

*The rape in the periphery in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: students' social representations
and teachers' praxis*

*O estupro na periferia do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: representações sociais dos
estudantes e práxis docente*

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Abstract

Official data say that young residents of periphery are disproportionately affected by violence and that young black youth have 2.5 more chances of being killed when compared to a young white youth. Thus, this paper focuses on a research that aimed to identify social representations about urban violence between non-white students living in areas dominated by paramilitary forces. The structural approach of the representations proposed by Abric. The data were collected by means of a Free Word Association Test and processed using the EVOG software. The results showed that rape is the main offense with strong association to robbery and femicide of black women.

Resumo

Dados oficiais informam que os jovens residentes na periferia são desproporcionalmente afetados pela violência e que os jovens negros têm 2,5 vezes mais chances de serem mortos quando comparados aos jovens brancos. Assim, este artigo enfoca uma pesquisa que teve como objetivo identificar as representações sociais sobre a violência urbana entre estudantes não-brancos que vivem em áreas dominadas por forças paramilitares. A abordagem estrutural das representações sociais é proposta por Abric. Os dados foram coletados por meio de um Teste de Associação Livre de Palavras e processados no software EVOG. Os resultados mostraram que o estupro é a principal causa com forte associação ao roubo e feminicídio de mulheres negras.

Palavras-chave: *Estupro; Representações Sociais; Femicídio; Periferia.*

Key-words: *Rape; Social Representation; Femicide; Periphery.*

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1. THE RAPE IN THE PERIPHERY IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL: students' social representations and teachers' praxis

In Brazil, the violence among youngers, in the age group between 15 and 29 years old, victims of homicides and gender violence has been becoming one of the most worrying contemporary issues, afflicting, particularly, the youngers who live in dominated areas by paramilitaries and therefore are daily exposed to different kinds of urban violence.

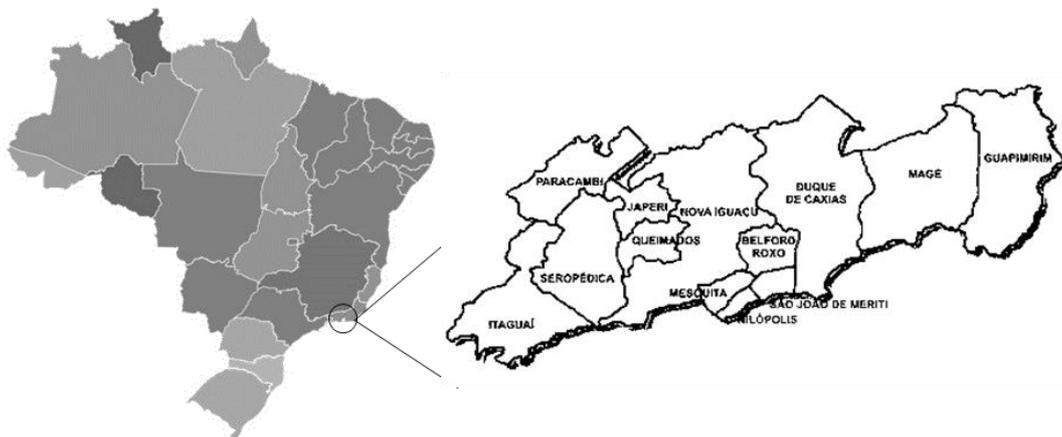
The most common case of urban violence that we are going to approach in this article is the rape, defined by the Article 213 of the Brazilian Penal Code as the act of “embarrassing someone, through violence or severe threat to have carnal conjunction or to practice or allow through this the practicing other libidinous act” (Brazil, 2009).

Official Brazilian data evaluate, even considering the police sub-notification, an average estimate of 822 to 1,370 rapes a day in Brazil (Atlas of Violence, 2019).

In the estate of Rio de Janeiro, from January to July of 2019, were notified 3.132 rape cases, it means a raise of 2.8% compared to the same period recorded in 2018 (Estado do Rio de Janeiro-ISP, 2019). Notably, in the region known as Baixada Fluminense, there were 1,088 rape notifications.

It is pertinent to inform that from the 13 municipalities that composes the region Baixada Fluminense (Figure 1), 11 are in the list of the of the 100 cities with the major number of violent lethality in Brazil (Atlas da Violência, 2019).

Figure 1 – Geographical distribution of the municipalities that composes the Region of Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro state – Brazil.



Source: Favela News Agency, 2018.

According to the “Dossiê Mulher 2016” (Woman Dossier, 2016) from Public Security Institute, the region of Baixada Fluminense registered 1,088 cases of rape in the year of 2015, corresponding to 26% of the total number of rape cases in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Table 1).

Table 1- Ratio number of rapes in the municipalities of Baixada Fluminense, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2015.

Municipalities of Baixada Fluminense	Rapes in 2015
Belford Roxo	115
Duque de Caxias	221
Guapimirim	16
Itaguaí	41
Japeri	41
Magé	77
Mesquita	48
Nilópolis	40
Nova Iguaçu	287
Paracambi	14
Queimados	51
São João de Meriti	113
Seropédica	24
Total	1.088

Source: Brazilian Public Security Forum³.

Belford Roxo presents, in the region of Baixada Fluminense, 10,6% of the rape cases in the year of 2015. From January 2016 to January 2017, the police station of Belford Roxo registered 125 cases of people who were sexually assaulted (Estado do Rio de Janeiro, ISP, 2019), an increase of 8%.

1.1. Brazilian legislation

The title of the law VI nº 12.015 of the Brazilian Penal Code, created on August 7th, 2009, modifies the previous literature that predicted rape as a penal action crime to public action crime.

³ From: <http://www.forumseguranca.org.br>.

Recently, in the year of 2019, the Brazilian Federal Government made effective changes to the Maria da Penha Law (Law 11.340/06). Some measures adopted included: i) the aggressor will be immediately removed from the victim's home; ii) the aggressor will pay all medical expenses; iii) the aggressor will not have provisional release; and iv) the judge shall be notified within 24 hours about the crime and shall decide, within the same period, on the maintenance or revocation of the applied measure, and also shall inform the Public Prosecutor concurrently (Brazil, 2019).

Moreover, the Lei Minuto Seguinte (Following Minute Law) (12.845/13) lists:

The hospitals must offer to the victims of sexual violence integral and multidisciplinary emergency medical care, aiming the control and the treatment of physical and psychic injuries due to the sexual violence, and referral to social assistance (Art1º); mandatory medical care in all hospitals that integrate the Health Unic System (Public Unic System of Health) (Art. 3º) (Brazil, 2013).

However, despite being clearly conceptualized in the Brazilian Laws, it seems to exist a tendency of relativizing the rape by doubting its merit. This is because it is not uncommon (even ignoble) the supposition that the victim may have facilitated the crime because of “her strong sexual appeal clothing, malicious attitudes, and risky sexual conduct” (Rodrigues, 2016, p.44).

Tuerkheimer (2004, p.962) acknowledges that the slowness of the penal imputability of the perpetrator “undermines the victim's credibility, obscures the batterer's motive and breeds juror apathy”, generating, therefore, in lack of reporting a significant portion of rape cases that occur in homes.

Before the Laws that criminalize the gender violence, some questions become pressing: why does the rape rate not decrease? Why do many women still scream silently in the alcoves of home? How does school must act in the deconstruction of rape culture? How must we discuss the violence theme in schools without a reductionist approach?

Thus, the purpose of this article is not to have the pretension of providing all answers but to identify among the elementary school students, in a school located in Baixada Fluminense, the socially elaborated and shared knowledge about the inductor term “Urban Violence” and, based on this information, what attitudes teachers, who act in this context, should approach in their pedagogical practices.

Hence, the main objective of this paper consists in identifying the set of explanations, beliefs and ideas about a given event. The Social Representations Theory, idealized by Serge Moscovici, in 1961, was appropriated as theoretical basis for this research.

1.2. Social Representation Theory

The choice for this theoretical contribution is due to its characteristics of trying to explain the men phenomena from a collective perspective, without losing sight of the individualist action on the object of representation.

Therefore, the Social Representation Theory is related to the comprehension of the symbolic exchanging in interpersonal relationships developed in different social environments.

The Social Representations “guide us in how we jointly name and define the different aspects of daily reality, how we interpret these aspects, make decisions, and eventually stand defensively against them” (Jodelet, 2001, p. 17).

Starting with a more conceptual character, Denise Jodelet (2001) states that the Social Representation designates a phenomenon of dynamics, daily and informal production of knowledge, common sense knowledge, understanding or the mastery of the social, material, and ideal environmental of such group.

According to the creator of the theory, the Theory of Social Representations occurs due to two phenomena interconnected: objectification and anchoring (Moscovici, 2003).

In Jodelet's consideration (1984 apud Sá, 1995, p. 37) anchoring occurs “by the cognitive integration of the represented object, ideas, events, people etc. to a preexisting social thinking system and the implicated information”. Therefore, anchoring is to classify and assimilates to a categorization process, once it attributes to objects a specific place in a network meaning (Moscovici, 1984).

The objectification, for its turn, is responsible for the images formations in which abstract notion are transformed in something concrete, familiar and almost tangible. Moscovici (1978, p.111) states that objectification “is also transplant to the level of observation what were only inferences or symbols”.

Therefore, “the social representations have as objective abstract meaning from the world and introduce order and perception that reproduce the world in a meaningful way” (Moscovici, 2004, p.46).

2. METHOD: RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research was conducted in a school unit in the municipality of Belford Roxo, Baixada Fluminense Region, which is 37 km from the capital of Rio de Janeiro, having geographic coordinates: 22.765011 latitude and 43.398602 longitude.

For this research we chose a non-probabilistic sample of intentional choice, considering the knowledge of the researcher about the investigated context.

Participants

Participants were 8th and 9th students and all teachers who work with these students in a public school located in the municipality of Belford Roxo, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil.

The average age of the students is 14,1 years old (standard deviation= 0,72). Of these, 43 were males and 48 females, composing a sample of 91 people (89% of the enrolled students for the above-mentioned school years). Of these, 32 (35,2%) self-declare Caucasian, 37 (40,6%) brown and 21 (24,2%) black.

Regarding the teachers: the average of age is 44,2 years (standard deviation= 11,1). Of these, 11 were females (64,7%) and six males (35,3%), totaling 17 participants teachers (100%). The average teaching time is 19,9 years (standard deviation= 9,8). Eight teachers (45%) self-declare Caucasian, four (23,5%) brown, and five black (29,5%).

Data collection and analysis

It was applied to the students a Free Words Association Test (FWAT), which allows the person to speak and write words that pop up to his mind after being stimulated by a word or an inducing expression.

The word association methodology is closely linked to the historic development of Psychological and Psychiatric. Francis Galton (1879/80) was the first person to build an association word list, however, it was Freud that, in collaborating with Breuer, who introduced in 1895 the “free association” as a therapeutic method and Jung used it as a diagnostic method to reveal the “complex” (Merten, 1992).

Since the 80's, the technique of Free Words Association is used in Social Psychological researches context, with emphasis on Social Representation, being part of projective technique, guided by the hypothesis that psychological structure of personal subject becomes conscious through conducts, reactions, evocations, choices and creations manifest. Nowadays, this technique is one of more used in order to determine the individual's cognitive structures about concepts, analysing the links between them (Kurt et al. 2013).

In this research, the inductor stimulus used was the term ‘urban violence’. Hence, we have requested to the 91 students to list the first six words that popped up on their minds, linked to inducing expression in five minutes.

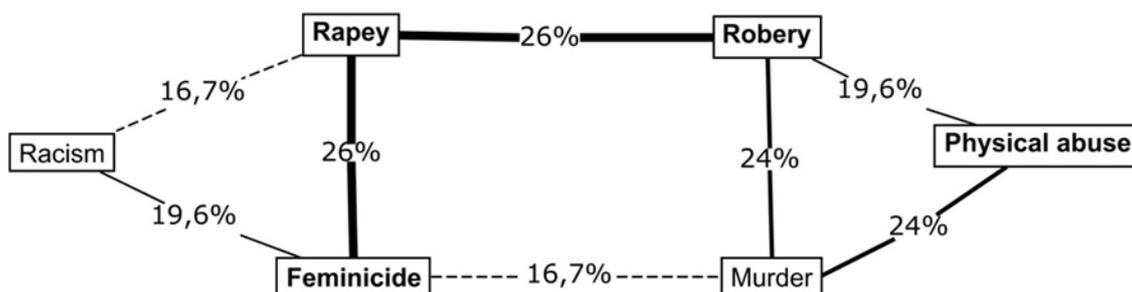
The evoked answers were analysed and treated by Evocation 2003® software (Vergès, Scano & Junique, 2002) which offers the prototype analysis of representation, it means, the frequency and prevalence of evoked words and cooccurrence between the words. The co-occurrence allows the visualization of Social Representation organization through the connexion strength of evocated elements.

With regards to teachers, it was applied a questionnaire with ten assertive questions about the thematic of rape and its praxis. For each assertive question, we attempted to verify the level of concordance using, for it, the Likert scale (Likert, 1932).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The prototype analysis of students evocations about the inductor stimulus “urban violence” revealed with more frequency (f) and prevalence (AOE) the following evocations: Femicide (f=20; AOE= 3,55), Rape (f=19; AOE= 3,26), (f=20; AOE= 3,55), Robbery (f=17; AOE= 2,57), Physical Aggression (f= 13; AOE= 2,38) and Prejudice (f= 12; AOE=3,33). However, when we verify the strength of the connection with the other evoked words, we notice that the term “rape” is the one that supports the social representation about urban violence (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Coocurrence analysis of the words evoked in the Social Representation about the inducing term “urban violence” by elementary school students from a public school in Belford Roxo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



In the figure: words in bold are those that had highest frequency and prevalence.

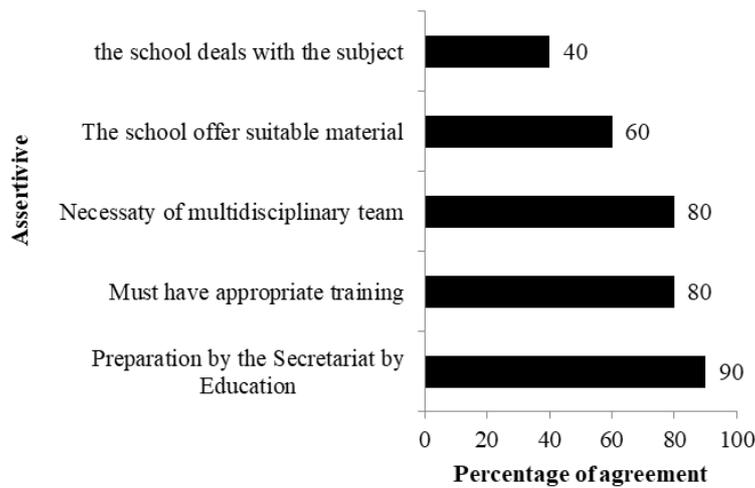
For the adolescents in this research, rape is strongly associated to the death of the black woman. It seems that this data goes aligns with Andrade’s research (2018), which states openly that black woman is preference victim of rape crime in the possible genesis of this preference, rape, particularly on Brazilian black women, seems to have source on slavery heritage where the slaved women belongs to the buyer and was “treated as commodity that provided sexual services and generated children who would be new slaves” (Silva, 2017, p.544).

Another verified relation on image 2 is the rape summed with robbery and murder, typified as heinous crime in which the rubbered victim is sexual abused and then assassinated. In this case it is important to be understood that robbery followed assassination is a situation that, by its own, needs a special attention. Moreover, when associated to rape, it is revealed that is a crime practiced by perpetrator with psychopathic personality (Debwska et al; 2015; Laws, 2016; Watts, Bowes, Latzman, & Lilienfeld, 2017).

Since crime of rape has been being recurring in an age range of adolescents and youngers in scholar age, what do primary teachers who teaches for this group, think about this theme in their praxis?

Figure 3 reveals the assertive that present the highest degree of agreement about the theme ‘rape’ in the teachers’ professional practice.

Figure 3 – Relations of the assertive with their respective percentage of agreement.



Hence, 80% of teachers in this research agree that the theme rape is relevant, but there is a dissent about the fact of the discussion about this theme in pedagogic meetings.

Although a significant portion (80%) agreed that the theme is relevant, just 40% states that they have appropriate training, and as a result, they feel that need to be trained about the theme by local Educational Government Department (90%).

80% of teachers prefer a multidisciplinary team, like psychologists, social assistants and nurses to, effectively, contribute to encourage the fight against this kind of violence.

In a spontaneous speech and without being questioned by researchers, two teachers, willingly, resolved talk about the theme.

In the first case, a 47 years old teacher confessed she was sexual abused by her stepfather when she was a child and stated that this image seems to be crystalized in her mind and states she was not able to approach this theme with her class. When the same teacher suspicious that a child maybe could be passing for something like this, she immediately tries to change the subject as a scape mechanism, as a way for not remembering the awful moments she lived with her stepfather.

The 2nd case is about a 44 years old teacher that stated he has a very catholic family and, because he was also catholic, he used to help the priest on his religious activities. At any given time, when he was very young, the priest molested him. In the beginning, he thought that was normal, by the way, the priest used to be a very dear person on his family and community, however, the attacks increased until the penetration

moment... “Nowadays I confess that my link with God and with church is not the same anymore. I cannot get in a church without remembering the episode” (Teacher, 44 years old).

Situations like that are not rare, so, how to approach the sexuality theme in Brazilian schools, since the century XX, is not a new proposal, although there is a resistance by part of some conservatives.

Normative documents, like *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (from Brazilian Portuguese National Curriculum Parameters), for example, propose that Sexual Orientation theme be transversally discussed in the classroom.

However, the difficulty of transversality verified in Brazil, aligns with the observations of Martinez-Alvarez and his co-workers collaborators (2012) when they noticed that something similar happened in Spanish Schools like: lack of specific formation, mismatch between teachers ideas, lack of sexual monitoring of sexual practice, lack of structure, disinterest about the theme and, mainly, lack of educational policy that incorporates the theme to the curriculum, not just in a specific course.

What is currently being discussed is whether the school intervention could empower children to identify possible abuses and avoid a consequent school dropout.

At Rozina Karmaliani’s and collaborators opinion, who worked with more than 1700 Pakistanis children, the intervention by itself is not able to change all parts of a child’s life but may empower them to be more assertive, strengthen their school performance and engage with the learning (Karmaliani et al, 2017).

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through this research, it was possible to observe that crimes against sexual dignity underwent several important changes since its initial classification as “Crimes against costumes and tradition”, with a noticeable evolution in its practical application. However, among the various type of violence, rape is the one that more grow statistically between young black women living in areas dominated by paramilitary force.

The rape naturalization, sometimes through media discourse, sometimes in daily practice by these young people seems to constitute the Social Representation genesis about the inductive term “urban violence”.

We believe that an effective and non-stop partnership with healthy agencies and with Public Ministry could reach a most affective action about rape in school or any social interaction place.

It is known that teachers and other teaching professionals have the responsibility to communicate the competent authorities about any violence case or abuse against students under 18 (Law 8.069/90). But how to exercise efficiently this vigilance role, if many teachers are not capable to recognize the signs that children may be a victim of violence – especially in sexual situations – or be sure that they won't suffer any retaliation by the perpetrator?

In that way, we believe that continued education to the teachers about the theme and constant permanence of a multidisciplinary team will contribute significantly to the prevention process to succeed.

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