

Love and violence at play: revealing the affective-sexual relations between young people using the gender lens

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objective was to analyze using the gender category, the discourse about affective-sexual relationships among teenagers based on the interactions in an online game grounded on the themes of sex, sexuality and violence. This is a case study, a qualitative approach that carried out the analysis of the discursive comments of adolescents produced from interactions with the *Papo Reto* game. The study subjects were 27 teenagers from a public school in São Paulo-SP. The analysis was based on the gender category and revealed that relationships between teenagers are part of a context of relationships influenced by gender models and norms constituting inequities that are determinants of both violence and its invisibility as a problem. The ambivalence of meanings that violence assumes in intimate relations translates into discourses of overcoming and, at the same time, of reiteration of gender inequities.

Keywords: Gender-based violence. Youth. Health communication. Game.

Introduction

The advance of the new technologies of communication and information (ICT) characterize the transformations of the youth condition. ICTs are the background for the production of new meanings, subjectivities and ways of relating and positioning in the world. Young people are extensive users of digital devices, to the point of being designated as “digital natives”, whose insertion in the world is permeated by new media, significantly impacting this generation, with respect to shared social values and norms¹.

With regard to affective-sexual relations, the experience of young people coexists with the social transformations of contemporaneity and the lingering values derived from the historically constructed patriarchal paradigm that permeates all spheres of reality. Examples of this paradigm are gender stereotypes, whose binary and hierarchical identities underlie inequality between men and women. Such assumptions restrict the formulation of policies and practices consistent with the needs and motivations of the new generation, disregarding the multiplicity of experiences and the leading role of this social group. In this sense, it is necessary to prioritize communication strategies that enable the free and democratic mobilization of knowledge.

Violence is a phenomenon of high prevalence and has had an impact on the quality of life of the young population. In Brazil, young people are the main victims of homicides for violence². With regard to gender violence, at the global level, 30% of girls aged between 15 and 19 years experience violence in their relationships³. A study conducted in nine countries, with 24,000 women, suggests that intimate partner violence affects more adolescents and young women when compared to adults³. In Brazil, a study carried out in 10 urban centers revealed that 86.9% of the young people surveyed suffered violence while 86.8% committed some type of violence during an affective relationship⁴.

Gender-based violence is socially produced and directly related to the historical and economic process of formation of society and the state. Thus, social institutions, through the different possibilities of communication, convey and produce ideologies that can imprint either a conservative or a transforming sense of the dominant conceptions. Gender inequality has compromised the health of men and women, being present across all aspects of life, legitimizing the oppression that manifests itself in the various violent acts.

The advent of digital culture, like the social spaces and social times of the internet, plays an important role in the constitution of the subjects, since it produces discourses and carries symbols generated in the mesh of language and culture⁵. Thus, it is imperative to understand the social spaces in which young people live and relate, seeking new uses for the promotion of disruptive dialogic spaces, allowing reflective conditions for the development of autonomy and equity in gender relations.

This study highlights the analysis of the application of an online game as a mobilizing artifact of the debate and reflection on the themes: sex, sexuality and violence in relationships. In view of the need for innovative practices for a generalized approach to sexual and reproductive health, the *Papo Reto* game was developed as a research product³ with the purpose of promoting the leading role and autonomy of adolescents in this field. It envisages the mobilization of critical reflection through

a ludic environment free of preconceived responses, prioritizing themes whose complexity and social stigma hampers their approach by traditional social institutions, such as family and school.

The present study conceives the game as a social space and time through which experiences and informants of affective-sexual relations between young people emerge and intersect. Thus, this article frames the contents produced in the interaction with the game showing the conceptions about affective-sexual relations. It aims to analyze, using the gender category and based on the narratives of young people produced in the game *Papo Reto*, how the discourse about affective-sexual relationships is configured.

Method

The study is part of the results of post-doctoral training. The original research involved the process of validation, application and evaluation of the game *Papo Reto*⁶, whose subjects were young, high school students from São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. Aspects related to both ludic and formative elements of learning around the themes sex, sexuality and violence were objects of previous studies of the application of the game *Papo Reto*⁶⁻⁸, so the present study does not contemplate this scope.

It is a case study, with a qualitative approach, developing the analysis of the narratives of young people about the affective sexual relations mobilized in the game *Papo Reto*, in São Paulo. The game is anchored in the problematization of reality, leading roles, free expression and interaction, in order to motivate the (re) construction of knowledge in the field of sexuality⁶. Table 1 presents a brief description.

Table 1. Summary description of the *Papo Reto*⁶ game rules

Description of the game	The game symbolizes reality on a city map (Figure 1). In each space, with new situations and stories of adolescents are presented (Figure 2), for which the player needs to express opinions, answer questions or create outcomes. It also evaluates and comments on peer action.
Elements for access	Username and password. Internet access on a computer, notebook or tablet.
Goal of the game	Conquer the proposed missions and be able to remain in the top positions in the Ranking.
How to play	At the beginning of the game, only the house will be unlocked and missions must be completed to open and explore other spaces. Responses, reviews and comments made or received are translated into punctuation. Click on the Missions item and complete the proposed tasks. Post questions, respond, comment, explaining what you think, so the game becomes even more enlightening and fun. When you feel offended, report it. Go to the wall and know what your friends think about what you posted. Get public information, sex education, and helpful phones, exploring the areas Got it? And Where to Go for Help? If any doubt persists, contact us.



Figure 1. Capture of the initial screen (*Papo Reto* Game)



Figure 2. Capture with a problem situation (*Papo Reto* Game)

The case studied a group of young people, students of a Public School of São Paulo / SP, aged between 14 and 18 years, who experienced the game *Papo Reto* for a period of six months. The invitation to the participants was made personally to all the students in contacts with the school. Those who showed interest and availability participated in the study.

A total of 67 young people were registered, among which 27 entered the game. Six months after the registration, the data generated by the interaction with the game were extracted for analysis purposes, constituting the empirical material for eliciting the narratives.

The corpus was produced from data composed of the discursive answers to the game situations and problems and by the comments of the adolescents, compared

to the responses of the peers. The dialogues stored together in the game by the adolescents were submitted to content analysis⁹, based on the gender category. The study was cleared by the Ethics Committee of the Nursing School of the University of São Paulo USP (CAAE 01850612.0.0000.5149).

In the 1980's, Joan Scott¹⁰ defined gender as “constitutive element of social relations, based on perceived differences between the sexes”. From the effects of gender as a social device, subjects are historically defined on the basis of sex. Thus, gender constitutes the primordial field in which asymmetric relations of power are articulated, based on socially constructed differences, but hegemonically conceived as essential, natural and unquestionable¹⁰.

Gender is not an effect of sex, but it understands sex itself as a category signified by the social apparatus of gender, so that sex would not have a supposed pre-gender essential nature, but would be one of the effects of discourse and regulatory practices of power, that establish the hierarchies of gender in the social imaginary revolving around body and sex¹¹. The methodological framework of gender studies enables an analysis of social phenomena as an effect of historically engendered power relations, a perspective that allows questioning for purposes of critical analysis, the hegemonically understood discourses as pre-established truths^{10,12}.

The conception that guides the present study considers the term “youth” beyond conceptions centered on chronological and biological aspects. The choice of the term “young” aims to overcome the biological vision that is implicit in the historical use of the term adolescence. In this perspective, subjects do not have fixed and impermeable identities, but are crossed by intersubjectivities engendered in a continuous and dialectical construction process¹³.

It is important to consider the aspects that relate to their social insertion and to the relations of power established by gender inequities that bring to light important hierarchical polarities that need to be problematized in the critical apprehension about social phenomena. Generation defines the place occupied by young people, so that these subjects are part of society and the world, and it is necessary to connect them to larger social structures that have impacted their relations, such as wars, social movements and the development of ICT, which facilitated the rapid circulation of information and characterized new configurations of relationship and social insertion^{14,15}.

Results and discussion

The dynamics of the game “*Papo Reto*” is based on the positioning of players around stories presented taking the shape of problematic situations (figure 2). These situations pose challenges that range from the construction of outcomes to the delivery of opinions. The game *Papo Reto* proposes the interaction between young people for the reconstruction or re-signification of the narratives. Narrative, which can be thought as the place where mediations occur, inscribes a temporal dimension of human magnitude. Thus, “the act of narrating, through the means, can reveal legitimations, values, representations and faults, fundamental data for the process of understanding and reading the world.” The empirical categories as presented below

synthesize the discourse revealed in the narratives, shaping conceptions about their affective-sexual relations¹⁶.

The normalization of stereotypes as a discursive effect of gender in the conceptions of adolescents

The analysis of the narratives mobilized by the interaction of adolescents during the game, in the light of the gender category, revealed discourses related to the reproduction of social norms and gender stereotypes in affective-sexual relationships. These patterns influence the understanding of different assumed roles, having polarized models that are associated with either feminine or masculine identities as references that are reproduced in their relationships.

For the girl [the first intercourse] is easier because it is usually the boy who leads and who has a good part of the responsibility for the sex to work out fine. (F)

I would advise him to talk about this [homosexual affective orientation] with his mother, since the mother is always more understanding (F)

The paradigm of modern science established conceptions based on the dichotomy between nature and culture. Patriarchy has historically consolidated the association of the feminine with nature and the masculine with culture, grounding the binary and hierarchical opposition between the sexes. Thus values and characteristics related to nature and the feminine, such as emotion, intuition and body would need to be controlled, dominated by the action of culture, masculine. This discourse is reproduced by the subjects of the study, establishing patterns of behavior understood as inherent to a supposed essential nature of the sexes. The discourse of the gender hierarchy is also reproduced in the conception about the sexual relation, whose conduction would supposedly be the domain of the masculine part.

Under the perspective of feminist studies, the neutrality of the body is questioned, criticized, since it is eminently political. Gender, as an ideological device, produces culturally intelligible stereotypes and patterns of identities that are recognizable as normal, and therefore desirable. The surveillance of bodies is performed by the political-ideological structure, which translates into the various social institutions (such as school, family, church and medical science) that establish social patterns of living sexuality and regulating the way of being and acting in the public space. In this way, the performativity of gender is continually reiterated thus materializing what that is named by it¹¹.

The discourse that was evidenced refers to the rejection of gender roles that escape socially desirable binary models. Patterns that establish a culturally desirable system of continuity between body, sex, gender, desire, and sexual practice are established in the register of compulsory heterosexuality¹¹. Identities that escape this “coherence” end up not being socially recognized as understandable, incurring the risk of being interpreted as abnormal or immoral and supposedly, should be corrected, treated as pathology or even concealed, in “respect for society”, according to referred to in the statements.



This is an aberration, a thing of sick people. (M - refers to the situation in which a boy wants to wear women's clothes)

He must stop liking boys and start liking girls. (M)

I am against prejudice, but I think homosexuals should respect society as well.
(F)

Homophobia is the expression of fear in relation to the loss of the hegemonic gender model, that is, of identification with the socially valued models of man and woman. It relates to the idea of abjection¹¹, in which those identities that are not consistent with heteronormativity are placed on the margins of society, subsumed by the right to citizenship and democratic and participatory spaces for the construction of public policies, to guarantee a just and dignified life in the various social spheres. Study that analyzes the construction of hegemonic masculinity¹⁷ defines homophobia as

A form of social control exercised among men from the very first steps of male education [...] Homophobia and domination of women are the two sides of the same coin. Homophobia and viriarchy build gendered hierarchical relationships between women and men. Homophobia is the product, in the group of men, of the naturalistic paradigm of masculine superiority that must be expressed in manhood. (p. 118)

Thus, sexual and gender identities are related in a social process of regulating sexuality by gender censorship. Different from sexual identity (related to sexual practice, desire and pleasure) but not independent of it, gender identity refers to the identification of subjects socially and historically with what is socially understood as male and female in different societies and historical contexts¹⁸. Both gender dynamics and sex, identities are multiple, are in a process of construction and will never be completely finished, since we are historical beings, in constant transformation¹¹.

Narratives and discourses not only enunciate phenomena, but institute them, also determining subjective identities engendered in the field of social signs and norms⁵, related to the dominant ideological political structure¹⁰. These discursive orders even institute what must be said and silenced. With regard to the discourses of young people, compulsory heterosexuality¹¹ appears as an important theme, evidencing an anomalous representation of the sexual identities that escape this logic. Although in contemporary times the discourse in the various media evidences multiple forms of living sexuality, the ambivalence of meanings is revealed in narratives that enunciate and reiterate the antagonistic binarism of hegemonic patterns¹⁸.

In game dynamics, responses are expected to be commented and evaluated by peers. Those that refer to the discourse of gender equity, predominantly, were evaluated as positive. The following testimonies refer to comments on the view that sexual freedom should be oriented differently for boys and girls. These reports reveal a thematic divergence from the reproductive discourse of the gender stereotypes previously discussed.

You are being sexist, because with the boy the father not only authorizes dating in the bedroom, but also encourages him to have sex, while for the girl he imposes several conditions. (F)

The father's attitude should be the same for both of them. There are sensitive boys, therefore vulnerable as well. (M)

Gender is understood as a device that results from a process of repeating a set of rules. However, at the same time that language acts in the maintenance of this discourse, it presents a destabilizing potential⁸. Digital social networks configure spaces for mediation of repetition, as well as questioning of symbols, values and norms produced by gender. Cyberspace allowed the engagement of non-political actors in issues representing previously experienced difficulties. At the same time, the virtual world forms the background to the various gender-based violence expressed online. The ambivalence of meanings that the norms and gender stereotypes assume in the discourse of the youngsters, translates as a contradictory and dialectical process, inherent to the social transformations^{11,12}.

A study that evaluated the *Papo Reto* from workshops performed after the experience with the game, pointed to the interaction between peers as a resource capable of mobilizing emotions, reflections and (re) construction of knowledge. In the free and relaxed environment of games, this process occurs in a freer way than approaches based on pre-established conceptions. The motivation for dialogue and reflection was evidenced between the lines of the adolescents' reports, about the experience with the game⁷.

In this study, the need for discussion about gender roles and norms makes sense, since the discourses reproduce stereotypes that reiterate hierarchical categories for men and women. Manifestations that are understood as natural in the relationships among young people, among them gender violence, result from uncritical positions towards reality. Thus, any strategy that proposes to deal with intimate partner violence should consider the importance of including symbolic violence¹⁹, whose confrontation must start from the estrangement of the identity and performance marks of gender⁸, by means of its de-naturalization.

Gender violence as a marker of relationships between young people: from experience to trivialization

The changes that new media represent in the lives of young people have been subjected to studies^{20,21}. The internet constitutes a field that reveals and at the same time, establishes meanings that influence ways of being and relating, configuring symbols, values and social norms of contemporaneity, with deep meanings in the field of affective-sexual relations²². Thinking about the disruptive potential of the game also means taking a critical analysis of the discourses mobilized by the game, permeated by ambivalences, contradictions and socially crystallized stereotypes that reiterate and reproduce iniquities and violence in relationships.

The narratives produced in the game highlight the importance of female freedom and autonomy, as exemplified by the following testimonies, which criticize social surveillance of the female body, as well as its reification and subjection to the masculine.

Does her short skirt really bother you so much? Is it because she has freedom over her own body? Or is it because you're animalistic and cannot hold your instincts? Because she uses a short dress it doesn't mean that she is at anybody's disposal. (F)

Calm down! Try to talk, to understand her side. She is not your puppy or your object. (F)

Although this generation has, to some extent, a subversive discourse, with an expression of greater freedom in the field of sexuality, it still reproduces sexist patterns of behavior. This is an expected aspect, since, in the historical transformations, there are dialectical shifts between progress and regression^{7,14}. In the statements that follow, the girls used the interaction environment of the game to express personal experiences of violence in relationships. These findings, besides evidencing the game as a channel of communication in which the players identified openness to share experiences, indicate that the conceptions about the female autonomy, expressed in other situations, do not always translate into the concrete experience of egalitarian relations.

I would like my boyfriend to hear me more when I say that I do not want it that way, so that we can try, in other ways, to know ourselves about pleasures. (F)

His jealousy and the rough way he treats me bothers me. (F)

He keeps laughing at me with his little girl buddies, it's rude sometimes. (F)

That he thinks he's always right, he does not listen to my opinion, because he thinks that his way is always right and the only one.(F)

Pretend to be indifferent to me in front of others. (F)

He shuts himself off completely, he escapes from the conversations, he victimizes himself or blames me too much. (F)

Despite the expression of personal experiences of psychological violence by the players, the corpus of analysis does not allow to show if they recognize these situations as such. However, sharing these experiences indicates their recognition as a problem, something that bothers and generates suffering. Psychological violence is evident as the predominant form of manifestation in these dialogues that denounce abusive relationships. However, these expressions were neither commented nor evaluated by the peers. The situation that motivated the first testimony triggered that of many other

girls, who shared similar experiences. This aspect highlights the need of the subjects to share experiences, opening channels of communication for the visibility of the problem.

The unequal relations of power are found in the genesis of violence when perpetrated in the sphere of interpersonal relations. The meanings that conform the social image of the feminine are rooted in these relations, determining subalternity and domination. When practiced between intimate partners, violence ends up being part of everyday life, understood as essential and inherent in these relationships. Such an understanding becomes a contradictory meaning, since it is a type of violence materialized in relationships based on affection.

Violence among intimate partners assumes several meanings for young people, including the inherent sense of ambivalence. Thus, it is urgent to take the problem as a focus of studies in the various areas of human, social and collective health sciences. A study indicated that, as far as physical aggression is concerned, girls are more victimized¹⁴, though they also strike back physically and psychologically. In addition, adolescents often find it difficult to perceive such aggressions as detrimental to their relationship, and often tend to associate controlling and jealous behavior as a sign of love^{23,24}.

The interaction of the youth with the game revealed responses that refer to violent behavior. These responses, as well as situations in the game that dealt with situations of violence, were often neither problematized nor questioned by peers, understanding them as normal or acceptable situations. This finding is observed in the following report of a girl about a situation of the game about sexual violence, in which the partner touches her breasts, against her will.

If I did not like it, I would take it off [his hand]. But I guess there's no reason why, after all, I'm dating him. (F)

When not recognized, violence reflects a broader process of production and reproduction of symbolic violence, naturalized by a long historical process of cultural imprinting. These are, therefore, subtle mechanisms of domination and social exclusion used by individuals, groups or institutions¹⁹. In this line of conception about violence, some testimonies reveal how girls are being blamed for the violence experienced. Thus, female behavior is what would determine violence against women, being identified as triggering these situations:

She's naughty playing with her boyfriend. She should be aware that his boyfriend would do it. Dumb girl! [comment about situation of the game in which the boyfriend divulges videos and intimate photos of the couple without clothes in the social networks] (F)

It would be feasible for her to protect herself by wearing the short dress in safer environments, such as in familiar ones. [situation that discusses rape and the use of short dresses by women] (M)

The testimonies highlight the feminist blame for gender violence manifested in online relationships. Even women historically introjected such discourses, socially engendered by the symbol of the profane woman. The discourse of rape culture is also evidenced as violence that operates subtly through purely symbolic ways of language and communication that justify rape¹⁹.

The logic of the relationship of male domination comes to impose and inculcate in men and women the entire negative properties attributed to feminine values. This worldview is continually confirmed and legitimized by the very same practices it determines, conditioning the whole society to incorporate it. Thus, male domination has all the favorable conditions for its full exercise, since its primacy is affirmed and incorporated throughout the social structure, as a result of ideological mechanisms that hide or conceal reality¹⁹.

In this study, the discourses show a banalization and naturalization in relation to certain acts of aggression, which are not understood as violence by the subjects, aspect that invisibilizes the phenomenon as a problem for this social group. The relationships among adolescents are part of a context of relationships influenced by gender models and norms, which constitute inequities, determinants of violence and their invisibility. Psychological, sexual violence and violence in cyberspace appear in the discourse as common situations, trivialized and justified by female guilt.

The social image around affective relations refers to idealistic conceptions of relationship. The testimonies, especially of the girls, point to a discourse that is related to the socially constructed ideology based on the symbol of romantic love.

From this imaginary, relations are conceived as monogamous and conflict-free. It is important to emphasize that the idealization of relations curtails the development of assertive attitudes for conflict resolution.

From the moment she is interested in other people there is something wrong.
When you are dating, theoretically, you only have eyes for your partner. (F)

Respect her boyfriend, the one who loves do not betray. (F)

I would die of sadness. You do everything, and even so she cheats on you? (M)

The findings reveal the reproduction of patterns of idealized relationships, which bring the idea of fidelity as central in conceptions about affective-sexual relations. The testimonies also revealed jealousy and infidelity as triggers of situations of physical violence. It is important to emphasize the importance of media influence on the production of socialized values between this generation and how the representation of affective-sexual relations and violence in these relationships is conveyed, problematized or naturalized by young people.

I would punch him in the face. [situation that simulates a betrayal] (F)

I would hit him with a flying kick and make a scene. [situation that refers to jealousy] (M)

A Brazilian study, which analyzed the role of jealousy in relationships among young people, points to convergent findings. Respondents presented significant agreement with the idea that infidelity or jealousy would justify the occurrence of aggression in a relationship. In addition to being valued as a manifestation of care and proof of love, jealousy is an important mobilizer of conflicts and violence in the affective-sexual relationships among young people²¹⁻²³. Studies^{25,26} carried out with adolescents in Curitiba (Brazil) revealed that many suffer and perpetrate violence, but do not recognize it as such, understanding the aggressions as natural, commonplace acts and inherent in the alleged essential feminine and masculine natures.

Punishment for infidelity constitutes a historically constituted fact aided by cultural symbols and norms, based on patriarchy, authorizing violence as a form of punishment of female infidelity. In this study, physical violence triggered by infidelity appears crystallized and not problematized. This aspect reiterates a discourse of primacy of male domination inscribed and reproduced in the imaginary of boys and girls, both products of the same androcentric social structure¹⁹.

The following statements make reference to patterns of relationship characteristic of this generation, in which the agreement between peers is what determines the differences of commitment between “dating” and “hooking up”. Even in courtship, adolescents expressed multiple possibilities for relationships, depending on prior agreement. Thus, this category reveals loyalty as an important issue, as represented below.

I would reflect and remember that I have also betrayed. But I would talk to my partner to make a deal so it would never happen again. (F)

I would enter into a free love agreement. But I think we must talk. (F)

You put it as if, when you are dating, one has power over another’s body, as if they own it. It’s not like this! (F)

It is important to emphasize that, despite the revealed ambivalences and complexities, some critical manifestations signal the (re) significance of conceptions about affective-sexual relations. Assertive conceptions of conflict resolution that point to the critique of idealized patterns are expressed, above all, by girls.

Among the responses evaluated negatively by the pairs, signaled as “unlike”, those with violent content or those that reiterate gender inequalities predominated. These responses have sometimes been commented upon by a discourse of refusal and negative peer evaluation. In some situations, such statements were answered with comments expressing a change of opinion or apology. The following are examples of some of these dialogues generated by the game.

Situation A

[Boy]: Stop being a bitch.



[Girl Comments]: I think you should be kicked out of the game just because I hate you.

Situation B

[Boy]: Whatever! Do what you prefer! If you want to have sex, go for it!

[Girl comments]: Such foulmouthed!

[Boy answers comments]: Sorry for the rudeness I committed.

Situation C

[Comment on a player's response to the multiple-choice situation in which the girl does not want a sexual relationship at that time. The player chose the alternative in which the girl was supposed to masturbate her boyfriend]

[Girl]: Imagine how annoying it must be for the girl to masturbate her boyfriend without any desire. If she is not in the mood will she do something out of obligation? It's annoying for both of us. Masturbation is nevertheless a form of sex and not wanting it is her choice.

The findings reveal the potential of the games in the construction of dialogical relations. Such relations can constitute a fertile soil for the subversion of hegemonic conceptions of gender in affective-sexual relations. The narratives reveal important aspects of their experiences that were mobilized by the process of interaction with the game. The findings reveal reflexive potentialities arising from this interaction, but also the need for interventions that go beyond the initial goals of the game: the problematization of intimate partner violence and gender inequity in these relationships.

In this context, it is important to develop strategies for coping with violence among young people, especially in the Latin American context, given the scarcity of studies and strategies on the subject. In this sense, the perspective of gender, as well as the ludic approach, emerge as innovative possibilities to promote the critical reflection of the subjects to reconstruct relations, interpretations and positions about reality.

Although innovation has become very evident in the reference to new media and technological interfaces, it is also present in the social impact of these technologies and in the new configuration of the subjects producing and receiving the information. The meanings shared by young people in the digital social networks, reproduced in the game *Papo Reto*, engender the production of meanings and subjectivities that support the representations around the body, relationships and social and subjective identities. Thus, thinking about its potential for the problematization of discursive processes fosters challenges for the (re) construction of stereotypes, norms and crystallized practices of inequalities.

Previous study, revealed the (re) signification of knowledge, promoted by the leading role, irreverence and freedom of the playfulness. It is a logic that, "devoid of educational interests, educates all the while it transforms through experience"⁸ (p. 2389). The game fostered a symbolic immersion that promoted the projection of the player in its own history. The shared tension, interaction, anonymity, symbolic representation and the progression of difficulties were aspects inherent in playfulness,

recognized by the players as the subversive potential of the game “*Papo Reto*” to discuss with peers in a ludic way regarding socially veiled themes⁸.

Final considerations

To unveil the discourse that is revealed in the lines of the *Papo Reto* game reveals concrete social needs related to a better understanding of the affective-sexual relations among young people, as well as to the development of innovative strategies to confront violence in this context, a phenomenon still scarcely investigated in the national context.

Although the present study does not deplete the analytical possibilities that the findings allow, the empirical categories revealed by the gender look reveal the affective sexual relations as a contradictory phenomenon, permeated by conceptions that both surpass and reiterate gender violence and inequality. In mobilizing the expression of these discourses, the game emerges as an artifact whose mediation of language and experiences is revealed as a dialogical possibility for the construction of meanings and new modes of subjectivation about affective-sexual relations. The results also show concrete social needs, related to the problematization of conceptions that involve the construction of gender, based on binary hierarchies, giving foundations to violence.

Authors' contributions

All authors participated actively throughout the stages of preparation of the manuscript.

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However, at this stage of the study the debate about violence is expressed very timidly on the occasions when the theme was mobilized, whether in the players' responses or in the problem situations presented in the game. The reconstruction of these conceptions requires the search for a procedural and dialectical path for the development of communicative action, based on the promotion of gender equity. Thus, it is necessary that disruptive strategies allow the debate, reflection and dissemination of information about this problem in the different spheres of reality.

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