



SEXUALITIES, BODIES AND MASCULINITIES, THROUGH THE SPEECHES OF PORTUGUESE TEENAGERS

Ana I. Silva¹, Cristina P. Vieira²

¹DCSG, Open University, Portugal, CEMRI/SCD-Uab Lisboa, anai.silva@uab.pt

²DCSG, Open University, Portugal, CIEG/ISCSP-ULisboa, cristina.vieira@uab.pt

Introduction

The body is thought as a mandatory place in the construction of masculinity. (Connell, 1995). In the current context, understandings based on body models prevail, whose system sex/gender/sexuality is conceived as unidirectional and binary –through hegemonic masculinity (Vieira, 2020). In a life stage where the body suffers several modifications, the body is thought as a key-element in the way that it is constructed and known, as they perceive themselves and relate themselves (McClelland, 2014; Silva, 2004).

Objective to understand and reflect, through the speeches of young Portuguese, the logics of the body, sexuality and gender, through the problematization of masculinity.

Design and Method

Investigation of an exploratory character, adopting a qualitative methodology, from the Focus Group (FG) technique. Seven FG were accomplished – with the total participation of 52 young boys and girls. Six images were presented, which served as guidance for the discussion in the areas of the construction of the body, identity and sexual orientation.

Results

The speeches of these young people show that we continue to embed in bodies understandings based in rigid binary models of sexual gender, which are engrained in nature and biology. The predominance of hegemonic masculinity is understood, based in signs of an understanding of emotional weakness: - “... **criying to men is like a sign of weakness...**” (Mário, 14 years old).

In these young speeches, a rigid vision of the body based in opposite definitions of what it means to be masculine and feminine (sex) prevails, and of what it means to be masculine and feminine (gender), guided by a binary sexuality: - “... **bisexual!? ... I’m not entirely sure of what it is?... You don’t like neither one nor the other??...**” (Tiago, 15 years old).

These young people understand sex as a biological and objective unquestionable reality. Normative sexuality is one and only: heterosexuality. “... **I think it’s disgusting one man kissing another man. Gays are unnatural**” (Daniel, 14 years old), even though there is an opening for different sexualities: “... **I have gay friends. There’re no differences.**” (Lara, 15 years old).

Conclusions

This study, by problematizing a set of complex speeches, elaborated by young people around the idea of body and masculinities, comes to interrupt a set of socially imposed silences, more or less hidden, giving visibility to some changes which, through a critical way, call into question the value of hegemonic masculinity.

References

- Connell, R.(1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McClelland S.I., Tolman D.L. (2014) Adolescent Sexuality. In: Teo T. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*. Springer, New York, NY.
- Silva, A. (2004). *Desenvolvimento de competências Sociais na Adolescência*. Lisboa: Climepsi.
- Vieira, C. P. (2020) Portuguese Youth’s Discourses On Masculinity: Broken Silences. In Enuguix, B. & Vieira, C.P. (Eds). *Sexualities, Gender And Violence: A View From The Iberian Peninsula* (pp. 113-128). Nova Science Publishers.