reality," or as "an ideology" (Paraíso, 2016, p. 399, our translation).

Moreover, they formulate arguments without scientific basis, replicating them on social media as unquestionable truths, using moral terrorism, and assigning a negative status to people who advocate for respect for gender equality and the discussion of sexual diversity in education (Reis; Eggert, 2017).

Junqueira (2017, p. 44) describes that behind these narratives are anti-gender narratives that suggest that children should not suffer "undue interference from schools, which, at the mercy of the implementation of a gender dictatorship, have become 'reeducation and indoctrination camps'." These narratives portray gender as a doctrine aimed at deconstructing social values and disseminating a lifestyle that encourages all forms of sexual experimentation from a very young age (Reis; Eggert, 2017). Implicit in these narratives is the intention to alert people to the need for action to prevent what they perceive as permissiveness and to prevent possible social instability (Tavano; Leão, 2020).

As Paraíso (2016, p. 398, our translation) illustrates, "with slogans, headlines, texts, and clearly distorted information, the internet and the media in general have been filled with opinions and calls against teaching gender and sexuality issues in schools," which in their opinion are baseless and seek to undermine all the work done in schools on these topics. Worse still, they intimidate education professionals who dare to address these issues in the classroom (Reis; Eggert, 2017).

The censorship of the term gender, as argued by Torrada, Ribeiro, and Rizza (2020, p. 47, our translation) "was also present in Brazilian states, with the processing of State Education Plans and, subsequently, in municipalities with Municipal Education Plans." In this context, conservative mobilizations were underway to exclude mention of the terms gender and sexual orientation in National, State, and Municipal Education Plans (Junqueira, 2017). Once the Municipal and State Laws of the respective Education Plans were approved, there was a concerted effort to prevent educational establishments from addressing gender issues (Reis; Eggert, 2017).

These discussions highlight the struggle to effectively engage in debates on sexuality and gender in schools, disregarding all scientific evidence, as numerous scientific studies attest

to and legitimize the need for such discussions. Paraíso (2016) warns that the subtleties employed by groups opposed to these discussions, the reactionaries, are numerous, among which is the stripping of the gender of its scientific character. However, despite these stratagems, they cannot conceal that schools are recognized in social realms as distinct instances for the coverage of these issues.

As Ribeiro (2020) argues, regardless of the restrictions that religious or political groups may seek to impose, addressing sexuality in schools is a matter of rights. It is important to emphasize that sexual and reproductive rights are human rights recognized in national laws and international documents, which entail the right to information and sexual education (Brasil, 2009).

This understanding justifies the relevance of discussing sexuality and gender, not only to introduce new content into the organization of curricula in the school environment, but especially so that students, mostly belonging to dominated groups, do not uncritically assimilate the hegemonic discourse. Consequently, they need to appropriate theoretical tools that allow them to unmask and problematize reality, confronting the "official discourse," contained not only in textbooks but also the discursive content of the teacher, which may intentionally or unintentionally contain their idiosyncrasies. In this perspective, it becomes possible to create a discursive antithesis that suggests new approaches to sexuality and gender, whose practice may result in relationships between men and women that are fair and equitable, based on full citizenship.

Considering this scenario of heated discussions, it is necessary to remember that issues involving the inclusion of topics related to sexual education were contested in the committees that discussed the National Education Plan (PNE), as well as the National Common Curriculum Base (Tavano, 2021).

The BNCC, as it is known, is a normative document that establishes the set of effective learning that students must develop throughout the modalities of primary education, in accordance with what the PNE postulates. This document contains what is considered essential learning for all students in Brazil. From this perspective, it would be up to the States and Municipalities to develop curricular guidelines, which would include contents beyond the minimums provided in the BNCC, the diversified part that would reflect the regional and cultural reality of each territory (Tavano, 2021; Vizentim, 2020).

This document expresses that its purpose is the integral human formation and the construction of a just, democratic, and inclusive society (Brazil, 2017), and it was approved in

2017, containing specific guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, and in the following year, it received guidelines for Secondary Education.

Vizentim (2020, p. 17) points out that the BNCC went through an entire elaboration process that culminated in three versions: the first in 2015, the second in 2016, and the last one in 2017, when it was approved. Desidério (2020), in a study analyzing this document, contextualizes that in 2015, the Ministry of Education instituted ordinance No. 592, together with the National Council of Secretaries of Education (Consed) and the National Union of Municipal Education Managers (Undime), a group that would be responsible for drafting this document, and in September presented the first version for public consultation, and in mid-2016 the second version, and in June and September 2017 the National Council of Education (CNE) held public hearings, and in December of the same year, the document was approved and homologated by the Minister of Education.

In September 2015, the first version of the BNCC was released, which was made available on the internet for public consultation, and received more than 12 million contributions from different education entities and society in general. The second version of this document was presented the following year, in 2016, and received contributions from State Departments of Education from across the country and from more than 9 thousand education professionals.

Before sending the preliminary version of the third and final version of the BNCC to journalists, the Ministry of Education (MEC) submitted the text to the National Education Council (CNE), the body responsible for issuing an opinion before the approval. Subsequently, the final text of the BNCC arrived with alterations, during which the terms "gender" and "sexual orientation" were removed, justified by the MEC due to the need for adjustments in the wording of the final document to avoid redundancies and controversies, explicitly stating that there were no changes that compromised the document's assumptions.

The BNCC's initial text contained the words "gender" and "sexuality," while the passages where these terms appeared were extracted from the final text. Thus, the BNCC suppressed gender approaches, and sexuality was consequently conditioned to the biological aspects involving this theme, ignoring the psychosocial and affective aspects (Tavano, 2021), as well as citizenship and human rights (Ribeiro, 2013).

According to Desidério (2020), sexuality was a term that was highlighted in the third version of the BNCC; however, the conservative bloc of Congress spared no effort to remove

it. Indeed, they removed not only this term but also the words that constitute necessary discussions in the field, such as gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

In preparing this document, various professionals participated, many of whom were members of academic groups and educational councils, and included the input of numerous teachers and the public in the public consultations conducted (Vizentim, 2020). However, the final text of the BNCC underwent scrutiny by the CNE, which made changes to this document.

Within the essential learnings defined by the BNCC, it is ensured that students develop ten general competencies, with competency defined as the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to solve the demands of daily life in the full exercise of citizenship. Therefore, the BNCC recommends that pedagogical actions be guided towards the development of competencies, so that students learn to mobilize the knowledge and skills acquired in everyday life (Brasil, 2017).

The BNCC is a formal document; however, it does not explicitly outline how teachers should work with the content. Despite this, it preserves teacher autonomy, which should, according to their reality, develop strategies for skills development.

This document highlights the commitment to holistic student education, attributing to the school the role of a space for learning and inclusive democracy. In this sense, it states that it should strengthen the practice of non-discrimination, non-prejudice, and respect for differences and diversities, without mentioning that this could occur within the context of sexual education work.

According to Vizentim (2020), the BNCC, although not positioned as a curriculum, guides the contents that must be covered throughout the national territory and was developed in light of the PCN, not nullifying them but rather succeeding them, making the content to be worked on each year more evident. The researcher adds that the BNCC proposes the development of skills focused on knowledge objects. Within the different areas in which it organizes the curricular components, he draws attention to the named Natural Sciences, where the Science curriculum is located, structured in thematic units such as 'Matter and Energy', 'Earth and Universe', and 'Life and Evolution', the latter being essential for bringing the development of skills linked to the theme of Sexual Education.

These three thematic units, as Desidério (2020) mentions, organize the contents of the curricular component that in the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) were named thematic blocks (Environment, Human Being and Health, Technological Resources, Earth and Universe). The author continues his assessment by positing that aligned with these units, the

Natural Sciences are organized into a set of skills, where complexity grows in a balanced distribution among traditional curricular contents, not being fractured as it once occurred, culminating in them being worked on in all school years, which he considers an advancement.

The curricular component Science, in the BNCC, more precisely the unit 'Life and Evolution', includes the study focused on issues pertinent to living beings, and is an axis that allows for the approach to issues of Sexuality (Desidério, 2020). As evaluated by Vizentim (2020), this unit brings objects of knowledge related to the human body and respect for diversity, topics associated with the various dimensions of human Sexuality. Although it does not mention expressions like Sexual Education, this document, in the researcher's assessment, contains implicitly in its guidelines the need for its treatment in the classroom.

Within the content of the Science area, the BNCC states that, in the early years of Early Childhood Education, it is necessary to provide children with opportunities to expand their knowledge about the body, knowing how to identify the necessary care for maintaining health and the integrity of the organism, developing an attitude of respect and acceptance towards individual differences. In the later years, topics related to reproduction and human Sexuality can be addressed, topics of great interest and relevance to the age group of this educational stage.

Desidério (2020) discusses that the "Life and Evolution" unit of the first year aims to work on knowledge about the human body and its abilities, which can direct the teacher's work to the coverage of Sexuality. Likewise, the ability to *compare physical characteristics among peers, recognize diversity, and value acceptance and respect for differences* can promote debate beyond physical aspects, inserting gender issues.

In the BNCC, there is a concentration of this theme in the Natural Sciences section, which does not occur in the other areas, highlighting that it is more linked to the issue of health, revealing that it presents sexuality through the prism of public health, being tied to control of sexual conduct and behaviors. Sexuality is presented in the BNCC limited to its biological dimension, bringing the discussion of the body linked to content related to STIs, thus reinforcing the prophylaxis of diseases and other purported sexual issues.

Considering the PCN as a previous document, these do not have a normative character and explicitly state the need for schools to address sexuality. However, the BNCC is a normative document and does not explicitly state this need. Therefore, this document represented a setback in addressing this subject in schools. Fagundes (2019) argues that it was

expected that this document would mention some gender issues, especially regarding the learning and development rights of early childhood education, but this did not happen.

It is worth noting that the BNCC does not prohibit the treatment of these subjects in schools, but by not mentioning them, it leaves the teacher without documentary support to address them. Moreover, the document that can serve as legal support is the PCN, although, as Maia and Ribeiro (2011) argued, they were not mandatory adopted in all Brazilian states.

Entering this reflection, Desidério (2020) emphasizes the setback represented by the absence of sexuality themes in this document, which can be observed in all proposed versions, whether for teaching Sciences or other areas of knowledge. In the author's words, "[...] we nostalgically remember the PCN (Brazil, 1997), which undoubtedly still represents a historical and official landmark of Sexual Education in schools" (p. 109-110, our translation). Indeed, the PCN is the official guiding document concerning sexuality issues, and represented, as Maia and Ribeiro (2011) declare, a significant advance in recognizing students' right to sexual education.

It is important to clarify that the BNCC was developed in a scenario of intense social movement against the inclusion of sexuality and gender in schools. What lies behind this scenario is Gender Ideology, which brought about a wave of conservatism, igniting adverse positions to the debate of these issues in and by the school, and for this reason, these terms were extracted from this document, resulting in an anachronism compared to the PCN. Due to the silence of the BNCC, the national reference for these themes is still the PCN, which (Tavano, 2021), although not mandatory, contextualizes sexuality work (Ribeiro, 2020).

Leão and Ribeiro (2012), in a study of the country's educational policies, over a decade ago, expose that only the PCN gave legality to sexuality to be embraced through the cross-cutting theme of sexual orientation, since in other documents, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education, from 1996, and the National Education Plan, from 2001, this subject remains veiled. In the authors' assessment, which is aligned with the current reality, "there is much to be done in thinking about the effectiveness of policies that are effective in terms of space and visibility for dealing with sexuality" (p. 35, our translation).

As Fagundes (2019) wisely points out, contrary to the solid education based on social justice, citizenship building, and the exercise of human rights that was expected to be experienced in this third millennium, the points of tension that emerge in the country are evident, with setbacks in various social and political spheres, including educational policies, with discourses that coerce schools and teachers not to speak about sexuality. Considering the

exclusion of this theme in the BNCC, *resistance* "is a necessary and fundamental action for effective sexual education work [...] in schools" (Desidério, 2020, p. 110, our translation).

Torrada, Ribeiro, and Rizza (2020) argue that, as a form of resistance, the school space has presented educational proposals that recognize pluralism, promoting actions that facilitate addressing these issues. The authors note that these acts of resistance are indispensable, given the conservative and reactionary force that aims to exert control over gender and sexuality issues in the school curriculum.

Ferrari, Gomes, and Berto (2020, p. 241) suggest that there are resistances in schools, which focus on the analysis of teaching practices themselves and on looking at students, in order to assess the inscriptions of gender and sexuality relations in conversations and doubts. Paraíso (2016, p. 406, our translation) discusses resistance, explaining that it has the potential for growth and "[...] transformation that we need to inhabit the earth, to operate in the curriculum field, and to prevent curriculum control and the silencing of gender and sexuality issues in schools."

In this context, "the 'no' becomes just the beginning of a force that must continue, walk, move, and suggest strategies that bypass this reactionary wave, which comes to control the curriculum and pedagogical practices of teachers" (Torrada; Ribeiro; Rizza, p. 51, our translation). Paraíso (2016, p. 408, our translation) warns that it is necessary to make this no into a resistance to extinguish the effects of power: "To resist is to make 'no' an intensity of life as a potential for change. After the no, there is a need for an intensive movement that mobilizes powerful arrangements to find solutions."

According to Ferrari, Gomes, and Berto (2020), discussions of gender and sexuality ignite in the school the identification of small possibilities of escape, resistance, and everyday micropowers in order to think of other ways to grasp the world.

Going against reactionary discourses, such as the one that propagates that discussing sexuality instigates a nonexistent sexual interest in students and tarnishes the values and principles of families, it is necessary to reiterate that the need to discuss this topic in the school environment is anchored in human rights (Ribeiro, 2013).

Paraphrasing Maia and Ribeiro (2011), the right to information and sexual education is one of the sexual rights that comprise human rights. Based on this premise, the cited authors emphasize the relevance of sexual education, as, in their words, it is an essential prerogative of the developing human being. Torrada, Ribeiro, and Rizza (2020) highlight that the school is a "gendered" and "sexualized" environment that reinforces gender and sexuality stereotypes, and

these themes must be integrated into the issues, as they title them, (de)constructed with students, teachers, and the pedagogical and managerial team.

Stereotyped concepts related to sexuality are present in the social imaginary, and it is up to the school, as an institution for education and dissemination of scientific knowledge, to problematize them (Tavano, 2021). In the words of Maia and Ribeiro (2011), the school's social function is to transmit the knowledge historically produced by humanity, with sexual education being a tool to help individuals develop a positive perspective of sexuality, ignite critical thinking, and develop their own values. Despite its importance for inclusion, many obstacles to its implementation are still common.

Paraíso (2016, p. 389, our translation) explains that resistance is a strategy, a reaction to power that "[...] opens spaces, opens paths, creates possibilities. Resistance creates a re-existing, that is, an existence in another way," which enables going against curriculum control and the silencing of gender and sexuality issues by and in the school.

Torrada, Ribeiro, and Rizza (2020) make explicit that power is a relation of forces not only present in the State and the police, but also in different social relations, namely, parents over children, children over parents, men over women, women over men, teachers over students, among others. The authors emphasize that where there is power, there is resistance, as where one cannot resist and lacks freedom, there is a situation of violence and not of power; and elucidate that resistance is a force that seeks to provoke criticism and question truths.

Despite power relations, sexuality, and gender relations must and can be addressed in schools since they are inherent knowledge to human historical understanding. However, we emphasize that this institution cannot allow itself to be used as a tool by conservative groups against gender issues, groups that aim to modernize male domination, going against human rights, strengthening sexism, misogyny, and machismo. Bearing in mind, as Ferrari, Gomes, and Berto (2020) assert, that the school is the locus of subject production, it can contribute to creating an equitable and inclusive society. This underscores the need for resistance.

In essence, resistance is the teacher being challenged to see the student as a whole, cognizant, and sexual being, being willing and available to address sexuality and gender issues as something natural and beneficial to their development. Resistance involves not being contaminated by conservative discourses that preach that gender and sexuality are harmful or unnecessary to be addressed in the school context, adopting a critical stance towards what is established. Ultimately, this is a challenge that needs to be faced to overcome setbacks and progress towards the effective implementation of sexual education.

Final considerations

Studies on the theme of Sexuality linked to schools were intensified in the late 20th century with the launch of the PCN (National Curriculum Parameters). This document constituted a relevant guide regarding the place of Sexuality in the school environment. However, given that it was not mandatory, its adherence or not remained at the discretion of governments and municipalities. In fact, in many cases, it was not adopted. The National Education Plan (PNE) and the BNCC (Common National Curriculum Base) do not explicitly address the approach to Sexuality and gender. Therefore, the PCN still serves as the reference document at the federal level for debating these issues in schools.

It is worth noting the presence of a latent conservative wave in Brazilian society, which became more evident from 2014 onwards and prevented the discussion of gender in the PNE and Municipal Education Plans. Indeed, there is an ultraconservative movement that has dismantled the understanding of what Sexual Education should be, disregarding, thereby, the entire scientific framework, which significantly alerts us to the need for this education to be implemented in the school environment. This movement, which opposes sexual education, advocates for societal surveillance over the topics addressed in schools, with the aim of exercising control and rejecting any proactive initiative that seeks to discuss issues considered subversive, communist, or revolutionary. This includes topics related to sex and Sexuality, which they perceive as violations of moral values.

While there is ample scientific backing legitimizing the need for Sexual Education to be implemented in schools, this movement seeks to discredit it with fake news. To combat this, urgent development of communication and information strategies is needed for society to understand what Sexual Education truly entails. It does not aim to undermine family values or indoctrinate students, nor does it concern itself with moral issues or dictate rules. Instead, its purpose is to provide access to knowledge about sexuality, allowing individuals to construct their understanding of this aspect of humanity.

This education aims to confront prejudices and discrimination, challenging the misogyny, sexism, and machismo that are so prevalent in society. Its goal is to foster respect for differences regardless of gender or sexual orientation, as they should not lead to inequality but rather contribute to students' education from a human rights perspective. This includes promoting the eradication of prejudices, discrimination, myths, and taboos, as well as social exclusion and various forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

This is not a simple task but rather a lengthy process that requires efforts to dismantle this conservative wave. Concurrently, scientific studies must be developed to expose the detrimental effects of this conservatism on Brazilian education and society in general.

In conclusion, we reiterate that this study aimed to highlight some of the challenges and resistances to Sexual Education in Brazil, exposing the absence of explicit space for the theme of sexuality in guiding educational documents. The aim is to shed light on the urgent need for studies that contribute to identifying setbacks and potential paths forward to support initiatives in the field and ensure that Sexual Education becomes a reality in schools across the country.

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CRediT Author Statement

- Acknowledgements:** We thank the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of Araraquara for the institutional support to conduct the present research.
- Funding:** None applicable.
- Conflicts of interest:** There are no conflicts of interest.
- Ethical approval:** The work adhered to research ethics.
- Data and material availability:** The data and materials used in the work are available for access.
- Author's contributions:** Adriana Marques de Castro Leão contributed to the design of the work, especially regarding the introduction, development, and theoretical deepening. Andreza Marques de Castro Leão contributed to theoretical deepening, analysis, and discussions, as well as ensuring compliance with ABNT standards. Paulo Rennes Marçal Ribeiro contributed to data analysis, textual revision, and finalizing the work.

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Proofreading, formatting, normalization and translation.

