


The schooling narrative of a trans woman in northwestern São Paulo

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This article highlights part of the results of a master's degree research in education, developed at the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul UEMS – Paranaíba/MS Unit. It aims to present and analyze the schooling report of Samantha¹, a trans woman from the Northwest of São Paulo, about education and transsexuality. To achieve this objective, a qualitative methodology with a post-critical approach was used through an in-depth semi-structured interview. The results of the interview reveal several points of tension and conflict in relation to a set of heteronormative mechanisms at school, such as experiences of rejection and exclusion from both family and school and the negative consequences of these factors on their life trajectory, processes of subjectivation and identification.

Keywords: Memory. Trans. Exclusion. Family. School.

Narrativa de escolarização de uma trans no Noroeste Paulista

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta parte dos resultados de uma pesquisa de mestrado em educação, desenvolvida junto à Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul UEMS – Unidade de Paranaíba/MS. O objetivo é apresentar e analisar o relato de escolarização de Samantha, uma mulher trans do Noroeste Paulista, abordando questões de educação e transexualidade. Para cumprir esse objetivo, foi utilizada uma metodologia qualitativa de abordagem pós-crítica, por meio de uma entrevista em profundidade semiestruturada. Os resultados da entrevista revelam vários pontos de tensão e conflito em relação a um conjunto de mecanismos heteronormativos na escola, incluindo experiências de rejeição e exclusão tanto por parte da família quanto da escola, e as consequências negativas desses fatores em sua trajetória de vida, processos de subjetivação e identificação.

Palavras-chave: Memória. Trans. Exclusão. Família. Escola.

1 Introduction

¹ Despite her ethical and scientific integrity, Samantha authorized the use of her name.

This article presents part of the results of a master's research project in Education entitled “School Management Practices and the Use of the Social Name as a Fundamental Right in Public Schools of the State Network of a Region of São Paulo”, developed at the Postgraduate Program in Education of the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UEMS) - Paranaíba/MS Unit. The research was carried out within the Center for Studies and Research in Anti-Racist Education, Diversity and Human Rights (NEPEADDH-UEMS), with approval from the Ethics Committee for Research with Human Beings of the university, registered under CAEE 53016621.3.0000.8030.

This study addresses the issue of the exclusion of trans people in the school environment, within the family and in society, using as a backdrop the accounts of a trans woman from the northwest of São Paulo (1980s and 1990s), identified by her social name Samantha. The purpose of the study is to identify: i) the situations of transphobia that trans people experience after entering the school environment; ii) the reasons why this exclusion occurs; and iii) the relationship between trans people and their gender identity.

When the topic of education is debated, one of the focuses of the discussion is the sex-gender dynamics, which are (re)produced all the time in school spaces (Braz *et al.*, 2020). This issue is closely related to the dilemmatic place that the sexuality of girls, boys and young people has occupied in the contemporary world, making sexuality the object of continuous surveillance and modeling by the adult world. This is a traditional conception based on the figure of the student as an uncompromising subject who must be trained, instructed and corrected towards an ideal of adult life.

Along these lines, school dynamics cannot escape the establishment of binary regimes of sexual politics, which are based on the universalization of heterosexuality as a generic body-sex model (Lima, 2020). In fact, the formal, hidden and omitted curriculum, by shaping the meanings of the body and sexuality, configures a school culture (Bartholomaeus; Riggs, 2018). These meanings are usually accompanied by mechanisms of exclusion, repression and silencing of dissident sexualities in educational spaces.

The construction of gender identity manifests itself in childhood through self-knowledge and the exploration of one's own body. According to Gavilán (2018), sexual differences are related to the environment in which the child develops, since parents act differently depending on the child's sex. Such behavior reinforces the gender issue and the identification process, which allows the acquisition of roles developed through adult reinforcement. In other words, this process - which can take place during adolescence or adulthood - influences awareness and personality development, contributing to the formation of psychosexual maturity, interest in sexuality and sexual identity. Therefore, these aspects allow the articulation between the sexual and the psychosocial, giving rise to personal identity. According to Machado, Almeida and Santini (2021), in the particular case of transvestites and transsexuals, the psychosocial process is limited.

Faced with this scenario, the challenge posed by Basílio (2020) is not only to listen to and make visible those boys, girls and young people who do not always fit into heterosexuality or gender normativity, but also to understand how they build their spaces of struggle and confront the cisheteroterrorist logic in everyday school life. This challenge involves an approach to life experience, understood as the way in which each student articulates different logics of action in the school world and produces a subjectivity in terms of their positions, tensions and configurations that escape the totalitarian control of the school institution. Within this logic, it is crucial to pay attention to the ways in which the student body acts from an attitude of indolence and resistance to the forms arranged in their body, gender and sexuality as a mechanism for building their own freedom.

The purpose of this article is to make visible the tensions and resistance of trans people, which stem from their own way of living and thinking about their subjectivity in environments where body-sex-gender binarism predominates as the norm. The aim is not to defend an academic messianism, but to elucidate and dialog with a reality that is erupting in the social world and in educational spaces. To this end, in this article, when presenting the story of Samantha's schooling, a trans woman from the northwest of São Paulo, on education and transsexuality, we chose to use a qualitative methodology based on a semi-structured in-depth interview.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 22), “qualitative methodology is characterized by an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its objects of study, which means that phenomena are investigated in their natural contexts, seeking to understand the meanings that people attribute to them”. As reinforced by Bauer and Gaskell (2017, p. 67):

the semi-structured in-depth interview is a valuable method in qualitative research, as it allows the interviewer to explore complex themes and issues flexibly, while maintaining a focus on the main topics, offering a combination of structure and freedom to delve deeper into relevant aspects of the study.

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2 Transgenderism as a phenomenon

According to Correa (2017, p. 6), “transgender is a global term that defines people whose gender identity or behavior does not conform to that generally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.” For Fernandes and Duque (2021), the expression “transgender” refers to the way in which individuals communicate their gender identity through their behavior or physical characteristics. Oliveira (2021) defines the term as an umbrella category that includes, for example, transsexuals, transvestites and drag queens.

Transgenderism, as Silva (2020) explains, breaks with the binary conception of gender, through which society divides what is male and female based on gender roles, affecting the psychosocial development of individuals. In this way, transgenderism is a phenomenon that constitutes a transgression of traditional concepts of gender, i.e. the subjectivity of gender identity challenges the concept of “gender” as a category that regulates society. This new scenario emerges from the perspectives on gender identity that have been established, as well as the importance of diversity worldwide, which is why it has become an object of study.

In the field of Social Anthropology, the concept of “transgender” encompasses individuals and groups who challenge the more traditional dual gender roles, since they go beyond the limits of the generic identity commonly assigned. This definition is established by determining the basic criteria for differentiating between the sexes, the specific representations that guide sexual behavior and how these representations are experienced

by social actors in situations and sociocultural contexts that are always specific (Souza, 2018).

2.1 Building a transgender identity

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The literature reviewed so far suggests that the construction of a transgender identity is an extremely important topic for investigating, deepening and analyzing the psychosocial development processes of the transgender person, who integrates, into their individual development, the connotations associated with their action of belonging to an emerging social category that breaks with social expectations. For this reason (as we will see later), transgender people are subject to sanctions expressed in their daily lives and in their interactions with objects, people and groups in their environment (Périco, 2021).

In the process of socialization, Sousa (2018) points out that transgender people internalize their own identity traits, as well as behavioural patterns related to social gender practices. In the case of transgender people, there is a latent dilemma (man-woman and sex-gender), which involves developing their personality according to their gender expression or their biological sex, i.e. the person understands their gender identity according to their development over the years and, based on this understanding, builds their personality and begins a process of gender transition.

In fact, Cánepa (2018) mentions that some transgender people have a gender identity that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth, which is why they face an exclusionary society - whose conception of gender is binary - and are therefore perceived as violating cultural norms and, consequently, relegated and discriminated against. These factors have a direct impact on the psychosocial development of these people, often resulting in psychological problems. In this sense, both biological determinism and the adversity of the social context have adverse effects on the mental and emotional health of transvestites and transsexuals, which can lead to episodes of anxiety, depression, irrationality, attention problems and even suicide attempts throughout their lives.

Fernandes and Duque (2018) reinforce that the psychological and emotional aspect of some trans people is the result of the constant discrimination they suffer in the family and social environment. In addition, the lack of support from society has been associated with psychological health disorders. In Silva's view (2023, p. 100),

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[...] when social rules are broken, homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia arise, situations that represent a social terror suffered by the victim, almost akin to hatred. As these transsexuals and transvestites do not fit into the binary norm (man/woman, male/female, penis/vagina), they suffer prejudice and discrimination from other groups.

Transphobia, as established, manifests itself in various contexts of trans people's lives, including public institutions, family environments, workplaces, the legal system and everyday activities in the public space. In Basílio's view (2020), transphobia denies the gender expressions and identities experienced by trans people, attacking their autonomy and dignity by obstructing and nullifying human rights such as access to health, work and education, as well as the right to identity, family, life and freedom.

According to Franco (2018), transgender people point out that identity is also a subjective process and depends on the point of view of those who experience it. However, it is possible to build a minimum common identity, that is, an agreement on identity emerges when a shared subjectivity is built. When this happens, we can talk about culture or subculture. The position of transsexual people who formulate a double and contradictory demand is paradoxical: on the one hand, they place themselves beyond biology, maintaining the primacy of symbolic recognition; on the other, they demand a modification of their bodies, looking to biology for proof of the veracity of their discourses, demonstrating the insufficiency of any symbolic reference.

According to Louro (2018), working on the issue of transsexuality

[...] is to work with people who sometimes bring up issues that we don't normally review: the gender system that we construct and manage on a daily basis, our vocabulary, being very careful with the sexual attribution of our words, asking ourselves about our links with our biological sex, in the mention that appears on our birth certificate or our identity document, the social name with our feeling of belonging to either sex, with our sexuality (Louro, 2018, p. 53).

According to Louro (2018), in order to tackle a subject as complex as the relationship between gender and body image, it is necessary to resort to new keys, new models of knowledge and new metaphors. By reviewing the imposed dichotomous models, it is possible to identify innovative practices that are actually taking place in society and culture. In order to do this, studies are needed that make it possible to account for i) the diversity and dynamism of trans people's gender identity, ii) their ruptures and transgressions, and iii) the interrelationship between specific representations and practices, as well as socio-political contexts and experiences, which consider macro and micro contexts and the modifying action of these people's experience.

Therefore, the fundamental role of psychologists and the multidisciplinary team is undoubtedly to help trans people to live comfortably with their differences and gender identity, in order to avoid the process of cure or de-transition. In this sense, Oliveira (2023, p. 261) points out that “gender de-transition refers to the process by which a person who has undergone a gender transition decides to return to their original gender identity or opt for a non-conforming gender expression”.

2.2 Recognition of the social name of trans people

Currently, the recognition, guarantee, defense, protection and promotion of the human rights of trans people, according to Carmo, Fumes and Lira (2021), have a legal basis at international and national level, as well as institutions, public policies and actions that should be widely known. This is fundamental not only to make these rights enforceable, but also to make them visible, dignify them and guarantee the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental freedoms, access to opportunities for well-being, personal and collective development, and respect in treatment.

In the international human rights framework, there are clear and forceful definitions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transvestite and intersex (LGBTQIA+) people. According to Braz *et al.* (2020), as these definitions were incorporated into the debate on human rights and as part of social and civilizational changes, reference to the situation of

these population groups began to be made in declarations and special procedures of the United Nations system and international organizations. In these documents, the living conditions of these people are considered, as well as the lack, reduction or impediment they have in accessing and exercising their human rights.

As mentioned by Fernandes and Duque (2018, p. 31), while the term “trans” refers to “a person who identifies with a different sex or who expresses their sexual identity differently from the sex they were assigned at birth”, the social name is “one that a person uses due to their gender identity and which differs from their registered name with regard to their first or given name.”

Among the most remote antecedents linked to the issue of the human rights of trans people is the International Declaration on Gender Rights, approved and adopted on August 28, 1993 by the participants of the Second International Conference on Transgender Legislation and Employment Policy, held in Houston, Texas. This Declaration includes the right to claim one's gender identity, the free expression of gender identity and practice, self-determination and modification of one's body, as well as the right to a competent and professional medical service (Machado, Almeida and Santini, 2021).

Historically, in practice, Basílio (2020) clarifies that cisgender people - those who identify with the sex assigned at birth - have no legal problems related to name and gender at work, in education and in health. In contrast, the situation is transversely different for trans people. As their social name and gender expression do not correspond to what is indicated on their identity document, they have problems accessing education, health and work, as well as suffering various situations of discrimination and exclusion (Correa, 2017).

For Silva (2023), the social name of trans people is directly linked to their gender identity. So how can this problem be solved while the change of name and registered sex is not carried out? The author points out that,

[...] In Brazil, this discussion began with resolution 1.482/1997 of the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM), which authorizes transsexualization procedures in Brazil, and the first transsexualization surgery performed by the Hospital das Clínicas of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in the state of São Paulo

in 1998. Furthermore, this discussion arose within social movements and extended to the field of social sciences (Silva, 2023, p. 32).

In this way, the aforementioned resolution initiates the regulatory framework for recognition and establishes a general mandate against discrimination based on gender identity. According to Souza (2018), this procedure undoubtedly represents a major milestone for the trans community, as it guarantees the protection of transgender people's rights and allows them to use their social name. Furthermore, Silva (2023, p. 59) adds that,

[...] in 2016, Presidential Decree No. 8.727/2016 was published, regulating the use of social names by transvestite women and promoting, within the federal public administration, the recognition of gender identity for trans women.

Based on this decree, trans people are legally protected both in the use of their social name and in their gender identity and expression. For the author, this procedure extends the rights of this group in public and private bodies and departments in Brazil. In this context, the decree includes:

I - social name - designation by which the transvestite or transsexual person identifies themselves and is socially recognized; and

II - gender identity - dimension of a person's identity that concerns how they relate to representations of masculinity and femininity and how this translates into their social practice, without being necessarily related to the sex assigned at birth. (Brasil, Decreto Presidencial Nº 8.727, 2016).

These legislative innovations guarantee and regulate the recognition of gender identity and the social name, moving from the social environment to the realm of legal regulation. However, in some states, there was already legislation in force to this effect, such as Law 10.406/02, contained in article 16 of the Brazilian Civil Code, which states that “everyone has the right to their name, including their first and last names”, in other words, it is a legal provision that regulates the use of the social name. The Presidential Decree therefore reinforces this right, incorporating into the legislation a catalog of situations that provides that any differentiation is discriminatory (Silva, 2023).

The Magna Carta, as Silva (2023) describes, guarantees any social being the right to equality, citizenship and respect. For this reason, trans women are also guaranteed the right to change their name. Thus, it is the right of every trans person, if they so wish, to demand to be called by their social name and to have their gender identity respected.

3 Methodology

The methodological path describes the main aspects of the study, such as the research approach, the interviewees who provided the information, the data collection instrument, the data analysis technique and the ethical aspects of the research.

In this sense, the research was a qualitative, descriptive-explanatory study, carried out during 2023. According to Minayo and Gerreiro (2014), descriptive-explanatory qualitative research emphasizes reflexivity as a fundamental practice, enabling researchers to reflect on their own influences throughout the investigative process and thus ensure a more detailed and contextualized analysis of the information collected.

To this end, a narrative approach was used, with an emphasis on investigating how the young trans woman Samantha recounts her school experience and her life experience. The participants were selected through intentional sampling (Gomes and Silveira, 2017), prioritizing inclusion and exclusion criteria related to the research objectives. As for the information production technique, narrative production was used, which involves the construction of a text based on the dialog between researcher and participant (Souza-Júnior *et al.*, 2017) about a particular phenomenon studied. This approach recognizes the researcher's active role in the production of knowledge and the construction of their own narrative.

Along these lines, the procedure consisted of constructing a text corresponding to the narrative that comprised a period for the interview. Therefore, far from trying to achieve a faithful reflection of reality, the results outline a dialogical, reflective and performative process of the reported experience.

After the virtual meeting, in order to produce a story linked to what the protagonist had said, the research relied on the recording to shape the product. The ideas that emerged during the meeting were systematized and interconnected, and then the different experiences were organized chronologically. When writing the narrative production, we tried to preserve the same words spoken by the interviewee.

Once the textual transcription of the data had been completed, the narrative was sent to Samantha by e-mail so that she could review it. The interviewee was asked to check that the narrative was a reflection of her experiences and meanings so that, if necessary, the story could be modified, eliminated or expanded. The narrative production was approved by the participant in the first instance and her approval was made available for publication as part of the Master's Dissertation. Finally, the research was approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee, ensuring that the principles of confidentiality and anonymity of the participant were respected. An informed consent form was used to clarify the conditions of the research.

4 Results and Discussion

Guaranteeing the right to education for all is a legal responsibility of the state, which implies guaranteeing access and maintaining a safe educational path, respecting human dignity and meeting all the individual and collective needs of girls, boys and young people in the country (Souza, 2018).

Currently, it is understood that the right to gender identity and expression, as well as the right to sexual orientation, are part of educational rights and have been incorporated through a gradual process of acceptance and appreciation of LGBTQIA+ boys, girls and young people in school contexts. This implies, for example, the emergence of new legal provisions on gender and sexuality, which promote a real openness to the recognition of sexual diversity by school institutions. Moreover, this involves a reorientation around school coexistence, in which teachers must take on a fundamental role in inclusive education in every sense.

Among the stories and conversations narrated by the teachers, there is a converging point related to a rupture in their personal and/or professional histories, which impacts on the configuration of their individual identities and/or on their teaching actions in the face of the phenomenon we are studying. In other words, thanks to the experiences these professionals have had with other people, they have been able to perceive their positive or negative, personal and/or pedagogical dispositions in relation to LGBTQIA+ issues and their manifestations at school.

In this context, according to the interview conducted with transgender student Samantha, the study presents her account of her experiences, capturing beliefs, perceptions, questions, projections and, undoubtedly, emotions and feelings that arise from living with the surrounding reality:

[...] I left for Europe/Spain because I had a lot of problems with my family and I still have problems with them today because I'm a trans woman. People don't understand that the fact that I'm a trans woman doesn't change my way of being at all, I'm still the same and I've just changed my physical body to be in harmony with my head and physical body, because many people meddle in our lives, to manipulate things the way they want them to happen, in the heteronormative pattern, as happens to me in my family and in my surroundings, so I decided to leave for Europe and there, I found my place. I returned to Brazil in 2022 and stayed here for almost a year. I tried to adapt here, but I couldn't and I went back to Europe/Spain. (Samantha, 2023).

Samantha's (2023) first statement is relevant because it situates her life trajectory within the family. The “home”, which should have been a place of security, love and affection, became an environment of rejection and misunderstanding of her gender identity, resulting in isolation and lack of communication. In addition, the interviewee reports that during her childhood, adolescence and youth, she doesn't remember any situation in which she received support from family members.

Next, when asked about the recognition of the social name for trans women, Samantha points out that:

The social name for us transsexual women is very important because we start with the physical/body change and then we need to change our name. When we go to the doctor, a man's name is called and a woman's is raised. I'm very embarrassed by this situation, some people are more embarrassed and others less, and some

even stop doing certain things in their daily lives so as not to have to go through this embarrassment. In our world, we know our friends' first names, but they never say it and when that happens, it's the same thing as belittling the person, it's a situation that creates confusion, fights with your friend by calling her by her first name, so it's very important to have a social name (Samantha, 2023).

The social name symbolizes a trajectory in the life of a trans person (Jesus, 2012; Bento, 2014; Santos, 2017; Correa, 2017; Franco, 2018) and, for this reason, it is disrespectful and cruel not to refer to this person by their chosen name. This also reflects the idea of limited citizenship, when we attribute to others the responsibility of validating who we are or not. According to Bento (2014, p. 167), “limited citizenship implies a double denial: it denies both the human condition and that of citizen of individuals who carry certain marks on their bodies.”

With regard to issues of transphobia, the participant was asked whether she had experienced any kind of prejudice in the public educational institutions where she studied and, if so, whether she had found a welcoming environment on the part of the management team, coordinators and teachers. In this scenario, she mentions that:

At the time I was studying in Brazil/Fernandópolis-SP, I did suffer from transphobia at school from an early age and, at that time, I didn't know what bullying and transphobia meant, but I went through it all in the school environment. It started in my own home, I was bullied, I was beaten up for everything and kept quiet, because if I said anything or went to explain to my father what had happened at school, I would be beaten up again at home, so I endured it all alone, I endured it all until I went through puberty, but I became a closed person, I didn't like to tell anyone about my things because everything I did was wrong, I couldn't play with my friends because it was wrong, if I went to school I was wrong, if I got beaten up at school I was wrong and I'd get beaten up again at home, and so I closed myself off and couldn't find people like me who were transgender, because our group is small and it's hard to find other people like us to support us at school. I never gave any reason to suffer all this, I was always an exemplary student in the classroom, I always excelled in my subjects and even so I was the laughing stock of my classmates and even though some teachers at the time took sides to help me, it did little good (Samantha, 2023).

According to the report, Samantha's transition story begins in childhood, since at that stage there were already the first manifestations of feeling like she was in the 'wrong body', as she herself describes it. After discovering her trans identity, she began to suffer bullying within her own family, through physical and psychological attacks from her parents.

Samantha probably identifies that she experienced bullying because that was how she understood it at the time. In light of this, it is important to note that bullying and transphobia represent different situations and should not be confused. Bullying is characterized by situations of repeated physical or verbal violence against the victim, and usually occurs in the school environment. Transphobia, on the other hand, is directed at people who don't fit the heterosexual, binary or cisheteronormative pattern, and can happen both in the school environment and in other social spaces.

For Samantha, trans women have faced so much humiliation and physical and psychological aggression that they now find it difficult to establish relationships of trust with other people, including those in their families. Because of this reality, this group is difficult to reach and, in order to reach them, she emphasizes the need for an intermediary, responsible for creating a connection between the victim and others. This is corroborated by Zerbinati and Bruns (2018), who point out that 56% of trans people have attempted suicide at some point - especially during adolescence - as a result of the discrimination they have experienced, whether in everyday family life or in the social system as a whole.

In order to re-establish family ties, the interviewee says she returned to Brazil. As Samantha reports:

In 2022, my goal was to return to Brazil for good and start my life again here in Fernandópolis/SP, but as soon as I realized that nothing had changed, that my family still had the same way of thinking as before, that my father, mother, aunts and uncles hadn't evolved, I decided to return to Europe/Spain, because there I have quality of life. In Europe/Spain it's very different in terms of social acceptance, because there the politicians aren't so corrupt and when citizens pay their taxes in Spain they get rights guaranteed by the state regardless of their sexual orientation. In Europe, society is more welcoming and if the parents themselves don't report that their daughter or son is being bullied at school or in society, the neighbors themselves will report it, as well as the principals, coordinators and teachers being very active, because one of them will report it and protect the young person and it won't go unnoticed like in Brazil and the TV media will report all these cases on television and the authorities will also take action. Transsexual women who want to have sex reassignment surgery and can't afford it, the state pays for all the treatment and she gets it for free through Spain's social security system. (Samantha, 2023).

According to the description, Samantha was unsuccessful in her attempt at family reconciliation. In fact, family is a challenge for transgender people, for

the heterosexual family is a standard model that influences the organization of other families. In fact, much of the criticism of the centrality that gay marriage has acquired in recent years refers to the reproduction, in the discourses of gay and lesbian couples, of the heteronormative family structure (Bento, 2012, p. 281).

According to Toledo and Teixeira Filho (2013, p. 383), when the family perpetuates the norm, there is a total silencing of any discussion about sexual and gender diversity, generating stigmas that can lead to segregation “[...] in a symbolic or real way, and even to physical violence and, in extreme cases, murder”. For this reason, when LGBTI+ people go through the process of family exclusion, they form deep bonds with each other and their support networks begin to strengthen.

On her return to Brazil, Samantha had her name changed and, according to her, the process was smooth. In Guarani d'Oeste/SP, her hometown, she changed her personal documents and in Curitiba, the capital of Paraná, she changed her name on her academic diploma. Thus,

My name change process in Brazil was very quick and without bureaucracy, both in the city of Guarani D`Oeste/SP where I changed my civil registration name, and in the city of Curitiba/PR where I changed my name on my graduation diploma, I was treated very well and the process was also very quick and effective. People should stop wanting to classify other people in order to inferiorize them in their own class, because that's not good for anyone. Transphobia is changing because everyone will have someone from the LGBTQIA+ collective in their family, that's inevitable, so the world has started to change as a result. Today, my biggest problem and clash is with my father, because he always says that if he has a queer son, he'll put him on the wall and kill him, and he still thinks that today. Another example of transphobia I experienced recently was when I arrived in Brazil, my mother and my aunt still called me by my male name, so I asked them that I would like to be called Samantha and little by little they changed their minds, fortunately. When I came to Brazil in 2022, I didn't suffer any kind of prejudice in the country or in Fernandópolis/SP, I always went out with my dresses, my necklines, and I was never disrespected by anyone, in the past I was afraid of leaving the house like this and being beaten up, being killed, but today fortunately Brazil is very different and is improving day by day (Samantha, 2023).

With regard to her social name, Samantha has encountered no obstacles in making the necessary change. However, with regard to family issues, she mentions the presence

of hegemonic and toxic masculinity in her relationship with her father, who takes a rejective stance towards her transsexuality. She also points out that she has not faced prejudice from the local population, which she believes reflects a greater acceptance of being trans nowadays compared to the past.

From the perspective of Gavilán (2018), the construction of gender identity manifests itself in childhood through self-knowledge and the exploration of one's own body. According to the author, most trans people live in a kind of arcadia during childhood, i.e. an exclusionary and discriminatory place. When puberty arrives, this reality becomes completely accentuated, turning into a hostile, regulated and standardized situation. This same feeling of rejection continues in relation to school, aggravated by the constant situations of violence that have marked their educational path.

According to Maganto, Peris & Garaigordobil (2018), trans minors are a highly vulnerable group, as their families tend to reproduce the stigmatizing view of sexuality that society has established. Cánepa (2018) explains that when a boy or girl discovers that there is no agreement between their biological sex and their gender identity, this identity becomes rooted in the wrong body. In trying to escape this situation, the young person faces constant verbal violence that will mark their entire life.

Gavilán (2018) adds that when there is no family support, trans minors keep to themselves a handful of emotions and feelings that can lead to deep depression. When guardians don't understand the gender behaviors of their sons and daughters, exclusion occurs and, as a consequence, families break up. In cases like this, the family needs to guide and respect the individualities of these minors, rather than imposing what patriarchal society has already influenced for decades.

Finally, for Louro (2018), identity is a vital aspect in the development of any person's personality. When this identity is not respected, transgender children and adolescents face problems of socialization, belonging and acceptance.

From this perspective, reducing family rejection, according to Braz *et al.* (2020), makes a big difference in the lives of transgender people, promoting a better quality of life. Family acceptance is therefore a protective tool against suicide, depression and substance

abuse. Furthermore, Zerbinati and Bruns (2018) mention that when there is family acceptance, awareness spreads among other people to accept and include those who are seen as different.

In view of the above, it is necessary to challenge the injustices and inequalities present in the trajectory of this group's lives. To this end, formal education becomes a means of attaining knowledge. This environment of resistance and emancipation has allowed Samantha to build her own story, since, on completing higher education, she sought continuous learning, decent employment and financial independence. Today, she has become a role model for other trans women and the LGBTQIA+ population.

When it comes to violence against trans students, the school must use different mechanisms to combat this form of exclusion. Often, teachers and government agencies minimize the experiences of bullying, giving derogatory sexual jokes a cultural character. However, the school must have an explicit perception of the mechanisms of discrimination that operate in society and how these same mechanisms are reproduced at school. The lack of intervention by the teaching staff and pedagogical management generates a kind of institutional helplessness (Oliveira, 2021).

In this sense, Junqueira (2019) states that

[...] a public educational policy with inclusive aims must seek to subvert the hegemonic values and power relations that have guided the building of a school for the few. Equally, it needs to invest in debating the criteria we usually adopt to evaluate and classify the world, things, people and their attitudes. For this reason, it must also turn its attention to the dialogical reconstruction of rules and ways of living together, as well as continually rethinking curricula and devising new ways of teaching and learning. Systematic, consistent and sustained policies to promote cultural and political recognition of the legitimacy of the expression of sexual diversity imply the empowerment of sexually dissident and marginalized individuals and groups. They also require the construction or deepening of dialogue and the forging of alliances, which are indispensable for dealing with possible manifestations of resistance on the part of dominant sectors and processes of updating or inventing forms of oppression, including among discriminated groups (Junqueira, 2019, p. 163-164).

Peres (2009) highlights the difficulties that schools face when dealing with issues related to gender identities and sexuality, especially in the case of transgender people. These difficulties result in social exclusion through violence or negligence on the part of the

school institution in the face of the seriousness of these acts. Junqueira (2009) stresses that the aim is to reduce the processes of exclusion and violence against trans women, who are often exposed to intimidation, harassment, a lack of welcome and disqualifications in the school environment.

Franco (2014) confirms that schools are one of the main social institutions that reinforce gender and sexuality norms, making them a crucial space for raising awareness about accepting differences and creating inclusive strategies. However, the education system is flawed, as schools often opt for neutrality instead of resisting, dialoguing and supporting trans people, informing them of their rights and ensuring their permanence. To avoid such situations, it is essential that trans women know their rights, although the practice is still marked by violence and exclusion, reflecting a social model of harassment that they face on a daily basis. For Alves and Moreira (2015), violence at school is

[...] that which stems from internal factors, from subordinate relationships between teachers, students and other education professionals. This is known as school violence. Analyzed from this point of view, the denial of bathroom use to trans students can be situated in an interstice between violence in and of the school, since gender positions are learned inside and outside the school. In this sense, it is essential to implement public policies that give everyone the right to safely use public toilets at school (Alves; Moreira, 2015, p. 65).

In order to ensure that trans women remain in schools, it is necessary to demand public policies and effective actions from school management to combat violence inside and outside the school environment. In 2020, reporter Ana Luisa Basílio, from Carta Capital magazine, discussed the challenges schools face in ensuring the rights of trans students. She highlights the importance of broadening inclusion and overcoming transphobia, as well as the crucial role of management in transforming school culture.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this study is to present the story of Samantha's schooling, a trans woman from the northwest of São Paulo, addressing issues related to education and

transsexuality. From this account and the theoretical discussion developed, it is understood that educating for non-discrimination necessarily involves the inclusion of gender issues throughout society, since ignorance and prejudice in relation to gender diversity and sexual diversity are alarming in various environments, such as family, school, academic and professional. As the view of human beings based on their biology prevails, the invisibility, pathologization and exclusion of those who feel alien to the construction of traditional and cisheteropatriarchal social practices becomes increasingly latent.

As far as the family is concerned, trans children and adolescents who do not receive the support and acceptance of their parents or guardians suffer from the perception of their true identity and the development of their real personality, culminating in psychological and socialization problems.

As for the school world, the school is one of the main social institutions that reinforces gender and sexuality norms, making it a crucial space for raising awareness about the acceptance of differences and for creating inclusive strategies. For schools to play this inclusive role, it is essential that they are equipped with information and open to dialog and reflection, so as not to become a space for the spread of transphobia. It is therefore necessary for school management to guarantee trans women dignified conditions to move around within the school environment, enabling them to stay, succeed and complete their studies, as is guaranteed to any citizen. In this sense, validating the use of the social name on documents guarantees rights such as freedom and equality.

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