

## **Sexuality: mutism in the family, experience at school – trails of an identity game played by gay and lesbian students**

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**Summary:** Family and school. If it were necessary to prioritize these contexts that are highly relevant to human formation, perhaps the family institution would be prioritized. However, what is often seen is that family mutism around sexuality causes a search for support and identity encouragement in the latter. A great paradox emerges: at the same time that the school also works to make multiple sexualities invisible, it is in this space that the experience of non-hegemonic sexualities becomes possible. The qualitative research was based on semi-structured interviews carried out with eight gay and lesbian students from three different backgrounds. The study pointed to the school space as a safe ground to experience sexual identity and orientation to the detriment of the shifting ground of the family context, leading young gay and lesbian students to practice an identity game as a way of dealing with obstacles posed by hegemonic heteronormativism.

**Keywords:** Family. School. Sexuality. Gays. Lesbians. Identity game.

**Abstract:** *Family and school. If it were necessary to hierarchize these contexts highly relevant to human formation, perhaps the family institution would be prioritized. However, what is often observed is that family mutism around sexuality provokes a search for support and identity encouragement in the second. A great paradox emerges: at the same time that the school also acts for the invisibility of multiple sexualities, it is in this space that the experience of non-hegemonic sexualities becomes possible. The qualitative research was based on a semi-structured interview with eight gay and lesbian students from three different realities. The study pointed to the school space as a safe ground for experiencing sexual identity and orientation to the detriment of the unstable terrain of the family context, leading young gay and lesbian students to practice an identity game as a way to deal with obstacles posed by hegemonic heteronormativism.*

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## 1. Introduction

As Messeder (2016) postulates, when we enter into the writing of any production, we must question ourselves about how the theme of writing has a history in our experience. This is the case. It was born as the result of a series of observations, dialogues, inferences and findings from my work as a professor in technical education and activism. I have noticed, over the years, a huge distress that affects young LGBT people in what they concerns their identities and their existence in the context of family and school, which appear as dichotomous. These are pains that I share as a lesbian woman<sup>2</sup>, member of a misogynistic, sexist and heterocentric society.

Also supported by Spivak (2010), for whom it is the role of all intellectual production denouncing the systems in which subalternities are produced, I propose to uncover, through the eyes of the young people interviewed, the hegemonic straight apparatus and the resistance in the aforementioned realities. In the same sense, I highlight survival strategies employed by them students, establishing what I call an identity game.

It can be seen that, as an embodied researcher, I bring traces of my corporeality in writing. This corporeality, beyond the marks of decoloniality, gender, race, class and sexual desire (MESSEDER, 2016), is also understood by knowledge produced so far. This way, it will be clear in my speech that influence of linguistics and organizational studies that make up my training.

The work<sup>3</sup> is divided into seven parts. In addition to this, I present a discussion on sexuality in the Brazilian patriarchal family and at school (1); outline the theoretical proposition of identity game (2); I present the methodological path (3); I analyze the collected data in light the proposed theoretical body (4); I make final considerations (5) and present the list of references (6). Regardless of only appearing in item 2, the entire argument will unfold around Chart 1 (p. 9) which brings reports about the experience of sexuality in family and at school.

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<sup>2</sup>As an activist, I opt for the term *lesbiana* because, like other members of this peripheral sexuality, I believe that it is a term further away from a pathologized view of female homosexuality.

Linguistically, it is not Hispanism (although it coincides with Cervantes' language), but a less common lexicon of the Portuguese language (see the lexicon in the online versions of the dictionaries *Houaiss*, *Aurélio*, *Michaelis*, *Dicio*, *Priberam* and *Infopédia*, all from Portuguese language).

<sup>3</sup> This article is an expanded and modified version of the oral communication entitled "The identity game of gay and lesbian students – the case of the Federal Institute of Camaçari" presented at the III International Seminar Undoing Gender, in 2017.

## **2. Sexuality in the family and at school: spaces of contradictions**

The conception of sexuality undergoes transformations over time (LAPLANCHE and PONTALIS, 1996). The mere biological and functional vision has dimmed since the contributions of Freud, for whom the concept is broad, as it covers many activities and does not is restricted to the genitals (FREUD, 1996). For Rubin (1984), limiting sexuality to biological sphere is precisely to deny the understanding that it is not a neutral field, but rather a field permeated by inequalities and different forms of oppression.

The perception of Weeks (1986) is interesting, for whom sexuality is nothing more than a social fiction, linked to a historical-cultural dimension of the subjects (VANCE, 1995). This vision expresses a very mobile and contextual idea, very linked to social arrangements from synchronous cuts in a timeline of a given society. sexuality concerns rituals, languages, fantasies, representations, symbols, conventions of a a deeply cultural and plural process (LOURO, 2007).

It is a historical device (FOUCAULT, 2012). The meaning of these premises leads us to understand that sexuality is a set of experiences, experiences and practices relevant historical-cultural aspects in the context of affections, with what is pertinent to them, which is deeply intertwined in a particular model of social construction, internalization and individualization of subjectivity (HEILBORN, 1999).

Perhaps much more relevant than establishing a conceptual proposal for sexuality, be it the issues surrounding the topic. Mutism around sexuality has prevailed for a long time. Foucault (2012, p. 33) problematized the issue by referring back centuries past when referring to something “that one refuses to say or that one prohibits mentioning”. Unfortunately, the persistence of silence around everything related to sexuality is something that still permeates social relationships and, in the family, sexuality takes on an air of crime.

In fact, dealing with the issue in the family institution requires discursive anteriority, since to refer to it is to enter an environment of complexity. What is understood as This is historical, contextual and entangled in a politics of nationality, economics and identity – the makeup of the family, and who has the power to decide what constitutes a acceptable model, it becomes an ideological battlefield as a maneuver of perspectives opposites for political and economic advantage (CARRINGTON, 2002).

In Brazil, what is seen as legitimate, in the eyes of reactive conservatism, is a perpetuated, recurrent and, in strange times like today, loudly claimed model – the patriarchal family<sup>4</sup>. It is a fixed model in which the characters simply replace each other over the generations, without threats to their hegemony, and are a trunk from which all other social relations spring (CORRÊA, 1993). This perpetuated model, reiterated and privileged has harmful reverberations and, in addition to the muteness it causes agony in adolescent lives, when it comes to peripheral sexualities, the model family hegemon becomes the main agent of heteronormativity and this weapon of gags and straitjackets of bodies in the large “closet” of the private spectrum called family (SEDWICK, 2007, p. 22).

On the other hand, in historical terms, in the school context it has not been very different. For a long time now, the school has remained silent, despite a series of documents and laws that highlight the importance of a broad debate around sexuality – one of the issues that has brought the most difficulties, problems and challenges to educators, in their daily work of teaching (FIGUEIRÓ, 2004). The culturalist perspective of organizational studies, inspired by Geertz (1989), incorporates the influence of anthropology, as a disciplinary field also interested in understanding organizational processes in their articulation with the sociocultural dynamics of the context more general in which they fit. Culture plays a central role in understanding any organization.

In this way, we understand that the school territory is a mini-society (BASTOS, LOIOLA *et al.* 2004) and as such, it is configured as a space of tensions, disputes and, evidently, of conflicts and denials. Just like society, historically, the school is structured into a system of power that rewards and encourages some individuals and punishes and makes others invisible (RUBIN, 1984). The school organization, in general, has worked so that sexuality is suppressed, unspoken, and the different, not expressed. Numerous researchers pointed to the school as an organization disciplinary, as another space for the docilization of bodies (FOUCAULT, 2012). There is a huge range of works<sup>5</sup> published from this perspective.

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<sup>4</sup> Despite the conservative claim regarding the patriarchal family, they are recognized and highly new and distinct family configurations are relevant, which are not the focus of this work.

<sup>5</sup> In this sense, without a shadow of a doubt, professor Guacira Lopes Louro has a respectable bibliography that addresses the devices of heteronormativity and its ruinous reverberations in the school environment (LOURO, 2009).

If it were the case of a hierarchy between these two highly relevant to human formation, perhaps the family would be put first, thus leading individuals to greater identity comfort in this space. The family, as person's primary institution, should be the first scenario for discussion of all types of question. However, what we found is that the silence surrounding sexuality in family institution provokes a search for support and identity encouragement in social organization school.

The great contradiction that we want to point out in this work then arises: at the same time time in which the school also works to make multiple sexualities invisible, to making polluting beings invisible (BENTO, 2011), it is in this space that, for the most part, the first accesses to other bodies that rebel against hegemony occur. The contact with other social actors/actresses who experience the same feelings, conflicts and same pains, provides a revealing of oneself, in Foucauldian light, which opens paths for heteronormative destabilization and a subsequent identity affirmation.

Thus, despite many oppressions, this research shows that space school becomes a safe ground for experiencing sexuality to the detriment of insecurity family context, leading LGBT subjects to play a game as a way of dealing with with the vicissitudes of authoritarian heteronormativism – an identity game. About this, we will discuss in the following section.

### **3 . The identity game**

Identity is a topic that arouses passions and much debate every time it is brought up to the surface. There were many theorists who wrote about this subject, mainly among last decade of the 20th century until the first of this century. It is not the intention to enter here in a debate of a broad conceptual nature, however it is important to highlight the assumption of identity that supports this work. Identity emerges, therefore, as a mobile aspect, under construction, that changes, advances and retreats according to social relations.

We understand, therefore, that a cohesive identity, firmly fixed and solidly constructed “would be a burden, a repression, a limitation” (BAUMAN, 2005, p. 60). For the author of liquidity, identity takes the form of endless experimentation, since the individual assumes one identity at a moment, however, many other identities are still untested are on the corner, waiting for the person to choose. And yet, many other

undreamt-of identities are yet to be invented and coveted for a lifetime (BAUMAN, 2005).

It is important to highlight that the assumption of identity as something under construction, as celebration of furniture (HALL, 2005) should not be understood as a total fragmentation of social actors and actresses. When making a synchronous cut in a line of evolution diachronic, identity is stabilized (never fossilized) and, in this way, readings can be made, characteristics of belonging can be easily pointed out and speeches can be associated and claimed.

In turn, it is important to point out that game is also a category of several theoretical positions. Contrary to what it may seem and because it is a very referred to in studies on childhood and adolescence, the game has no age, with wide variety during each stage of human life (MACHADO, 1994). Huizinga (1971) is one of the most cited authors when we delve into the subject. For the author, the game is the foundation of human culture; it is neither “ordinary” life nor “real” life – it is an “evasion from real life” (HUIZINGA, 1971, p. 11) that provides the nutrition of human culture. The author states that In and through the game, civilization emerges and manages to develop.

Despite not being exclusive to this age group, gaming is a constant in the lives of adolescents and is used as a negotiation tactic of different content, whether in the context family, at school or in groups of friends. For Machado (1994), in adolescence the game of Mediation is a striking variety. For Erikson (1943), the game acquires such relevance crucial in human life, including teenagers, which, in fact, is a resource self-therapeutic. This premise aligns perfectly with the discussion proposed here.

Organizational studies have a great contribution to the reverberations identity issues relevant to this proposal, as they define the use of an alterity identity for the convenience of organizational *stakeholders* as in a game, in order to survive. Such an approach can easily be displaced from the organizational context traditional and applied to other social spheres, as we propose here. The scholars organizations examined how people create coherence and continuity through their diverse identities, so that they have a better sense and acceptance of themselves (PRATT; ROCKMANN;KAUFMANN, 2006). Individuals can print narratives balanced in a game that establishes or restores the continuity of identity, balancing, despite the changes between personal and social self-definitions (HOLLAND *et al.*, 1998; ELSBACH, 2003; KREINER, HOLLENSBE and SHEEP, 2006). In the organizational universe,

The notion of self-defense of identity often leads to a game with identity, in order to invent and reinvent oneself for individual preservation (IBARRA, 2010).  
Play with identity.

After this discussion, I point out that the act of conceptualizing something is not a simple task, since every concept has components, multiplicity and several numerical variations (GALEFFI, 2018). The concept “is obviously knowledge, but knowledge of oneself, and the What he knows is the pure event” (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 2000, p. 46), something that presupposes semantic-temporal mobility. However, a delineation is made necessary to understand this small scripture that emerges as the result of experiences.

Thus, I conceptualize the identity game as a survival metaphor for LGBT actors/actresses, mainly teenagers, who are discovering their sexuality, integral part of a larger identity construction that seeks stability, even if not definitive, and protection. The perception of oneself as a corporeality that escapes expectations family, leads individuals to enter into an identity dynamic of strategic alterity that balances between the notion of *who I am* and *what my family expects of me*.

Thus, the identity game establishes itself as a convenient reinvention and, at times, momentary awareness of self as a dissonant body in a system that oppresses, makes precarious and cancels differences, placing identity within the scope of preconceptions, immutabilities and secular uniqueness. This game is played with dexterity and intentionality. The body, aware of itself, perceives the brutality of heteronormativist hegemony and simulates, forges, hides, goes into the closet to preserve himself. It becomes a fundamental action for the preservation and development of the autonomy of *who I really am* – is configured as a protection for LGBT teenagers.

#### **4. Methodological trail and data collection**

In theoretical terms, this study was based on a comprehensive approach, since that according to Ray (1994), the goal was to understand and highlight the meaning of social and individual within the scope of the proposed theme. This is a qualitative research that establishes from reflected and appropriate experiences in the effort to understand articulator that addresses the possibilities and effectiveness available in achieving a knowledge at the service of human beings and their relationships of belonging and common-responsibility with the living totality (GALEFFI, 2009).

The research initially collected data from three different spheres of my work. The first of these spheres is my *locus* of work – IFBA Camaçari<sup>6</sup> . At  
In my work as an English language teacher, I lead three different projects. The first  
One of these projects is “*Live and Let Live – Education for Respect for Differences*” which is developed in the second grade classes of Integrated High School. The second project is the “*Songs of Protest*”, for the third grade classes of Integrated High School, annually. O  
third project is entitled “*Work and Diversity*” and is aimed at students in classes English II of the Subsequent Course. They all bring with them issues of gender and sexuality. Whenever projects are completed, a *feedback* questionnaire is presented to students. In addition to other questions, the questionnaire asks about age and orientation sexual. These questions are posed as optional answers. After reading and analyzing the questionnaire, each academic year, according to the time frame presented, some students who declared themselves LGBT were invited for an interview.

The second sphere is that of activism. As coordinator of the Education Center of Families for Diversity Collective, at the end of 2016, we presented to the Coordination of Diversity of the Department of Education of the State of Bahia, at the time coordinated by Érica Capinan, the Families for Diversity and School Community Project. The proposal consisted of holding Conversation Circles on genders and sexualities, to be held in schools states of Salvador. Through Dr. Eva Rodrigues, the State Public Defender's Office joined the proposal, offering logistical support. The project was carried out in 2017 and was an incredible experience. In this context, data collection was initially carried out by spontaneous approach of actors/actresses from the contexts visited. Soon, an invitation was made to some for an interview on the topic proposed here.

The third sphere is the personal. I use my circle of neighbors and friends to access LGBT students from the private education network. Once these bodies have been identified gays and lesbians, the approach was very careful, very careful, in order to preserve the identities, convey trust and achieve people's fluid expression.

I opted for the interview technique because it constitutes an immeasurable source of information. The interviews were conducted privately, in person and individually with a total of 16 students<sup>7</sup> who identified as gay and lesbian. duration varied between 35 and 60 minutes and took place in different spaces on the campus of

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<sup>6</sup> The project for writing the article is registered with the Research, Postgraduate and Innovation Coordination of the Camaçari *campus* .

<sup>7</sup> I chose to use 8 of these interviews just for the sake of delimiting and organizing the textual unit.



IFBA (English language laboratory, canteen, classroom and library), in the classrooms of teachers at the state schools visited and on the *playgrounds* in some of the buildings interviewed.

The model adopted for the interview was focused and semi-structured in two parts. A first, with the collection of personal data (age, sexual orientation, series/course, place of housing, religion) and the second, with a conversation driven by the trajectory of life, with a view to emerging not only what was intended nuclearly, but also new facts, nuances, perspectives and theoretical propositions (GOLDENBERG, 2000). The data collected were analyzed in the light of discourse analysis, in order to understand verbal and non-verbal communications verbal, as well as being guided by the real use and preservation of the language linked to the context (VAN DIJK, 1993) of the people interviewed. Thus, the transcriptions of the speeches were faithful to the choices and discursive characteristics of each student. The result of these interviews is a vast material, rich and exciting in many aspects.

The work will be developed based on the selection of fragments from 8 life stories collected, apparently disconnected, but which contribute to the understanding of the whole (VIKERS, 2005). In the fragments, the students spoke about the experience of living the sexuality in the family and at school. In order to guarantee the preservation of the identity of interviewed, the fragments will be presented with fictitious names, containing the age, declared sexual orientation, the composition of the family nucleus and the religion of the parents. Of these 8 interviews, three come from contacts in the sphere of activism (students from the state network of teaching – Safo, Turing and Lorca), three from the sphere of my work (students from the federal education network teaching – Dali, Audre and Gabo) and two from the personal sphere (students from the private education network Salvador – Cassandra and Baldo). With a view to better visual structuring for people readers, the fragments relating to this proposition will be presented in the table below.

**Table 1** – The experience of living sexuality in the family and at school

Interviewee Report	
Sappho	In my house they only talk to me about my obligations, that I have to take care of my 18 years – brothers, that I have to clean the house, make food and other household things. I learned lesbian about sex with my friends, schoolmates and neighbors. My mother asked me a few times if I was dating and warned me not to get a belly. It's a joke because she never told me how to get belly fat (laughs). I think it will take a long time for me to say that I like women or I will never say it. I want to play football with the kids on the street, but that would be too much fun. I have to repress my tastes, my desires, I like to wear sneakers, my Bahia shirt and looser pants... but all it takes is for my mother to come with that "I'm going to kill you" look. My father doesn't say anything, nothing to me... just to ask if there is food or about the result of the game. At school everything is easier. Thank God no one from the family is here. There are projects like yours and there are other friends like me. One protects the other. We demand respect and have already demonstrated at school with Grêmio. The principal warned us not to make out, but the teachers and aunts didn't

	<p>so not even there. Quiet! (2017)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: father, mother, one sister and two brothers / Religion: "mix of everything")</p>
<p><i>Turing</i> 18 years old – gay</p>	<p>Huuuummm... in my house they don't even imagine that I'm gay. They think this possibility does not exist. This beard is already a disguise and I also pick up the baba from the street so that no one suspects, both me and my real boyfriend. My father says several times that he would rather not have a child than have a fagot at home. I'm afraid he'll find out because he's aggressive. He hit me with his belt several times when I was younger... Do you see this mark here? It was from a beating I received and I don't know why. I think that's why he goes to church, prays and controls his violence. If he finds out, he'll beat me up and throw me out on the street. That is if it doesn't kill me. I have a friend in quotes to disguise it, my friend and classmate who is bi. We always do work together and our families think we are lovers. She covers for me and J...</p> <p>We acted very well... we are artists (laughs). At school they know I'm a faggot. Some guys are really stupid with jokes and there are some linked to drug trafficking here in the suburbs. So I'm a little scared. But in general it is calmer. There are many pocs and frogs here and that gives security. The director and the sociology teacher are good people and respect us. (2017)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Mother, father, one sister / Religion: evangelical)</p>
<p><i>Lorca</i> 18 years old – gay</p>	<p>I have to control myself all the time at home. I have a huge poc inside this skinny body (laughs). I have to control my hands all the time... sometimes I forget when I hear a song that I really like and my middle sister says she knows I'm a fagot. I feel like my mother notices something different, but she doesn't tell me anything. It forces me to go to the damn cult twice a week. That disgusting pastor looks at me differently... it seems like he wants me... he's a faggot there! When I go to visit my father, I go very macho, wearing more masculine clothes, controlling myself, walking differently so as not to look bad. His wife is unbearable. But I have fun with this pretense... my sister helps me by telling my father that I have a girlfriend. I'm laughing inside. School is my stage. This is where the sex takes place, where we date, where we plan parties, cachaças. There are a lot of religious and conservative employees, but there are a lot of people who give us peace. There are boring teachers, but there are some great ones who respect and are friends. I've even done drag for a course project. Success! (2017)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Mother and two sisters / Religion: evangelical)</p>
<p><i>Dali</i> 19 years old – gay</p>	<p>The school is a libertarian environment, but, as an effeminate queer, I suffer some restrictive looks from some people, but IFBA is everything to me, it changed my life. At home we don't talk about things like sex or sexual orientation. I have to pretend I'm straight and save my gayness. I laugh at myself acting macho. I laugh but I'm afraid of my father's reaction when I come out. (2017)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Father, mother, a sister and an aunt / Religion: Jehovah's Witness)</p>
<p><i>Audrey</i> 17 years - lesbian</p>	<p>In my house they never said anything to me about being a dyke. I think my mother knows, but she keeps pushing me to wear feminine clothes, makeup and other nonsense... Even with my cousin she has insinuated that I date her. My dad doesn't say much, but every now and then he says I'm weird.</p> <p>The first thing I do when I get to school is tousele my hair, take my shirt out of my pants or wear looser clothes. I have to leave the house looking tidy like my mother wants. When I'm returning home, I repeat the ritual of dressing up. I even have fun with it. I feel very good at school. There are many people like me. In my class there is the group of dykes and we have gay teachers and dykes. I've had a girlfriend for a year now and her family is much worse, evangelical to the core. School is the only space we have or when we go to our other colleague's house to do work. There is only one employee who is boring, religious. One time she came to talk because I was holding hands sitting on the patio with my girlfriend. I asked her if she knew article 5<sup>o</sup> of the constitution. She never addressed us again. The IFBA is a difficult place, but it's a good place. (2018)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Father, mother, two brothers / Religion: unable to inform)</p>
<p><i>Gabo</i> 17 years old – gay</p>	<p>Despite some professors in the technical area who look at me with disgust, I can be me at IFBA. For those people who are rude, I shake my head, shake my hair and put my hand on my waist so they can see that I really am a poc. But I know they're not crazy enough to tell me anything, because there are other wonderful professors who support freedom. There's COTEP, there's Grêmio, there are laws... At school I date, I enjoy my life and my colleagues respect me, I'm challenged in work in some disciplines. My house is the hell of hell. I remember once at a party at my uncle's house, I was playing with my cousin. I was only 9 years old. We were playing songs when my father came and slapped me in the face and told me to become a man. I don't even know what I did wrong. I cried a lot and it was the first time I wanted to die. We don't talk 10</p>

	<p>about nothing at home. Not even my older brother talks to me. My parents only think about worship. They finally stopped insisting that I go to church. I think my father is ashamed of me because of my mannerisms that I can no longer hide. I spent a lot of time trying to walk in a more masculine way, like my brother. My dream is to graduate, leave home, far away from Camaçari. I admire rich gay professors who live their lives as they see fit, they don't hide. I want to be like them. (2018)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Father, mother, two brothers / Religion: evangelical)</p>
<p><i>Cassandra</i> 18 years - lesbian</p>	<p>In my house it's a little difficult. My mother is a psychologist and says she helps a lot of LGBT people, but she keeps correcting the way I sit and walking and making changes to my clothes. He says I should be more feminine and I pretend I don't hear him. It sucks! My father is a lawyer and says that being a faggot and a dyke is pure naughtiness. I've been with a colleague a few times, but I've never told anyone anything. My parents think she's just my friend. I love it when she sleeps over to study or do work. We slept together in my bed. Nobody suspects.</p> <p>I'm in love with her but she's also afraid of her family. I'm afraid my parents will find out. I think my mother will want to admit me. At school it's cool because there are my friends there. The coordinator is very open and we talk about everything. The best thing is that no one has anything to do with anyone's life. There are employees with disapproving looks, but they are afraid of losing their jobs if we file a complaint. I'm studying hard to get a good ENEM so I can move away from my parents (2019).</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Father, mother, one brother / Religion: Catholic)</p>
<p><i>Baldo</i> 19 years old – gay</p>	<p>My mother wants to know where I am, who I am with all the time. They gave me a car, but I think they regretted it because I started to have more freedom. I'm dying to get to college and leave home. My cousin who lives here in the same condominium is a dyke and we let it be known that we like each other because it's easy to go out to parties and clubs. We don't talk, but we let people understand, we give the idea, you know? We have peace this way. We laugh about it, my friends sometimes make fun of it but they cooperate, they help with the show (laughs).</p> <p>And there's one thing: I think my little sister is going to be a dyke. Imagine? The school is a mix of supervision by some employees and moments of freedom. Nobody has anything to do with my life there, so it's much easier. Once the counselor found out from a cleaning aunt that I was making out with a guy in the bathroom. I begged her not to talk to my mother and she didn't say anything. Fortunately! (2019)</p> <p>(Family nucleus: Mother, father, one sister / Religion: Baptist)</p>

The excerpts from the life stories portrayed here will be discussed, taking into account aspects common to the interviewees. We are aware and it is clear that many things could be discussed based on reading these fragments. However, we will focus on aspects relevant and pertinent to this theoretical-textual proposition.

## 5 . Analysis of life stories

### 5.1 Family: the silence of the big closet

In postmodern times, the allegorical scene of the Victorian moralist family, holding of a silent, contained and disguised sexuality, resists, persists, reoccurs with its interdictions, imposing muteness (FOUCAULT, 2012). It can be seen from the statements that nothing about Sexuality is discussed in families, much less sexual orientation. Sapphoé's opening speech categorical:

In my house they only talk to me about my obligations, that I have to take care of my brothers, that I have to clean the house, make food and other household things. I learned about sex from my friends, schoolmates and neighbors<sup>8</sup>.

My mother asked me a few times if I was dating and warned me not to get a belly. It's a joke because she never told me how to get a belly (Safo, 2017).

In the hegemonic family model, the stamp of heterosexuality is given before the birth and the family becomes the main watchdog, the great guardian of this heteronormative preconception, as patriarchy requires coercive heterosexuality, as demonstrated in Turing's speech: "in my house they don't even imagine that I'm gay. Do you think that this possibility does not exist." This is also a reverberation of the silence that normalizes and naturalizes the identity of the person who arrives. Thus, one arrives in the world with the responsibility, even before understanding oneself as a social actor/actress, of meeting expectations, ancient standards and beliefs, which will reflect on the construction of your identity.

For Butler (1993), family imposition drives an entire activity, an entire construction of a female or male body – there is no possibility outside of this logic. Once a person is found to be violating this premise within the family, another person emerges. Silence – the silence that is a verb, as it acts with force: the silence of refuting, denying, hide the different. Quickly, the mechanisms of heteronormativity are put on alert and the family remains silent in favor of a non-discussion about sexuality and gags the manifestation that he does not know, does not accept and that runs away from what is conventionally normal. This is evident in the highlighted lines:

I think my mother gets it, but she keeps pushing me to wear feminine clothes, makeup and other fru-fru... Even with my cousin she has insinuated that I date her (Audre, 2018).

I think my father is ashamed of me because of my mannerisms that I can no longer hide (Gabo, 2018).

My mother is a psychologist and says she helps a lot of LGBT people, but she keeps correcting the way I sit and walk and tweaking my clothes (Cassandra, 2019).

An important aspect that was demonstrated in the clandestinity of bodies in the closet called family, was the issue of violence, which also drives silences, such as we can extract from the following excerpts:

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<sup>8</sup> The study by Bozon and Heilborn (2006) shows that teenagers from lower classes seek more information about sex and sexuality from their friends, to the detriment of family and school. For more information, see: BOZON, Michel; HEILBORN, Maria Luiza. Initiation into sexuality: modes of socialization, gender interactions and individual trajectories. In: HEILBORN, Maria. Luiza *et al.* (Org.). *Learning sexuality: reproduction and social trajectories of young Brazilians*. Rio de Janeiro: Garamond; Fiocruz, 2006. p. 155-206.

My father says several times that he would rather not have a child than have a fagot at home. I'm afraid he'll find out because he's aggressive. He hit me with his belt several times when I was younger... Do you see this mark here? It was from a beating I received and I don't know why. I think that's why he goes to church, prays and controls his violence. If he finds out, he'll beat me up and throw me out on the street. That is if it doesn't kill me (Turing, 2017).

I laugh, but I'm afraid of my father's reaction when I come out (Dalí, 2017).

I was only 9 years old. We were playing songs when my father came and slapped me in the face and told me to become a man (Gabo, 2018).

Unfortunately, violence is a recurring aspect in the lives of LGBT people. We are speaking of a national context in which, every 20 hours, an LGBT person dies violently<sup>9</sup>.

In the family institution, violence emerges with different contours, from psychological that affects self-esteem, identity and development of the person (DAY, 2003), goes through movements of exclusion from the family and emotional support, and physical reach of victims who end up developing psychic pain, often irreversible, or even die at the hands of family members who repudiate the difference. When it's not like that, these psychic pains cause voluntary deaths. According to the GGB Report in 2018, suicide was the 4th leading cause of death among young LGBT people aged 15 to 29 in Brazil. Gabo's statement, "it was the first time I wanted to die", is an illustration of the barbarities that affect young people.

The hetero-silent gear of the patriarchal family is unaware of the possibility of the body lesbian, denying it intelligibility. The idea that where there is no man there is no there is the possibility of emotion, sexual affection and pleasure, which still persists in many spaces (NAVARRO SWAIN, 2004).

Many people "can't even imagine that a lesbian could exist! (...) For a woman, There is only one possibility, heterosexuality. So, people only think about that" (SAUNDERS, 2017, p. 143). This can be seen in the excerpt below:

My parents think she's just my friend. I love it when she sleeps over to study or do work. We slept together in my bed. Nobody suspects (Cassandra, 2019).

It would represent a significant gap if it did not touch on the weight of religion on lives here discussed. Among the 8 stories presented, only Audre declared ignorance about family religion and Sappho spoke of "a mixture of everything". Lorca reported that her mother forces her "to

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<sup>9</sup> GGB Report 2018 – LGBT population dead in Brazil. Available in: <https://homophobiamata.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/relatorio-2018-1.pdf> - Accessed on: 10/08/2019.

go to the damn cult twice a week” and Gabo claims that his parents “only think about the cult”. This reality found in the investigation aligns with what was pointed out in postulates Foucaultians, namely, the Church as one of the channels for interdicting sexuality.

Regarding peripheral sexualities, an entire linguistic framework persists with aimed at a repudiation of the dissonant body present in the hetero-patriarchal family. To beyond the need for nominations, to inscribe (BUTLER, 2015) labels such as gay, fagot, lesbian, dyke in the middle of the family is the representation of the transgression of divine laws, of dogmas and the cloudy interpretations and religious designs that are supported by discourses inflamed, generally claiming the bible. The gay/lesbian body is, then, the *locus* of final judgment (WEEKS, 1995). The intelligibility of transgressive corporeality represents the failure of the heterosexual project preached in churches, carried out in families.

In this section, I tried to highlight how intrafamily mutism reverberates in the lives of people interviewed. Despite the fact that the family is presented as a big closet silent, it became evident that identity, sexuality, desire are important issues of individual personality that refute normalization and destabilize heteronormativism. In this way, there will always be people who violate regulatory arrangements (LOURO,2007).

## 5.2. Identity game strategies

### 5.2.1. The secret due to fear

Secrecy, silence and self-invisibilization are part of the game's strategies identity of the interviewees. Such resources are not new in the LGBT universe and have already appeared in other research (PECHENY, 2004; ERIBON, 2008).

Performativities foreign to heteronormativism also emerge strongly silent, the silence of the closet, as a form of resistance/survival so evident in the aforementioned interviews. For Miskolci (2009), the risks of taking oneself lead people who move outside the heteronormative standard and live in secret, as in addition to being expelled from home, there is even a risk of death. This is confirmed in Turing's speech:

My father says several times that he would rather not have a child than have a fagot at home. I'm afraid he'll find out because he's aggressive. He hit me with his belt several times when I was younger... Do you see this mark here? It was from a beating I received and I don't know why. I think that's why he goes to church, prays and controls his violence. If he finds out, he'll beat me up and throw me out on the street. That is if it doesn't kill me (Turing, 2017).

For Britzman (1996), the secret is not a wonderful alternative, but given the  
In situations of oppression, such a resource is viable and has an effect on intertwined relationships.  
It can be seen from Cassandra's speech that the mother's response to the discovery of a daughter  
lesbian, would have a demanding medicalized connotation of enclosure, even due to the profession  
of the mother.

I already made out with a colleague at a party, but I never told anyone anything.  
I'm in love with her, but she's also afraid of her family. I'm afraid my parents will  
find out. I think my mother will want to admit me (Cassandra, 2019).

Also in the case of the other interviewees, the choice of secrecy is the deprivation of  
sharing doubts and fears and the experience of their identities within the family.

#### 5.2.2. The heterosexual simulacrum

The person who discusses the concept of simulacrum is the French sociologist, Jean Baudrillard  
(1981). He argues, among other points, that simulacra, which are based on imitation and  
in pretense, they aim at "the restitution or ideal institution" of a nature – they represent  
a utopia (BAUDRILLARD, 1981, p. 151). For Deleuze (1969), the simulacrum is "the highest  
power of the false" (DLEUZE, 1969 apud SAFATLE, 2006, p. 303). In the same vein, Chauí  
(2006, p. 82) did an etymological research on the word simulacrum and states that it is a  
"Latin word that comes from *similis*, which means similar (...) and can either mean a  
representation or exact copy as a pretense, a simulation." These arguments in  
they help to understand the strategy used by students.

The heterosexual simulacrum is, perhaps, the strongest strategy in the identity game for the  
service to the pillar of *what my family expects from me*. We can identify three variables  
of this simulacrum. The first is the hetero-affective relationship. In this case, another body enters the  
game, another player<sup>10</sup> who participates and acts with the prerogative of giving solidity to the  
simulation. In many cases, that other person also shares the same feelings  
and pains and enter to play, in order to also obtain the same benefits of the simulation.

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<sup>10</sup> In general, in the network of friends with peripheral sexualities, there is conscious and consensual  
participation. However, tacitly, we can state that unconscious participation is not uncommon, the result of the  
desperation of the person who transgresses.

In the research, with the exception of Gabo who seems to have his non-hegemonic body already written by the family, the reports show the fear that the family will discover the real identity of each one. The path found for some was that of a lie made concrete by the pretense of straight dating, which ultimately means the deepening of silence. That is evident in the speeches of Turing, Lorca and Baldo, as we can see in the excerpts:

I have a friend in quotes to disguise it, my friend and classmate who is bi. We always do work together and our families think we are lovers. She covers for me and J.... (Turing, 2017)

... my sister helps me by telling my dad that I have a girlfriend. (Lorca, 2017)

My cousin who lives here in the same condominium is a dyke and we let her know that we like each other because it's easy to go out to parties and clubs. We don't talk, but we let people understand, we give the idea, you know? We have peace this way (Baldo, 2019).

The second variable identified concerns performativity. Butler (2015) postulates the sequence of performative acts, as discursive constructs, when addressing gender and sexuality. Thus, the different ways in which the body shows or produces its meaning are a cultural issue, there being no pre-existing identity through which an act or attribute can be measured. In this sense, heteronormativity is performativity; the straight body is "a disciplined production" (MESSEDER, 2016, p. 269) that brings together gestures, acts, mannerisms, mannerisms.

The undisciplined body, which transgresses, which escapes this hetero performativity culturally recidivist, he claims it, making it his own, using it for convenience to survive. The undisciplined person simulates, theatricalizes, pretends, forges a straight body. order that legitimizes the subjection of bodies, encourages the policy of subversion (PRECIADO, 2014)—in order to survive, gay and lesbian bodies subvert, keeping in the closet, which is subject to denunciation, evidence. Dalí, who calls himself an "effeminate queer", needs to "guard" his "gayness" when he is at home, implying that he practices simulacrum of the regulated straight body. Gabo even reveals that he spent "a long time trying walk with a more macho way" like his brother and Turing talks about "catching the baba off the street so no one suspects<sup>11</sup>".

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<sup>11</sup> The association of "baba" (football) with masculine is due to a series of factors within the scope of gender inequality, one of them is Decree Law no. 3,199/1941 (in force until 1979), which prohibited the presence of women in sport. When dealing with female refereeing in football, Calheiro and Messeder (2014), point out "the masculinist 'intention'" (p. 94) predominant in the sport.



The third variable identified was the adoption of the projection of an aesthetic image-body linked to a cultural repertoire said or seen as straight. Lorca talks about “clothes more of a man” when he goes to visit his father, and Audre has to “leave the house tidy” as the mother wants. Safo signals that he needs to repress his tastes, including the team shirt and the “looseest trousers” and, once again, Turing talks about the beard as a disguise. of the “body way” (MESSEDER and CASTRO, 2018), here we identify a subjection aesthetic-sanitisation in favor of an approximation of the hetero matrix with a view to escaping family pressures and hostilities.

### 5.2.3. Mobilizing a sense of humor to survive

The third strategy that emerged in the research that we want to highlight was the use of humor. Despite the variation in approaches to this topic in the literature, there are recurrent notes on its importance as a means of enabling communication, promoting relationships, alleviate tensions and manage emotions (DEAN and GREGORY, 2004).

Sosa (2007) points out that for a long time, including Aristotle and Freud, philosophy Western philosophy tries to explain the nature of humor. In this sense, the Argentine researcher finds similarities between the two philosophers and asserts that for both, humor has the mission to purify the soul through catharsis. That is, humor has the purpose of discharging tensions through an artifice in which reality is distanced, while re-presented against us, its contemplation being a weapon that postpones pain, while preparing us for face her: “I laugh, but I’m afraid of my father’s reaction when I come out” (Dalí).

Humor has the purpose of undoing the absolute character we seem to be, it takes us away from ourselves and we can look at the pettiness and ridiculousness of the world from afar, without losing faith in life (LIPPS, 1923). Humor aims to dismantle truths (GÓMEZ DE LA SERNA, 1988). For Acevedo (1966, p. 281) “humor comes from the melancholy of a soul person who can have fun with what saddens him.” This is strongly confirmed again in Dalí’s speech – “I laugh at myself acting macho!”. In the same vein, Lorca, despite the pain and fear present in the reality in which he lives, manages, in the game, acting with humor in the heterosexual simulacrum by expressing, “but I have fun in this pretense... my sister helps me by telling my father that I have a girlfriend. I stay laughing inside.”

Having humor means having a rebellious but understanding stance towards humanity: he opens everything up ("I have a huge poc inside this skinny body"), but forgives everything. A resentful person cannot have humor because that is the profile of the pessimist (ACEVEDO, 1966). In Audre's statement "I even have fun with it", a certain understanding and parsimony in the face of the need to repeat the "ritual" of "dressing up" every day. This perception was also reinforced by the use of the expression "fru-fru", said jokingly during the interview.

The strategies presented here, for us, go beyond the contexts analyzed. Unfortunately, this kind of strategic bodily self-deterritorialization of young people gays and lesbians, a core characteristic of the identity game, is a recurring feature in contexts heterocentric family members, which appears contradictory to the presupposition of this institution as a welcome and safe space.

### **5.3. Peripheral sexualities in the school context: a safe space?**

In this section, I choose to provide a more general analysis of the interviews. So I won't go in in specific speeches from the students, but we will conduct the debate in such a way that the person reading will make spontaneous references to the interviewees' reports.

There is a consensus that school should be the natural stage for differences. It is consensus that the Sexuality is one of the issues that has brought the most problems, challenges and concerns to actors/ actresses in everyday school life (FIGUERÓ, 2004). Unfortunately, there is also a consensus that the school has always been one of the strong agents of heterosexuality, acting for legibility and docilization of individuals in order to standardize them (FOUCAULT, 2012). Historically, the What we saw was the denial of the multiplicity of sexuality, genders and bodies in the most varied school environments (LOURO, 2007).

The big question of this research then arises: how can an environment that traditionally acts in favor of heteronormative hegemony, can be considered a safe place for gay and lesbian identities interviewed?

To answer this question, it is necessary to discuss some points. First, if makes it imperative to argue that there is an entire literature that deals with issues of sexuality and gender, in a generic way and more specifically in the school space (this, mostly, placed as a powerful tentacle of a hetero-hegemonic unity, supported by the patriarchal family model). Starting from Foucault's recommendations, drinking

of Freudian and Lacanian problematizations, breathing necessary feminisms, treading Butlerian postulates and queering looks, there are so many works, so much research and problematizations that it is even unwise to present a nominal list here.

It would be quite exhaustive. Without going into nominative aspects, I can bring some numbers to back up our argument.

In the Theses and Dissertations Catalog of Portal Capes, for example, for the term gender and sexuality, there is a record of 1,144,166 different works (789,092 dissertations master's degrees and 269,477 doctoral dissertations). The number increases when we look for the "education, gender and sexuality" triad, with the return of 1,144,419 surveys (789,270 dissertations and 269,544 theses) and for the more contextualized search "gender and sexuality in school", the result is even more robust 1,144,934 works (789,654 master's research and 269,642 theses).

Thus, the vast literature does not appear out of nowhere. A dense theoretical field composed of research, researchers and research groups contributes to the dissemination of knowledge which has precisely the deconstruction of the universality of subjects and the meaning of new hues. In a simple search, on the same pair "gender and sexuality", carried out in Directory of Research Groups at CNPq, we found nothing more, nothing less than 206 research groups<sup>12</sup> registered in Brazil.

Allied to this, in recent years, we have seen the flourishing of a strong performance by social movements that wage a battle for recognition and emancipation, emerging from the shadows, longing for visible lives, livable lives (BUTLER, 2016). In this sense, the philosopher postulates that there is no "political position" that does not make use of "theoretical premises even though the theory often emerges in abbreviated forms", that is, "in definitions that are maintained without critical examination, on premises about the field of action, and even about the very nature of action, in the field of politics" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 23): in the field in issue, academia and activism feed each other.

Arising from this process (perhaps there was a concomitance), in the previous decade to the parliamentary coup that took place in the country (*with the STF and everything*), which resulted in the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, several projects were implemented by different bodies, different secretariats, different ministries, in different spheres, focusing on demarginalization of non-hegemonic identities. The agglutination of these aspects discussed above results in a

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<sup>12</sup> The northeast region leads the ranking with 85 research groups, followed by the southeast region (56 groups), the south region (37 groups), the central-west region (18 groups) and the north region (10 groups). The groups are mostly linked to public universities. Consultation carried out on 08/15/2019: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/web/dgp>

large scope of knowledge that is disseminated and appropriated by different bodies that interact socially. Knowledge is in a network, everyone can manipulate and intervene in cooperative way, with no center or axis, being in the field of possibilities (BRITO ROCHA, 2005) and aiming to disseminate it. Alves and Pretto (2005), citing Deleuze and Guatarri state that this is a rhizomatic logic that is constructed from the diversity that permeates the subjects.

As can be concluded, the notion of world order outside of school (which often seems to still be in modernity) tends to be that of contemporary times (BONILLA, 2005), and *educational stakeholders*, who feed on the important emerging epistemology, they take her to the school grounds. In addition to curricula, lesson plans, planning, all important social themes are naturally brought into the school context. Education, even though many want it and work for it, is not immune to what happens around the world. around you.

Thus, the school, once at the crossroads of all these influences, starts to influence in society, as it opens up to the resignification of mechanistic conceptions about the thinking, knowledge and communication that permeate the educational system and all other social and political institutions, since in the contemporary worldview no system is isolated (BONILLA, 2005).

Therefore, feeling comfortable in the school space should not make us feel strange. O territory of tensions, conflicts and resistance also offers security to bodies dissonant. The precariousness of expression within the family, which is articulated along the lines of *don'task, don'ttell*<sup>13</sup>, reverse yourself in force in this organization. The knowledge that circulates in collectivity, interactions and a support network reflected by these processes mentioned here, provides the affirmation of specific identities.

This finding is perhaps largely responsible for the attacks on the entire educational system in recent years<sup>14</sup>. Conservatism has not been reacting for nothing. A feeling that something changed in Brazilian education provoked a wave of attacks religious segments and political entities that positioned themselves as moral champions, true

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<sup>13</sup> The expression *Don'task, don'ttell*, also known by the acronym DADT, refers to the law signed during the Bill Clinton administration in the United States. It was a coercive option adopted by the armed forces to accept homosexuals, as long as they did not admit their orientation. The expression is self-explanatory and represented the compulsory closet for LGBT bodies in the armed forces. It was revoked, at least in official terms, under Barack Obama's government in 2011.

<sup>14</sup> We watched in astonishment at a poorly conducted and unilateral debate in the formulation of various state and municipal plans throughout Brazil, in a kind of crusade against the so-called gender ideology. The debate was largely supported by the "school without party" program, which identified the school as a space for ideological indoctrination.

agents of heteronormative hegemony. At school, conservatism stakeholders they resist, they watch, they try, agonizingly, to control non-conforming people. They work for avoid inevitable cracks in a curriculum that guides “conformity and obedience” (SILVA, 2002, p. 78).

It's no use. “Sexuality will not leave school because it is part of the subjects, it is not something that can be turned off or something that can be undone” (LOURO, 1997, p. 81). A Surveillance cannot suffocate peripheral sexualities (much less genders dissidents). The school, historically disciplinary, becomes a space of resistance, insurance for political demands and for the most diverse social existences.

## 6. Final considerations

In this article, the objective was to analyze the experience of living non-sexual sexualities. hegemonic within the patriarchal family and in the school environment. A survey was conducted qualitative study based on individual interviews to narrate eight life stories, of three different realities, with a view to substantiating the proposal.

Therefore, based on the conceptualization of the identity game, the same as a survival metaphor for gay and lesbian actors/actresses, especially adolescents who are discovering their sexuality, an integral part of a construction greater identity that seeks stability and protection. The perception of oneself as a corporeality that escapes family expectations, leads individuals to enter into a dynamic identity that balances between the notion of *who I am* and *what my family expects from me*.

The data evidenced in the interviews allows us to affirm that the silencing around of sexuality and the meaning of compulsory heteronormativity lead individuals to practice of the identity game through strategies characteristic of the game, which prove to be as facilitators of survival in an oppressive family environment. On the other hand, the school, the despite all the conflicts, obstacles and clashes, it appears to be a safe space for experience of peripheral sexualities.

As limitations of this work, I point out that a socioeconomic profile could have been worked on, since, in addition to distinct families, we have three educational realities many different. It would also be interesting to discuss sexualities and

intersectionalities. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the emptiness felt in relation to the other letters in the acronym (LGBT). Such limitations can be exhausted in other research.

Therefore, based on what has been raised here, it is appropriate to deepen the discussions on sexuality in the family and at school, so that identity expressions outside the heteronormativity are not muzzled, that they have audible voices in those referred to and different spaces and don't feel forced to play a game that, in truth, you don't want to play.

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