

Nude Leaking: from moralization and gendered violence to empowerment

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Abstract *The “sphere of intimacy” is increasingly mediated by a socio-technical network inlaid with new meanings and readings in love and seduction games. In these affective-digital exchanges, nudes are essential in linking interest between partners, also setting spaces for power struggles and violence. This work aims to analyze the prevailing moralities, the emotional management, and the inclusion of the body in affirming autonomy and diversity identified in the statements of young people whose intimate contents were disseminated on the internet without their consent. We analyzed 20 videos of young YouTubers who had such an experience from the Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. The statements carry discursive forces of “venting”, “testimony”, and, above all, “counseling”. The narrated experiences highlight the dynamics of disseminating these intimate contents and how they differently affect the representations of face and social recognition of boys and girls. Handling suffering techniques vary between resignation in the face of patriarchal order and overcoming and autonomy discourses. We also highlight the initiatives of these young people in managing intimate images and a political stance on the use and expression of their bodies.*

Key words *Violence, Gender, Privacy, Social network, Internet*

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Introduction

The “sphere of intimacy”, recognized as fluid spaces for the enunciation of the Self¹, is increasingly mediated by a socio-technical network, covered by new meanings and readings in the love and seduction games experienced by digital means². In this context, the “presentation of the Self” will be performed on the body and digital borders in a connective culture whose premises of “spectacularization of the Self”³ and hyperexposure⁴ are emblematic marks.

The internet is increasingly incorporated, embodied, and mundane⁵, mediating most interactions and experiences, including those related to exercising sexuality. Countless apps promote sexual/sentimental encounters, channels, and tutorial programs to “teach” how to behave and perform acceptable sexual scripts according to the parameters of reference groups, and many others to question and deconstruct such models. Other sites and pages promote practices with identity contours, among so many erotic-sensual manifestations that hold a place on the internet⁶. After all, as Lins⁷ reiterates, the internet can be considered a battlefield about ways of living and defining sexuality. It is an arena for affirming diversity, whether of non-hegemonic bodies and sexualities, waging fierce disputes of inclusion, recognition, and acceptance⁸ in the different media and platforms.

However, the vast production, circulation, and exchange of erotic/sexy videos and pictures of the naked body or intimate sexual interaction with a partner will be treated by a “moral pair”⁹ that, on the one hand, condemns women who express and experience their sexuality, and on the other hand, are tolerant and permissive to the manifestations of male desires^{6,9,10}. Against this backdrop, the debate on the non-consensual dissemination of intimate content highlights the limits and possible agreements between the public and the intimate, shaping the contours of the relationships of violence between intimate partners in a field where moralities are selectively activated per gender referents and hierarchies. When analyzing several cases disseminated in written and online media, Giongo⁹ confirms that boys sharing intimate content are not even mentioned. The blame will fall on girls/women for their inadmissible “daring” or “naive” behavior in sharing images of their naked bodies. As indicated by Paz e Silva¹¹, those whose confidential material is published on the internet suffer moral retaliation because, per the patriarchal view,

“they are the ones who give away the contents”, contrary to the expectation of modesty and restraint of their sexual instincts. Such elements confirm mechanisms of control and surveillance of the image and the manifestations of female sexuality and behavior.

Although there is already significant production on the subject, the focus has been on the judicialization and criminal liability of those who take ownership and disseminate intimate content without consent on social networks¹² or the process of illness of people who suffer such abuse¹³⁻¹⁵.

Looking at the body, positioning its place of autonomy and political expression, and resignifying violence suffered can put new lenses on debates about the expression of sexuality in digital spaces and the deconstruction of blame, especially of female bodies and the so-called “divergent bodies”.

This paper aims to analyze the experience of young people whose intimate content was disseminated without consent over the internet, the interactional dynamics linked to the leak, the prevailing gender moralities, emotional management, and inclusion of the body in the affirmation of autonomy and diversity. Thus, we selected the statements of young YouTubers, recognizing them as influencers and spokespersons for a digitally native generation.

Methods

We searched on the YouTube platform, using an anonymous guide to avoid suggestions based on search history, from June 2019 to February 2020. The inclusion criteria were videos of YouTubers that presented adolescents as leading figures of the unconsented leak experience or young people narrating such situations that occurred in adolescence.

Chart 1 describes the keywords used in the search that resulted in 41 videos. Repeated videos were excluded from the collection; those with ‘nude’ in the title but that did not present the title theme in the content; and those of “trolling” (staging made to deceive someone). Twenty videos remained after the selection, 12 starring girls and eight boys. They were classified by decreasing order of the number of views and transcribed fully, fully respecting the phonetic enunciation and time mode. Body actions and audiovisual effects were described, comprising 180 transcribed pages.

After successive approximation readings, the collection was initially divided into three major

Chart 1. Distribution of the collection according to title, number of views, posting date, interlocutor and search key.

Title	Nº of views	Posting date	Interlocutor	Search keys
F.P vazou na web!	6,595,560	25/07/2018	Adult	"My nude leaked"
It happened to me: nudes	2,768,315	1/09/2015	Young female adult	"My nude leaked"
Vazou a foto	1,830,862	1/10/2016	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Vazou meu nude!	437,887	2/12/2016	Young female adult	"My nude leaked"
O dia em que meu nudes foi parar no grupo da família!!	138,352	23/11/2018	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Meus nudes vazaram!	86,516	21/09/2017	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Manda nudes? Aconteceu comigo	27,789	15/01/2017	Young female adult	"It happened to me: nudes"
Vazou meu nude?	20,234	15/10/2016	Young female adult	"My nude leaked"
Nudes-Aconteceu comigo	12,665	11/10/2016	Adolescent	"It happened to me: nudes"
#lisincera - vazaram nudes, e agora?!	11,852	9/09/2016	Young female adult	"My nude leaked"
Vazou nudes meu!	11,597	10/02/2017	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
O nudes vazou! E agora?	7,077	3/11/2019	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Vazaram meu nude!	6,263	21/04/2018	Young male adult	"My nude leaked"
My nude leaked	2,932	31/03/2019	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
O dia que vazaram meus nudes!	2,602	24/03/2018	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Ameaçaram espalhar nudes meu	2,425	20/01/2018	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Meus nudes vazaram, e agora? - Im pouco de tudo	1,921	21/09/2016	Adolescent	"My nude leaked"
Vazou nude na escola	1,305	18/09/2017	Adolescent	"They leaked my nude"
Vazou nudes meu?	956	16/08/2017	Young male adult	"My nude leaked"
Nudes - aconteceu comigo/meu testemunho	336	17/12/2019	Young male adult	"It happened to me: nudes"

Source: Authors.

thematic blocks: 1 - Dynamics and moralities; 2 - Emotional management; 3 - Empowerment. The themes were analyzed from the Critical Discourse Analysis perspective¹⁶. Taking its three-dimensional perspective, we highlighted text elements (grammatical and syntactic aspects when vital for the analysis of meanings and intentions), the discursive practice (especially the category of "power"), and the ideological aims that contextualize such utterances.

Results and discussion

Dynamics of non-consensual leak of intimate content, gendered moralities, and shame

"It happened to me: nudes", "The day my nudes leaked!", "My nude leaked!". The video titles posted by teenagers and young YouTubers already make it clear that a personal experience

about the dissemination of intimate content on the network will be reported there, ensuring, from the onset the credibility of "a statement place". The experience and position of an aspiring digital influencer give them the authority to advise other young people on how to handle this type of situation, advising on managing actions, behaviors, and emotions. The titles also indicate some technical mastery regarding the choice of words in a media term economy so that videos are easily found on YouTube.

The several stories narrated confirm some known dynamics of the event. The exchange of erotic or sensual photos, texts, and videos will occur during occasional or stable affective-sexual relationships. At some point in this virtual interaction, one of the partners will ask for "sending nudes", either as a "proof of trust" or as a prerequisite for maintaining interest in the other. The exchange of nudes seems to be a new contemporary sexual script¹⁷. However, in the face of suspicion of betrayal, jealousy, or relationship break-

up, that material may be disseminated on social networks as revenge and attack on the partner's public image^{1,18,19}.

Another dynamic mentioned is when some disaffected person outside the love circuit builds a fake profile with the person's name and publishes erotic materials collected on the internet, attributing the authorship to this person. The exchange of intimate materials can also occur between anonymous members (or not) of a closed WhatsApp group or in specific applications (app) for these exchanges. In this case, the leak occurs when one of the group members breaks the anonymity pact and reveals the identity of the materials exchanged. Finally, this content can be hacked from the cellphone through cloning apps or improper access to the device. The unconsented spread of such contents may be preceded by blackmail and threats (extortion).

Suppose the dynamics of intimate content production potentially involve the consent of those involved. In that case, non-consensual dissemination will have absolutely different effects depending on the gender position of the person who had the content explained¹⁹. While it can cause vexatious situations in the family environment and among friends, the non-consensual leak of a male body image is more tolerated and even eventually offers the vital capital of "fame" in the economy of digital exchanges. Unless these boys belong to some conservative religious group, the episode will be commented on as a fun fact or a manly act. Sanctions and criticism will be shifted to other poles of discrimination, such as having a fat body or a small penis. In a hierarchy of gender relationships, straight boys reported triggering arguments to justify the public exposure of their bodies that showed to be socially accepted. Although they also recognize prejudice, the openly gay boys supported a more autonomous narrative of exchanges of intimate images, indicating that the socio-technical network of the internet has played an essential role in the erotic and sexual mediations of the LGBTQIA+ community for a long time^{20,21}. As can be seen, it is a moral, clearly gendered framework.

I said, "man, you can leak it as much as you want. [shakes head in the negative, seeming not to care]. It will just give me thumbs up". Because, if I had a small "piece", that would be shit, you know? [cut] It's just that I have great self-esteem, and it's not just self-esteem (Video 15-Boy).

I didn't know where to put my face because, bro, how does a nude end up in the family group? Then I acted crazy: I said that it had been hacked,

that they invaded my snap albums, [...] and they said [tone of disbelief] "all right, we believe you" (Video 8-Boy).

[...] People didn't criticize as much [...] Also, because I'm a man, right? Because society prey on women...! Stuff like a woman posted a sexy photo, and they said she's a bitch, a slut, she's trying to fuck with everyone [...] I'm part of the LGBT community... Anyway... This also happens in the LGBT community. People say "wow", "this is sick stuff"... (Video 3-Boy [2]).

On the other hand, girls will go through itineraries that begin with discovering the leak through the intense movement of their network of contacts who warn them of what happened. The sudden "fame" is quickly followed by "moral lynching" in digital networks and face-to-face relationships. Negative moral labels will be assigned to their identity. They will be seen as the "girl who doesn't value herself", embodying unforgivable neglect with their "name" and "honor". They will also be called "tramp", "slut", "whore", or "little whore", entering the circuit of social devaluation embodied by stigma²². Living in a small town or countryside damages this girl's image and her network of relationships. Thus, these young women will shift from the initial "fame" that moves the networks to a "bad reputation", which embeds the local memory permanently. These young women will be morally judged for exercising their sexuality, besides the infamy of being shown in front of a camera, closing a circuit of blame and moral suspicion. Similar reports and trajectories were reported in studies by Sydow and Spínola¹⁸, Barratt¹⁰, and Chisala-Tempelhoff and Kirya²³.

In the narrative succession, the plot moves to discriminations perpetrated by peers, (self) imposed isolation, and emotional suffering. In a spiral of attacks, the insults hurled by those who published the material will be endorsed by the comments of the network members and will continue in the face-to-face spaces where these same people circulate.

In the analyzed videos, except for the mentions made to the police institution, where some of the complaints were taken, and to the family, there is a lack of mediation from the institutions that are part of the daily lives of adolescents (school, courses, and sports groups) to mitigate or repair the offenses suffered by young people. It is unsurprising that for some girls, the breakup, isolation, change of neighborhood, or school were cited as ways to "escape" the shame. "Shame" with different intensities was the core of

the meanings attributed by almost everyone to the experience.

[Girl, apparently 18-19 years. She says she met a boy at a teenage club in her town when she was about thirteen. Soon afterward, at the boy's insistence, they began exchanging nudes. After the end of the relationship, the boy leaked the material.]

Excerpt 1: [...] [eyes still teary] yeah... this photo came up at my mother and... when it did, my mother was at school, and she called me. When she called me [looking at the horizon], she fought with me, right? She said that... it's over for her too [looking down].

Excerpt 2: [...] my mother is the kind of person who preserves her image a lot. She cares a lot about what others think about her, her daughter, and the family... [wiping one tear] [cut].

Excerpt 3: She hung up the phone [...] I spent two classes crying in the bathroom [wiping a tear] with my friend inside. [closed eyes and furrowed brows] and crying repeatedly [...].

Barbosa²⁴ produces a detailed study on the categories of shame, moral offense, and resentment. The author takes up the Goffmanian work to define how the relationships between the interactional patterns of the Self take place to stabilize itself as a facade, that is, an image and public reputation of a positive nature to ensure recognition and social acceptance within its line, defined as the set of its interactions. Therefore, the socially integrated Self would have succeeded in responding to expectations to a set of demands regarding reputation, complying with certain etiquettes linked to the social system of positions, performing expected roles, to a set of obligations and identity performances. We should remember that Goffman²² affirms a close emotional connection between the Self and its facade, whether family or individual. Thus, severe offenses and moral accusations that produce a frontal attack on this facade result in the disfigurement and humiliation of the other, possibly leading to their fraying and the rupture of social bonds. Shame is that social pain, which is also emotional, of having one's facade entirely devoid of socially valued attributes.

In a psychological reading, Lameiras²⁵ defines the notion of shame as "an internal experience of the self as undesirable, unattractive, defective, worthless, and impotent". His study indicates that the experience of shame in childhood and adolescence can generate traumatic records and self-identity elements, which can affect emotional self-regulation and be associated with greater vulnerability to various psychopathologies such

as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, body image, and eating behavior disorder. The statements analyzed in our study also report insomnia, deep sadness, and suicidal ideas, as mentioned in international literature by Bates¹³, Chaudhary *et al.*¹⁴, and Gassó *et al.*¹⁵. In a study involving 1,370 Spanish university students about their involvement in sexting and psychopathological symptoms, measured by a sexting scale and by the Brief Symptom List (BSL-50), Gassó *et al.*¹⁵ indicate that no differences were identified between men and women in the prevalence of their victimization by non-consensual disclosure of sexual content. However, women were more pressured, threatened, and vulnerable to depression. Being female and participating in sexting, passive sexting, and online sexual victimization were variables associated with worse mental health. In a study with 480 university students, Drouin *et al.*²⁶ indicate that coercion to send sexting can be a marker for other types of intimate partner abuse. Those coerced into sexting had more anxiety, depression, and generalized trauma symptoms. Coercion by sexting was also related to physical, sexual coercion, and intimate partner violence. Qualitative studies^{7,10,27} also reinforce the moral distress and humiliation endured by women whose intimate contents were disseminated without consent.

As the young woman in video 8 points out, using the phonetic stretching feature ("vaaaarious qualities"), the set of offenses and insults that are associated with the leaking of nudes, especially of girls, disfigures the elements of facade presentable in the market of social acceptance relationships, discrediting any other favorable attributes:

[...] Do you know one thing I think is the last straw in this situation? [cut] is that regardless of [medal symbol 'number 1' in the video] whether the victim is a great daughter, great student... [cut] Because of her nude... (Video 8-Girl).

"But this body is not mine"

[Adolescent, female, looking about 15 years old, lots of makeup, working-class home].

Excerpt 1: Hi guys, how are you? This video talks about a somewhat complicated subject... it has happened to me and may have happened to you. It's about nudes [in this opening statement, the teenager fixes her hair several times, checking her image] Yes, people... with me...

Excerpt 2: So, once I was there... on WhatsApp [...] chilling out. A guy sent me a message, started

sending me nudes, and asked me (sic [CV3]) to send mine.

Excerpt 3: I suspected he was fake as he was very handsome. So, what did I do... as I was in several porn groups, I went to one porn group, picked up several photos, and sent them.

Excerpt 4: So, he thought it was actually me, and like... I took a hairy pussy and put it there. Then the guy took a print and put it on Facebook, calling me a slut and many other things. However, you see [expression of conformity] [frowns]...

Excerpt 5: [...] people used to call me "hairy cunt" for a long time-for a while... Many people still talk about it... [looks down sadly] and really don't know the truth.

Excerpt 6: AD: After a while, right, yeah... a girl called F. started to spread to everyone that I had fucked eight kids inside a Beetle - a Beetle, mind you...! For a truffle... [rolling eyes].

Excerpt 7: [...] after this gossip... many people keep calling me truffle. They still call me that... And man, I don't like truffles...(Video 1-Girl).

In this story, the girl announces the discursive style of confession and captures the audience's interest by summoning empathy ("it could have happened to you"). From the first contact, the girl suspects the intentions of that "so handsome, available boy". She speaks without prejudice and participates in "sexual content groups", in which the exchange of intimate images and sexting is free and consented. With some experience, she believes she knows how to control the proposed game and sends photos of someone else, an anonymous body, collected in digital indigence. However, even with such an artifice, she will be labeled a "slut", discriminated against, and designated by the nickname "hairy cunt". The image used as a substitute for her body starts to receive more credibility than her word. Humiliation follows a diffuse and incomplete temporality (the lexicon tense is repeated several times, alternating indistinctly between past and present). Her account reiterates that the permanence of posts, the scale of reproductions, and the circulation speed are unpredictable or uncontrollable^{7,28}. As in the work of Paganotti²⁹, who analyzed the case of TV host Xuxa, who filed a lawsuit against the Google platform to remove content related to search keys about her participation in a porn film in the 1980s, digital platforms hijacked the right to oblivion in their commercial-algorithmic logics.

Then, the already vulnerable girl and her public image devoid of social value, circulating in the spheres of stigma²², becomes the target of

gossip about having participated in group sex in exchange for a sweet. The penultimate excerpt shows the borderline relationship between online and offline moral persecution that gives continuity to it. She will be treated as someone who would trade sex for anything, personifying moral debauchery. In the last excerpt, the girl reveals endless grievances, the lower self-esteem, and the naive argument of not even liking that type of candy is what is left in her defense.

Other young people in the analyzed videos also mention using images of bodies collected on Google to protect themselves from a possible leak. This feature was specially mentioned when there is little trust in the partner or when the intimate content is exchanged in groups, on sites, or groups for this purpose. However, such a device is only effective with evidence of the stratagem, such as screen prints. It will be useless to deny that the body shown is not even similar to yours. One's word is worth less than the image, and, in turn, the meta-image (the image of the captured image) has more credibility.

On the other hand, the photo is disseminated without the head ("faceless"), a resource already known as a measure of image self-protection in digital sexual exchanges and an element of contemporary visual cultures³⁰. Even disfigured, it will be analyzed by the members of the communities that receive it. The "clues" will be sought only to give legitimacy to the inquisitorial accusation, "proving" that that body is, in fact, the "denounced" individual. Hair color and even jewelry will be considered "proof" enough:

[...] Because I didn't recognize my body! First, I didn't have those breasts. I looked at... "Guys! I don't even have breasts! This girl has big breasts! I have no breasts!" [...] then she looked at my face and said... "but it's you! I don't know what..." I replied [impatient gesture] "guys, it's not me! I... [puts her hands together in a swearing gesture] I swear it's not me!" (Video 17-Girl).

Despite the trivialized appearance of naked bodies or in the sensual exposure games that endlessly circulate in networks and digital media, in exchanges where intimacy and privacy are constantly resignified in the search to "exist" to have recognition in the "market of digital visibility"^{3,27}, the female sexuality's exposure continues to be evaluated by the sieve of patriarchal morality, with frankly unequal rules of use and social sanctions applied in this game of moralities. Even when this exposure was not consented to or desired, clearly configuring an action of violence against this woman/girl, the disciplinary devices

of the female body appear with all their aggressiveness.

Managing emotions

The “tutorial” style is part of the YouTuber’s linguistic and media genre, and even children and adolescents assume the role of “teachers” in their channels³¹. The videos on this platform also tend to “teach” and prescribe how to deal with feelings in situations that cause suffering. Nude leaks will also be discussed in this cyber-pedagogy of emotions in this emotional, social technique. In our collection, all the young people shared their previous experiences and how they managed their feelings, creating a “guide” to “help” those who are experiencing the problem. This discursive set consolidates what Le Breton³², in his text *Anthropology of Emotions*, recognizes as the negotiations and cultural modeling of feelings. Young YouTubers show a certain expected “way” of feeling (which emotions are predictable and which are acceptable or not for each interactional context) and ways of dealing with these emotions.

The girls’ videos reaffirm a typical emotional journey. The leaked nude will generate suffering and humiliation, and there is nothing to do but conform and “let it pass”. The waiting resilience will be strengthened with the presence of “true”, supportive friends who believe their word, now so undervalued. Warnings are made that this time of suffering can be prolonged, even lasting years, with tireless harassment after the fact. The overcoming comes after this stage. The last stage is the “fuck it” moment, a term repeatedly cited as the expression of this resignification, when the comments of others no longer influence the girls’ emotional state, and they manage to resume their lives and define other identity performances.

In the emotions management tutorial made by boys, the shame phase is experienced very quickly, being immediately led to the reinforcement of male self-esteem (“what is beautiful is to be shown”, “I will be on the cover of some nude magazine”). The boys teach each other how to detach themselves in this melodramatic game and even try to get some benefit out of it:

[...] that I didn't understand... I didn't imagine... I didn't expect at all that this was going to happen. I'm really cool about it, you know. I don't care about these things... like, man, dick is dick... Every guy has one, right? [...] Thus... [laughing lightly] that saying, right? "what's beautiful is for showing off" [...] after it hit me, I said, "man, fuck

it, now it's done. - [A snippet of the song "Já Era", by country singers Jorge & Mateus starts playing] - [...] I don't care. I'm going to be on the cover of Playboy, whatever, some nude magazine, right?" (Video 16-Boy).

In the compendium of emotions, some of the girls’ videos also call for empathy, warn them not to feel guilty, and so that they can support those who are experiencing this type of situation. The sisterhood summoned offers a counterpoint to the many reports of access perpetrated by other girls, relentlessly defending the rationale of male domination and labeling those who had their nudes spread:

[Shy, middle-class looking female teenager about 15 to 17 years old - soundtrack music Hey, Fais featuring Afrojack. The video is shot in her bedroom.]

Excerpt 1: [conformity tone] No, there's nothing else to do [shakes her head in a negative sign], understand? So, come on, stay calm. Will it be easy? No, it won't be easy. It's going to be complicated. I cried a lot... [...] I didn't know what to do... [cut].

Excerpt 2: Sip your chamomile tea, and go to your friends... Real friends even more [points to the camera] ... this is when you find out very well who is really your friend and who is not... [cut].

Excerpt 3: Let's start where some assholes will be making up things about you... Moreover, what you're going to do is deny it. Suppose some people won't believe it. They'll say, "well-well, there's something there", to which you reply: "go to hell". Your real friend will know... that you are being honest [...] (Video 7-Girl).

Some of the young women count on oblivion by saturation. These harassments can be mitigated when other leaked nudes grab attention on the same social media, replacing the target of harassment. In this case, violence and its (re)production rationales are maintained, just replacing the leading roles this time:

[...] after a while, people, it passes. Let's suppose you sent it, and they spread it. After a while, there will be several nudes of other girls or boys, and people will end up forgetting about you... (Video 1-Girl).

The empowerment speech

The opinions of these young “experts” on the experience of having a nude disseminated without consent varied, showing different agencies in the face of moralities on the subject. Some people consider it a mistake and a significant risk to exchange such intimate materials over the internet.

Other people advise others to do it only if they wish, but with a certain “restraint”, with a subjective judgment of sending only “to whom one’s trust”. Finally, those young women who claim to enjoy taking and exchanging nudes consider it a form of free expression, an affirmation of their sexual freedom, and their bodies’ (political and digital) existence. For this last group, the exchange of intimate images and the decision to publish their nude on social networks is part of a set of implementable choices, an expression of their visibility and digital citizenship, and the use of their body as language and identity:

Firstly, I took a lovely nude. I wanted to promote it because I thought it was beautiful. I said, “this nude can’t stay here on my phone”. I got in touch with a famous page that posts nudes of people and said, “you can post it, my dear, because I think it’s beautiful. I won’t be hiding” (Video 3-Boy).

[...] so, all right. My nude was indeed leaked! Actually, it’s semi-nude. However, if it leaks or doesn’t leak, fuck it! Do you know why? Because I post it on my Instagram: everything is lovely there! I like it! And I post! I think it’s beautiful! [cut] The first day I was insulted was when I said, “look, I’m going to post this on Facebook, ok?” To see what will happen! I posted this photo here! [a picture of the girl in panties and blouse holding a mug appears, her face appears] [...] A controversial girl! An affront girl! [cut] (Video 18-Girl).

The “affront girl” clearly defines the leading role in managing the level of dissemination she wants of her nudes, managed by her and not at the mercy of the blackmail or revenge of (former) partners. Her statement reiterates the expanded boundaries between daring and moralizing, labeling, taking risks, and the pleasure of publicizing her body images. In this movement, she recognizes and rebels against the “moral regulation” of female sexuality in “internet times”^{6,33}. The testimonies of the two boys also reiterate the attribution of positive values, such as beauty, visibility, and autonomy – boys whose bodies would be far from established stereotypes. There, the nude becomes an arena of discursive struggle for diversity, for the affirmation of the space their bodies desire and can occupy in digital (hyper) visibility^{6,28}.

Conclusions

The videos analyzed suggest an intersection between the personal experience of suffering, in-

volving different types of violence experienced such as humiliation, threats, and persecution, and, on the other hand, the media handling of a topic that “yields an audience”. “Nude leaks” dominated the network’s “trend topics” for some time and was highlighted among the complaints made to Safernet³⁴ for consecutive years, leading many professional and aspiring YouTubers to include the subject in their channels.

How social inequalities impact differently on the lives of those who suffer this type of violence deserves a reflection. Although the values and specific standards of morality discussed in part here are embedded in all social strata, as we saw in our study, young people, especially women from the poorer strata and in locations/communities with a religious profile, in the inland region or even in the suburbs, can be more vulnerable and have lower acceptance by the family, the community, and suffer virtual lynching and social exclusion. Studies adopting an intersectional perspective, articulating social position/class, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, and their different impacts on the way young people (boys and girls) experience and re-signify the exposure of nudes are required for a better understanding of the event and the more appropriate ways to approach it, whether for its discussion/prevention or for the care of those who suffer from such an experience.

However, the nudes also potentiated a “look at oneself”. The fact of photographing oneself sounds like the reversal of patriarchal patterns and the dynamics of power that involve being meekly captured by the lens of the other. The erotic self-portrait also represents a self-esteem exercise, as those who see themselves outside the media body standards encourage other people to show their bodies more, as self-admiration, self-acceptance, and reaffirmation of the diversity of bodies⁷.

If contemplating one’s image was considered an unwanted erotic stimulus for women³⁵ until the 19th century, the “politicization of nudity” has conferred an activist character in recent decades by highlighting the power of the female nude, confronting the limits of what is socially acceptable to show^{6,28}. Likewise, the growing movement of the voices of “divergent” bodies in digital spaces has brought to the fore the debate on democratization in the struggles for the recognition of diversities and the constant threat of violence that these clashes include.

Finally, concerning the approach to this topic, we observe a discursive tone in health-derived

productions, associating “sexting” with risk behaviors with STIs, early sexual initiation, and the demand for intervention measures. This production’s background is the blame, accountability of young people, and the dictates about exercising

sexuality with a strong gender bias³⁶. This perspective still permeates the ways of dealing with this issue concerning health care, where digital violence and how subjects face it is rarely discussed.

Collaborations

SF Deslandes spearheaded the data collection, analysis, and the paper’s writing. CVC Silva collaborated in the analysis and the paper’s writing/review. JM Reeve and RMD Flach also collaborated in the paper’s writing/proofreading.

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