

Masculinities representations in educational contexts: an integrative review

Representações de masculinidades em contextos educacionais: uma revisão integrativa

Representaciones de las masculinidades en contextos educativos: una revisión integradora

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Highlights

Integrative review analyzes representations of masculinities in educational research in an anti-democratic context.

Educational institutions have chosen not to encourage critical discussions about gender and sexuality.

Cultural pedagogies contribute to both maintaining and challenging the cis-heteronormative.

Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze how representations of masculinities appear in research related to the Brazilian educational context, as seen in literature published in scientific articles between 2018 and 2024. To achieve this, an integrative review (Kramm, 2019) was conducted, with data examined through content analysis (Bardin, 2015) and intersectionality (Collins, 2020). Three categories emerged: *Difference and valorization of the pattern*; *Absence and silencing*; and *Resistance and resignification*. These categories were discussed in light of decolonial theoretical perspectives (Castro-Goméz, 2007; Lugones, 2018; Mignolo, 2008). The analysis indicates that representations of masculinities are mostly aligned with the cis-heterosexist, white, and elitist pattern. A lack of discussions on gender and sexuality, especially in schools, was observed, making it difficult to include these themes. Despite this, the Brazilian educational landscape, far from being neutral, also harbors masculinities that challenge norms, generating resistance and creating possibilities to reverse oppressive situations.

[Resumo](#) | [Resumen](#)

Keywords

Representations of Masculinity. Gender Relations. Education.

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| Introduction

Contemporary times reveal a global crisis of capitalism, affecting gender relations, especially in educational contexts, due to political polarization, economic recession, conservatism, and religious fundamentalism (Fraser, 2020). The crisis of Western democracies legitimizes authoritarian tendencies, notably among conservative leaders, who promote similar visions of masculinity in the neoliberal context.

In general, they manifest rhetoric associated with a hegemonic, dominant, and assertive masculinity (Viveros Vigoya, 2018). They present themselves as *outsiders*, emphasizing the image of the strong man who is resistant to traditional political structures; they oppose discussions on gender and sexuality, especially in schools; feminist advances and LGBTI+ rights¹; they defend patriarchal views of family values; they despise democratic norms, adopting law and order stances; and they discredit scientific knowledge.

Representations of masculinities are ways in which meanings are attributed to gender roles in specific contexts (Connell, 2016). Thus, we infer that these representations do not produce fixed and immutable interpretations, but are constantly molded to sociocultural practices, elaborated from knowledge processes that mobilize power relations (Seffner, 2016).

In recent years, studies investigating the relationship between masculinities and education have increased. Previous studies have examined how this topic is addressed in theses and dissertations in this area of concentration (Henrique et al., 2024). However, broadening this search is important to enrich the debate with other researchers on the representations of masculinities and their relations with the educational context.

Given this scenario, in this study we seek answers to the following problem: how has scientific research addressed representations of masculinities, considering both their (re)productions and (de)constructions in the current context of Brazilian education? This article aims to analyze how representations of masculinities appear in research related to the Brazilian educational context in the literature published as scientific articles between 2018 and 2024.

The time frame is justified by the political changes that have taken place in Brazil, especially since Dilma Rousseff's *impeachment* in 2016. This period was marked by the growth of ultraconservative and negationist discourses, and the approval of neoliberal educational policies, such as the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and the New High School (NEM). In addition, in 2024, the first decade of the National Education Plan (PNE) will end. The plan has generated controversy

¹ This acronym has gained consensus in the organized movement in Brazil, encompassing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people. The + symbol indicates this community's indeterminate, open, and constantly under construction nature (Quinalha, 2022).

due to its gender equity targets and anti-discriminatory actions, which have faced opposition from the ruling class.

The school is seen as a space where differences can manifest as violence, highlighting the importance of welcoming, inclusion, and respect. However, a survey by the *Todos pela Educação* institute revealed a decrease in the number of schools with projects to combat sexism, racism, and homophobia since 2015, reaching its lowest point in 2021 (Alfano, 2023).

With this in mind, we conducted an integrative literature review (Kramm, 2019). We pay attention to the idea that investigating representations of masculinities involves examining a variety of elements, such as traits, discourses, practices, and artifacts that contribute to the construction of male identities (Seffner, 2016). The data collected from this methodological movement was discussed in the light of intersectional studies and decolonial perspectives.

These theories elucidate hierarchical relations manifested in a system of exploitation and domination based on social markers such as gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, social class, etc. They also highlight subjectivities and knowledge that are often marginalized. For this discussion, we mobilized the concepts of coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2018), coloniality of knowledge (Castro-Goméz, 2007), and epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2008).

Currently, once unquestionable, the concept of masculinity is under debate, highlighting its possible inadequacy in contemporary times (Rosa, 2014). The way subjects interpret manifestations of masculinity in educational environments can shed light on gender and sexual inequalities and violence. This panorama, although often ignored in schools, persists in society, despite reforms in educational legislation.

| Method

This is an integrative literature review that seeks to analyze productions on representations of masculinities in the educational sphere. According to Souza et al. (2010), this research methodology combines data from theoretical and empirical literature, covering purposes such as defining concepts, reviewing theories and evidence, and analyzing specific methodological developments on a given topic. According to Rodrigues et al. (2022), the integrative review provides a qualitative approach that allows us to assimilate educational contexts in a complex and multidimensional way, especially in the field of education.

The following stages are planned: 1) Identification of the topic and selection of the guiding research question; 2) Establishment of criteria and the search sources; 3) Identification of pre-selected and selected studies; 4) Categorization of the selected studies; 5) Analysis and interpretation of the results; and 6) Presentation of the review and results (Kramm, 2019).

| Methodological development

The theme of this integrative review focuses on representations and, consequently, conceptions and meanings attributed to masculinities in the Brazilian educational scenario. This understanding can demystify the notion of knowledge's neutrality, leading to a reflection on the need to include discussions on social markers of difference across the board in teacher training.

These delimitations were essential to formulate auxiliary questions that guided the qualitative examination of the publications found: 1) How do the studies address representations/conceptions/meanings of masculinity (re)produced and/or (de)constructed in the Brazilian educational context? 2) How do they deal with social markers of difference, such as gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and nationality, when analyzing representations of masculinities? 3) What influences can be perceived in the sociocultural and subjective experiences of the subjects participating in these investigations?

The structuring of these elements led us to think of the following descriptors: *representations, meanings, conceptions, gender, masculinity, school, education, teaching, teachers*. They were drawn up amid exploratory readings on concepts of social representations of masculinities (Connell, 2016; Seffner, 2016), especially in discussions that dealt with non-hegemonic masculinities and their connections with the teaching field (Rosa, 2014).

For the search, we chose to use *SciELO* and the *Portal de Periódicos Capes*, free databases that make it easy to locate and select articles. This choice is due to the fact that both platforms integrate several repositories, providing access to a wide variety of scientific journals. This can guarantee the comprehensiveness and quality of the studies included in the review.

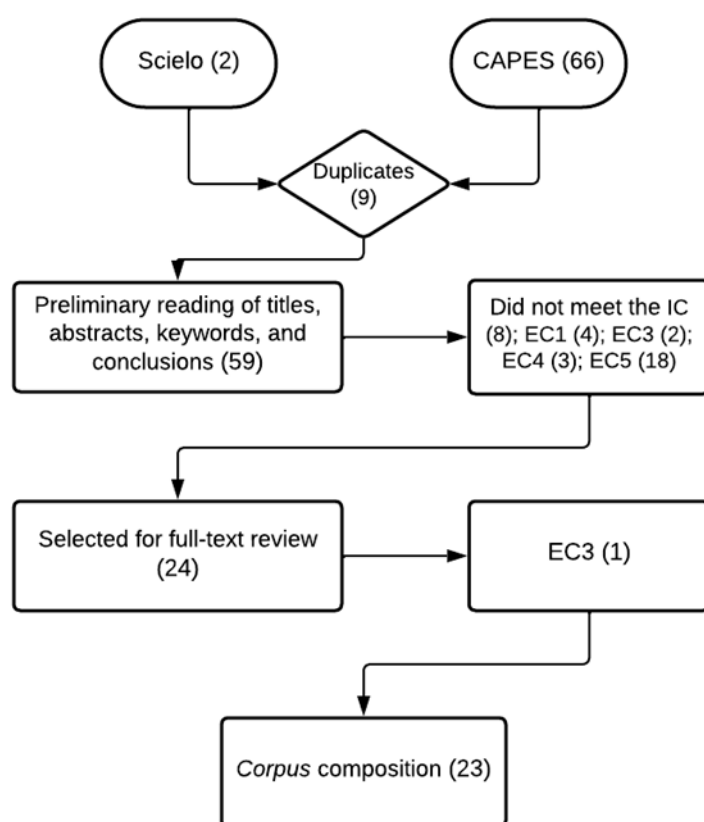
Based on the combination of the descriptors listed, we created a search coefficient using Boolean Operators. The formula (*representations OR meanings OR conceptions*) AND *gender AND masculinity AND (school OR education OR teaching OR teachers)* was applied to both databases, with language and time filters. The search was carried out in April 2024, resulting in 2 articles in *SciELO* and 66 in *Periódicos Capes*. The 2 *SciELO* articles were also found in *Periódicos Capes*, and 7 repetitions were identified exclusively in this portal. After excluding the repetitions, 59 articles were analyzed based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, initially evaluating their titles, abstracts, keywords, and conclusions.

The inclusion criteria (IC) adopted were: articles on representations/significations of masculinities in the Brazilian educational context, published in indexed journals, in Portuguese, between January 2018 and April 2024. To be included in the *corpus* of this review, the article had to meet all the criteria. As a result, 8 articles were excluded: 5 for not being in Portuguese and 3 for exclusively discussing representations of femininity.

Thus, 51 articles were subjected to the following exclusion criteria (EC): productions that were presented as literature reviews (EC1 – excluded 4); works in other publication formats than scientific journals (EC2 – no exclusions); texts in other genres and formats than scientific articles (EC3 – excluded 2); articles that discuss the subject in foreign educational contexts (EC4 – excluded 3); works on areas of knowledge such as health, cinema, literature, sport, media and administration, not related to the pedagogical field (EC5 – excluded 18). That left 24 articles, which were read out in full for verification. At this stage, one article was excluded in the face of EC3.

Figure 1

Flowchart of the *corpus* constitution process



Source: the authors.

Therefore, the *corpus* of this integrative review consists of 23 articles, shown in Table 1, organized from the most recent to the oldest. All of them deal with representations/significations of masculinities in the Brazilian educational context and were published between 2018 and 2023. No publications were found from 2024 to the date of the search.

Table 1

Articles included in the integrative review

Article title	Journal	Year
"Toys have no gender": visual culture and the visual construction of masculinities and femininities since the childhood	Educação em Foco	2023
Hegemonic masculinities under the childhood perspective	Psicoperspectivas	2022
"Men don't twerk"; "This girl is a bad influence for her classmates": reflections on human rights, gender and school	Retratos da Escola	2022
Discursive practices on gender among students of Fundamental Education II – final years and high school	Revista Educação	2022
Men in childhood education teaching: an analysis from the children's perspective	Revista Brasileira de Educação	2021
School actions and reactions to hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities: an anthropological view	Campos	2021
Problematizing hegemonic masculinity in soccer teaching / training: experience report in a social project lead by a student entity	Caderno de Educação Física e Esporte	2021
Construction of gender identities in childhood: the discourses of toys and play	Revista Pensar a Prática	2021
Researching youth masculinities in a school context: methodological challenges	Cadernos do Aplicação	2021
Gender and sexuality at school in times of globalization: perspectives and adolescent cultures in the Pantanal of Mato Grosso do Sul	Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação	2020
Publicity as cultural pedagogy: gender representations in the Jean-Paul Gaultier campaigns	Reflexão e Ação	2020
Everyday Life's Imageries in School: gender and sexualities in the designs of students at a public school	Retratos da Escola	2020
The "father's day" includes transexuals fathers: dissident masculinities and LGBTTQIA+ artistic practices	Revista Apotheke	2020
Gender relations in the history textbook: the dispute between norm and customs in 2007 and 2015	Tempo e Argumento	2020
University: space to (re)think gender conceptions, masculinity and their implications in the training of pedagogues	Diversidade e Educação	2019
"I wish I was born a girl": failing to comply with norms and masculinities at school	Diversidade e Educação	2019
Gender and education, interfaces with graffiti in a school environment: research possibilities	Colloquium Humanarum	2019
Black masculinities in the Portuguese language textbook (1)	Cadernos de Gênero e Diversidade	2019
"I remember to want to be hard, how it is said a man should be": gay body building in school	Revista Exitus	2019
Black teen narratives: between masculinities, school daily life and experiences	Cadernos de Gênero e Diversidade	2019
Discussing gender, sexuality and diversities in children through the PNAIC	RELACult	2019
Masculinities and school performance: the construction of	Cadernos de	2018

hierarchies among peers	Pesquisa	
Gender, sex and sexuality in early childhood education: what the documents of the municipal network of Florianópolis say	Zero-a-seis	2018

Note: (1) It corresponds to a free translation made by the authors from the original title, since the source consulted does not provide an official English version of the title.
Source: the authors.

We used thematic analysis to explore these articles, which consisted of three phases: preparation, coding, and categorization of the collected material (Bardin, 2015). We used intersectionality as an analytical tool (Collins, 2020), as it contributes to thinking about strategies aimed at equity, by addressing a range of social problems, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

The categories of analysis were defined based on the presence or frequency of shared themes among the articles. These themes emerged from a thorough reading of the *corpus*, considering their contribution to answering the research question (Bardin, 2015). The category *Difference and valorization of the standard* includes all 23 articles. The *Absence and silencing* category includes 22 publications. Finally, the *Resistance and Re-signification* category includes 19 works.

Results

All the studies take a qualitative approach, using mainly the following methods: participant observation (4); descriptive-exploratory (3); ethnographic (3); discursive analytical (3); documentary (2); bibliographic; (2)(auto)biographical narratives (2); focus group (1); cultural analysis (1); production of everyday meanings (1); art research (1).

In the selected *corpus*, 60% of the participants in the empirical research are students, both in basic education (10) and higher education (4). Teachers account for 12% (4), most of the time alongside students. Studies focusing on documents (2), textbooks (2), and other cultural artifacts² (4) account for 28% of the total.

Intersectional theory enabled the identification of social markers of difference related to gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, social class, and, to a lesser extent, religion in approximately 56% of the participants in these surveys. Deepened by its multifaceted nature, intersectionality highlights the experiences of people belonging to neglected groups (Collins, 2020). On the other hand, there were no markers such as nationality or disabilities.

As for representations of masculinity, the experiences of the research participants reveal that the contemporary Brazilian educational context is marked by three central aspects: the valorization of abusive rules of gender and sexuality that make difference a problem; the absence of pedagogical discussions on gender and sexuality, as well as the silencing of counter-hegemonic corporealities and subjectivities; and non-conformities and transgressions to cis-heteronormativity,

² Toys, sports, works of art and advertising campaigns.

promoting reflections and tensions that become synonymous with resistance and re-significations.

| Difference and valorization of the standard

This category examines how formal educational institutions suggest the reinforcement of hegemonic norms of masculinity, highlighting the way in which identities constructed around white cis-heterosexuality and crossed by ruling class ideologies, such as neoliberal meritocracy, are often imposed on subjects. This dynamic seems to encourage them to conform to a supposedly *correct way of being a real man*, so as not to be read as *different*.

Educational institutions, especially basic education institutions, are often described as spaces that reproduce uncritical, fixed and immutable gender ideas, contributing to the disciplining of the bodies that pass through them, mainly through pedagogies that end up teaching hegemonic masculinity as the only or correct way to be a man (Cavalheiro, 2019; Esper et al, 2022; Godoy et al., 2021; Lima & Mariano, 2022; Nascimento & Figueiredo, 2021; Rios et al., 2019; Silva et al., 2021; Silva Júnior, 2019).

Cavalheiro (2019) discusses how the school has become the central space for governing subjectivities, especially childhood-related ones. Esper et al. (2022) argue that school institutions and homes play a fundamental role in shaping children's gender identities through norms. As Freitas and Brêtas (2022, p. 164) explain, "being a man is a unique personal experience and is related to the way family relationships are, access to goods, and the conditions of socialization."

Research into drawings in Early Childhood Education and the Early Grades of Primary School indicates that cis-heteronormativity perpetuates gender stereotypes, portraying men as virile, strict, dominant, providers, and authoritarian (Esper et al., 2022; Santos, 2021). On the other hand, the drawings by teenagers in the final grades of elementary school and secondary school emphasize the penis as a cultural symbol, reducing the body to its genitalia. In addition, male homosexuality is often portrayed in a pejorative way in inscriptions on walls and school objects (Cardoso & Zimmermann, 2019; Silva Junior & Silva, 2020).

Lima and Mariano (2022) and Esper et al. (2022) emphasize that social and cultural practices influence gender identities unequally, based on biological distinctions between men and women. This highlights the influence of social institutions in perpetuating gender binarism. The construction of gender identity begins even before the birth of the child, when the biological sex of the foetus is identified and socio-cultural elements are incorporated into its constitution.

The place of difference in schools is the result of the contradictions and complexities inherent in the practices that take place within them (Freitas & Baíão, 2019). Thus, subjectivities that do not fit the hegemonic pattern suffer violence, which, according to Nascimento and Figueiredo (2021, p. 59), "is perpetuated by

students, teachers, and school bureaucrats within this framework of relationships and tensions."

In a third-grade class, Freitas and Baião (2019) observed a child who was often mocked for questioning the binary logic of gender. Rios et al. (2019) analyzed the narratives of gay teachers, revealing the naturalization of homophobia at school, highlighting prejudiced and discriminatory manifestations against LGBTI+ people. Nascimento and Figueiredo (2021) and Santos and Iriart (2021) agree that effeminate homosexuals face greater exposure to discrimination and mistrust.

Toledo and Carvalho (2018) identified that teachers' ideas about *good* and *bad* students reflect collective conceptions of masculinity. Thus, the students considered to be *bad* shared an intersection between gender, race, and class that resulted in non-white students being associated with indiscipline and poor school performance. Nascimento and Figueiredo (2021), as well as Silva Júnior (2019), report on the complexities faced by black masculinities at school, where the notion of not belonging prevails, reinforced by stereotypes of virility and hypersexualization.

Oliveira (2019) analysed representations of black masculinities in elementary school Portuguese language books and found that, in the books, the image of black men is a minority, generally discredited and marginalized. Ribeiro and Silva (2020) investigated conceptions of masculinity in high school history textbooks. They concluded that the books reinforce normative positions of being male and naturalize power relations between masculinities and femininities.

| The place of absence and silencing

This category analyses how institutions seem to avoid discussions about gender and sexuality, perpetuating and compulsorily privileging cis-heteronormativity and marginalizing non-hegemonic identities. This silencing reflects patriarchal family and religious influences. Given this, it can contribute to establishing environments that neglect diversity and rooting the construction of male subjectivities in rigid and exclusionary patterns.

In this sense, formal educational institutions are recognized as a *continuum* of binary disciplining, most often constituted by the abstention of discussions involving gender and sexuality, because they are topics seen as taboo in society (Cardoso & Zimmermann, 2019; Esper et al, 2022; Freitas & Baião, 2019; Freitas & Brêtas, 2022; Godoy et al., 2021; Lima, 2020; Lima & Mariano, 2022; Rios et al., 2019; Santos & Iriart, 2021; Silva & Lapinski, 2019).

Nascimento and Figueiredo (2021, p. 54) illustrate this reality when they state that in the school where they carried out their field research, "questions about gender and sexuality were not present in classes, not even from the biological matrix discourse". The silencing of gender and sexuality in schools reflects the growing authoritarianism, conservatism, and religious fundamentalism, especially of a neo-Pentecostal nature (Baliscei & Maddox, 2020; Lima, 2020; Nascimento & Figueiredo, 2021; Santos & Iriart, 2021).

Freitas and Baião (2019) point out that, in the current political context, teachers are often accused of indoctrination and of diverting children's innocence, making it risky to address these issues. In addition to the fear of curtailment and reprisals, teachers who address gender and sexuality face the invisibility of these themes in professional training processes and in official documents (Cardoso & Zimmermann, 2019; Nascimento & Figueiredo, 2021; Silva & Buss-Simão, 2018; Silva & Lapinski, 2019).

Oliveira (2019) observes that in textbooks, there is little concern on the part of authors to treat masculinities in a more egalitarian way, resulting in the near absence of non-hegemonic body representations. For the researcher, this stance causes a distancing between socially racialized/inferior students and the teaching material, which doesn't offer them references with which they can identify.

Gay teachers report school experiences marked by the weight of remorse, as described by Rios et al. (2019, p. 749), who explain: "the feeling of guilt stemmed from the fact that they considered themselves deserving of punishment for the abjection their bodies exuded". The culture of silence can result in a lack of self-awareness and, consequently, a lack of citizen awareness of the right to respect and inclusion. This is due to the lack of positive references to non-hegemonic masculinities and the erasure of dissident sexualities (Nascimento & Figueiredo, 2021; Rios et al., 2019; Santos & Iriart, 2021; Silva & Buss-Simão, 2018).

When it comes to issues related to black masculinities, the silencing is similar. Considering the rates of parental abandonment and hypersexualization of black men, Silva Júnior (2019) warns of the urgency of working with black adolescents on topics such as affection, caring, and the creation of bonds beyond the sexual act. Often associated with indiscipline, a black boy in 4th grade said that he "talked a lot in class because people didn't listen to him" (Toledo & Carvalho, 2018, p. 1019). This example illustrates how invisibility and negative stereotypes affect the self-expression and socio-emotional development of non-white boys.

Finally, it is important to note that these issues are not limited to formal institutions. Some studies discuss cultural pedagogies in which artifacts act as mechanisms for representing masculinities. Along these lines, they explore how toys, sports, and advertisements can reinforce the absence of counter-hegemonic references, affecting both students and educators.

In childhood, toys often contribute to naturalizing experiences based on the binary separation between boys and girls (Baliscei & Brasil, 2023; Godoy et al., 2021). Silva et al. (2021) report an experience involving soccer training for adolescents in mixed teams, which caused strangeness in boys who had never played with girls. These boys also acted with hostility towards boys considered to be less skilled. Silva Junior and Félix (2020, p. 54) also analyzed advertising campaigns for a perfume brand. They concluded that "the discourses signaled in these campaigns are aimed at white, young women and men with high purchasing power".

| The place of resistance and re-signification

In this category, we examine how students and teachers transform and subvert hegemonic norms of gender and sexuality. These re-significations seem to challenge stereotypes, especially in relation to black and LGBTI+ masculinities, promoting new forms of expression and understanding of identities. Resistance in the school environment suggests the ability to question and change rules, and can contribute to forming more inclusive environments.

Godoy et al. (2021) consider that the subjects who circulate in the school operate symbolic representations regarding gender and sexuality, and can transform them, giving them different meanings. In this sense, Lima and Mariano (2022) warn that social distinctions between genders, such as personality, power, *status*, behavior, and bodily traits, are not only determined by biology but also by sociocultural constructions.

Because school is a space frequented by all Brazilian children and adolescents, bodies, subjectivities, and representations that defy the standard usually meet there. As suggested by Baliscei and Maddox (2020), re-significations of masculinities have the potential to challenge hegemonic masculinity.

In Silva Júnior's research (2019), the stereotypes of black masculinities would have been shaken by the performance of a black and gay masculinity, which defended stable relationships, suggesting the formation of a family. In the same way, trans people destabilize the cis-heterosexual matrix because they subvert the coherence between sexualities, genders, and sexes in a way that is not intelligible to this normative matrix (Baliscei & Maddox, 2020).

The ethnography by Freitas and Baião (2019) reports the case of a 9-year-old black child who expressed the desire to *have been born a girl* and showed behaviors considered atypical for his gender/sex. Sensitized by the evident exclusion, the teacher introduced classroom activities that explored the resistance of people who represent different ways of signifying genders, sexualities, and other aspects of identity involved in power relations.

Santos and Iriart (2021) explored conceptions of counter-hegemonic masculinities among young women considered masculine and men considered effeminate, who reported the opportunity to express themselves outside of cis-heteronormativity. On the other hand, by assigning new meaning to the word "*queer*" to highlight these experiences in the school context, Rios et al. (2019) point out that *queer* children generally challenge the rigid norms established by the school, revealing the fluidity of gender and sexuality.

The drawings, graffiti, and inscriptions made by children and adolescents at school may indicate that, due to the lack of spaces and moments to discuss gender and sexuality issues, students resort to these forms of expression (Cardoso & Zimmermann, 2019). In addition, these prints also represent figures that challenge binary notions of gender and can question identities conceptualized as *cyborgs*

(Silva Junior & Silva, 2020). Both studies highlight the disconnection between graffiti production and the male gender, emphasizing works also made by women.

Participants in Toledo and Carvalho's research (2018) challenged the notion that school work is a female activity. Another example of the re-signification of masculinities is seen in the inscription *can't be sexist* on a drawing made by a student in the Early Grades, possibly reflecting a masculine ethic linked to gender equality (Esper et al., 2022).

The articles reviewed indicate gradual progress in discussions about discriminatory practices in teacher education (Cavalheiro, 2019; Lima, 2020; Silva & Lapinski, 2019). Some works from the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (PNAIC) address sexual and gender diversity, allowing teachers to question norms that are considered immutable (Cavalheiro, 2019). The curriculum guidelines for Early Childhood Education suggest deconstructing gender stereotypes, especially by promoting games in the school routine (Silva & Buss-Simão, 2018).

Two studies investigated reports by teachers in training. Lima (2020) examined the results of implementing a subject dealing with ethnic-racial education, gender, and diversity, in which all the classes rejected discrimination and homophobia. Silva and Lapinski (2019) point out that, for most future teachers, masculinity is seen as a social construction, and their university experiences influence this process.

Cultural pedagogies also trigger transformations in masculinities. Baliscei and Brasil (2023) note that not all toys follow a gender division, which can promote the same skills in all children. Silva et al. (2021) highlight the need to adapt soccer training to normalize female participation and break with behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity. Baliscei and Maddox (2020) examined works by LGBTI+ artists that challenge traditional concepts of family and fatherhood, seeing the potential to broaden the meanings attributed to masculinities.

| Discussion

Decolonial and intersectional theoretical inflections make it possible to think of gender from a relational perspective, in other words, from sociocultural asymmetries arising from unequal power relations. Viveros Vigoya (2018) places masculinity within a broader context of racialization and the generification of certain bodies. In this sense, gender relations are understood as structuring masculinities, and it is therefore necessary to reflect on the denaturalization of the oppressive characteristics of current masculinities.

The category *Difference and valorization of the standard* examines representations of masculinities shaped by the hegemonic standard (Connell, 2016), used to portray them and marginalize those who do not conform. These representations suggest the persistence of gender coloniality (Lugones, 2018), which points to the sexual and racial hierarchies imposed by colonialism, outlining articulations that are different from those of the white bourgeois colonizers. Thus, coloniality of gender

encompasses practices and discourses that perpetuate the colonial gender hierarchy.

The derogatory and subjugated way in which *other* masculinities, such as black and LGBTI+ masculinities, are confronted, based on biological binarism, reminds us of the colonial structure of domination and exploitation. For Lugones (2018), a gender system structured on patriarchal cis-heterosexism is in force, which imposes specific forms of masculinity that are centered on the interests of global capitalism, through the ruling class.

The *Absence and silencing* category emphasizes the suppression of knowledge that challenges coloniality of gender, whether by families or even by the school, which privileges the conventional representation of masculinity and tries to correct those who challenge it. These power dynamics reflect the legitimization of universalized and essentialist knowledge, often of Eurocentric and positivist origin. In the curriculum, the lack of dialog about gender and sexuality, together with the absence of critical sex education, reminds us of the coloniality of knowledge. Reflecting on the impact of this knowledge on society reveals a hierarchical framework of representations of masculinity, in which symbolic violence is evident.

The coloniality of knowledge refers to the production, legitimization, and dissemination of knowledge from a colonial perspective, recognizing its non-neutrality and non-universality, and its construction based on relations of power and domination (Castro-Goméz, 2007). This highlights how educational institutions tend to privilege Western epistemologies on gender and sexuality, marginalizing other forms of knowledge. Therefore, it is crucial to decolonize knowledge and value subaltern epistemologies to promote a diversity of perspectives in the academic and educational environment.

Cultural pedagogies, which inevitably cross subjectivities in the school environment, end up contributing to the maintenance of the colonialities of gender and knowledge, as they mostly involve reinforcing the cis-heteronormative that often fills the space left by silence. However, many cultural artifacts also help break down stereotypes ingrained in our culture.

The *Resistance and re-signification* category shows that, despite being the majority, the meanings that involve the imposition of hegemonic masculinity as a rule are also tense and contradictory, as they represent just one end of the polarized path that Brazilian society is going through. In this territory of coloniality, there are interruptions and fissures through which subjectivities pass, subverting and transgressing dominant norms and giving them new meaning.

The representations of masculinities manifested by black and LGBTI+ bodies contribute to the decolonization of thinking about gender and sexuality in educational contexts. This is because, according to Mignolo (2008), decolonizing implies giving visibility to knowledge that has historically been marginalized by dominant epistemological currents.

Naturalized truths about what it means to be a man can be deconstructed, especially when they are detached from the hegemonic, conservative, and colonial logic. These deconstructions are related to epistemic disobedience, a decolonial action that consists of unlearning universalist reasoning by considering multiple knowledges in the apprehension of a reality (Mignolo, 2008).

Given this, we infer that research is moving towards discussions that go beyond the limits imposed by norms and invisibility. They critically enter contexts marked by hierarchies of gender and sexuality, revealing knowledge outside the cis-heterosexist patriarchal structure. A main trend in the field seems to focus on counter-hegemonic representations of masculinity in educational contexts, which are immersed in power relations. Concerning traditional/colonial deconstructions, black and LGBTI+ masculinities are highlighted.

There are significant gaps for future research, including analysis of the meanings attributed to masculinities by university undergraduate students, teachers from different areas of knowledge, pedagogical and administrative teams from educational institutions, public education managers, and students' parents/guardians. In addition, it is necessary to explore in depth the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality, as well as other aspects of diversity such as nationality, religion, and disability.

| Conclusions

In the current context of Brazilian education, research has highlighted the hostile and authoritarian climate against the propagation of scientific discourses and approaches to gender and sexuality. This scenario seems to be reinforced, to a large extent, by the dissemination of conservative and fundamentalist ideas capable of influencing the (re)production of an oppressive, often unquestionable masculinity, supported by a system of subjugation aimed at all those who do not embody it. The image that prevails in hegemonic representations is based on white cis-heterosexuality, virile and providing, generally associated with an economic elite.

Even though there are already subjects focused on diversity in undergraduate curricula, the (de)constructions of this standard are usually stressed in school environments, especially when they fall on black and LGBTI+ masculinities, because they are considered different and inferior. These forms of masculinity seem to be opening up avenues for academic discussions that involve resisting oppression and other colonialities, as well as re-signifying this discriminatory and exclusionary gender system.

The emergence of new meanings about masculinities does not end the research carried out. On the contrary, it opens up new possibilities for study. Given that only teachers who have recently graduated or are still in training seem to have come into contact with discussions of this kind, enabling them to reduce this problem in schools, it is important to investigate the role of teachers in this context. In addition, we recognize the importance of exploring other databases to broaden our understanding of the subject.

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Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar como as representações de masculinidades aparecem nas pesquisas relacionadas ao contexto educacional brasileiro, na literatura publicada no formato de artigos científicos, entre 2018 e 2024. Para tanto, procedeu-se a uma revisão integrativa (Kramm, 2019), cujos dados foram examinados via análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 2015) e interseccionalidade (Collins, 2020). Três categorias emergiram: *Diferença e valorização do padrão*; *Ausência e silenciamento*; e *Resistência e ressignificação*. Elas foram discutidas à luz de perspectivas teóricas decoloniais (Castro-Gómez, 2007; Lugones, 2018; Mignolo, 2008). A análise indica que as representações de masculinidades estão majoritariamente alinhadas ao padrão cis-heterossexista, branco e elitizado. Constatou-se a ausência de discussões sobre gênero e sexualidade, principalmente nas escolas, dificultando a abordagem dessas temáticas. Apesar disso, o panorama educacional brasileiro, longe de ser neutro, também abriga masculinidades que desafiam normas, criando resistências e possibilidades de reverter quadros opressores.

Palavras-chave: Representações de Masculinidade. Relações de Gênero. Educação.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar cómo aparecen las representaciones de las masculinidades en las investigaciones relacionadas con el contexto educativo brasileño, en la literatura publicada en forma de artículos científicos entre 2018 y 2024. Para ello, realizamos una revisión integradora (Kramm, 2019), cuyos datos fueron examinados mediante análisis de contenido (Bardin, 2015) e interseccionalidad (Collins, 2020). Surgieron tres categorías: *Diferencia y valorización de la norma*; *Ausencia y silenciamento*; y *Resistencia y resignificación*. Se discutieron a la luz de perspectivas teóricas decoloniales (Castro-Gómez, 2007; Lugones, 2018; Mignolo, 2008). El análisis indica que las representaciones de las masculinidades se alinean mayoritariamente con el estándar cis-heterossexista, blanco y elitista. Hay una falta de discusión sobre género y sexualidad, especialmente en las escuelas, lo que dificulta el abordaje de estos temas. A pesar de ello, el panorama educativo brasileño, lejos de ser neutral, también alberga masculinidades que desafían las normas, creando resistencia y posibilidades de revertir los marcos opresivos.

Palabras clave: Representaciones de la masculinidad. Relaciones de género. Educación.

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