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*Artículos científicos*

## **Expresiones de la violencia patriarcal en adolescentes mujeres rurales**

*Expressions of Patriarchal Violence in Rural Women Adolescents*

*Expressões da violência patriarcal em mulheres adolescentes rurais*

**Oscar Cruz Pérez**

Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, México

[Oscar.cruz@unicach.mx](mailto:Oscar.cruz@unicach.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2452-2834>

**Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre**

Dvnires Instituto de Intervención Psicosocial, México

[hildeestebans@hotmail.com](mailto:hildeestebans@hotmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7736-9717>

**Germán Alejandro García Lara**

Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, México

[german.garcia@unicach.mx](mailto:german.garcia@unicach.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4075-4988>

**Jesús Ocaña Zúñiga**

Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, México

[jesus.ocana@unicach.mx](mailto:jesus.ocana@unicach.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0300-0797>

**Soledad Hernández Solís**

Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, México

[soledad.hernandez@unicach.mx](mailto:soledad.hernandez@unicach.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5621-986X>



## Resumen

La violencia en contra de las mujeres ha sido, en parte, la expresión de un sistema social patriarcal que ha creado dispositivos de control y sometimiento de las mujeres durante el devenir histórico. Este trabajo tuvo como objetivo recuperar los saberes y experiencias de adolescentes mujeres escolarizadas de bachillerato alrededor de la sexualidad, las prácticas sexuales y las relaciones con los padres/madres de una comunidad rural de Chiapas, México. Desde una perspectiva cualitativa fenomenológica, con un enfoque de análisis feminista y utilizando la técnica de grupos focales, se dio voz a 14 mujeres adolescentes con edades entre 14 y 17 años. En los discursos, las participantes evidenciaron que las expresiones de la violencia patriarcal se dan a través de la romantización de las relaciones amorosas en la pareja heterosexual; el ocultamiento, por parte de padres/madres, de información pertinente que las oriente sobre la sexualidad y las prácticas sexuales, y a través de tres formas específicas de sometimiento ante las normas patriarcales: no caer en la desgracia de un embarazo a temprana edad, la maternidad obligada en la prohibición del aborto y la reclusión al ámbito doméstico como consecuencia de la maternidad. Se concluye, a partir de las experiencias más significativas expresadas por las jóvenes adolescentes alrededor de la sexualidad, las prácticas sexuales y su relación con los tutores adultos que las rodean, que sigue vigente y de manera profunda en la subjetividad y los cuerpos de las adolescentes la reproducción de las relaciones de género que han perpetuado la subordinación de las mujeres frente al poder masculino, propio de las sociedades patriarcales.

**Palabras clave:** aborto, embarazo, mujer adolescente, sexualidad, violencia patriarcal.

## Abstract

Violence against women has been, in part, the expression of a patriarchal social system that has created devices of control and subjugation of women throughout history. The objective of this study was to recover the knowledge and experiences of female adolescents in high school about sexuality, sexual practices, and relationships with parents in a rural community in Chiapas, Mexico. From a qualitative phenomenological perspective, with a feminist analysis approach and using the focus group technique, 14 adolescent women between the ages of 14 and 17 were given a voice. In their speeches, the participants showed that the expressions of patriarchal violence occur through the romanticization of



love relationships in heterosexual couples; the concealment, by parents, of relevant information to guide them on sexuality and sexual practices, and through three specific forms of submission to patriarchal norms: not falling into the misfortune of pregnancy at an early age, forced motherhood in the prohibition of abortion and confinement to the domestic sphere as a consequence of motherhood. It is concluded, from the most significant experiences expressed by young adolescents about sexuality, sexual practices, and their relationship with the adult guardians around them, that the reproduction of gender relations that have perpetuated the subordination of women to male power, typical of patriarchal societies, is still deeply present in the subjectivity and bodies of adolescent girls.

**Keywords:** abortion, pregnancy, adolescent women, sexuality, patriarchal violence.

## Resumo

A violência contra a mulher foi, em parte, a expressão de um sistema social patriarcal que criou mecanismos de controle e sujeição das mulheres ao longo da história. O objetivo deste trabalho foi recuperar o conhecimento e as experiências de adolescentes alunas do ensino médio sobre sexualidade, práticas sexuais e relações com os pais em uma comunidade rural em Chiapas, México. A partir de uma perspectiva fenomenológica qualitativa, com abordagem de análise feminista e utilizando a técnica de grupo focal, 14 mulheres adolescentes entre 14 e 17 anos tiveram voz. Nas falas, os participantes evidenciaram que as expressões da violência patriarcal ocorrem por meio da romantização das relações amorosas no casal heterossexual; a ocultação, por parte dos pais, de informações pertinentes que os orientam sobre sexualidade e práticas sexuais, e por meio de três formas específicas de submissão às normas patriarcais: não cair no infortúnio de uma gravidez precoce, a maternidade forçada na proibição do aborto e o confinamento à esfera doméstica como consequência da maternidade. Conclui-se, com base nas experiências mais significativas expressas por jovens adolescentes em torno da sexualidade, práticas sexuais e sua relação com os tutores adultos que os cercam, que ainda é válida e profunda na subjetividade e nos corpos dos adolescentes, a reprodução das relações de gênero que perpetuaram a subordinação das mulheres ao poder masculino, típico das sociedades patriarcais.

**Palavras-chave:** aborto, gravidez, mulheres adolescentes, sexualidade, violência patriarcal.



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## Introduction

Systematic violence against women has been made visible thanks to the historical struggle of women: from Olimpe de Gauges with its Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens in 1791, within the framework of the French Revolution, to the various waves of the feminist movement. In the case of Mexico, extreme expressions of violence such as femicide have been classified in the regulatory framework (National Human Rights Commission [CNDH], 2014).

Mexico's regulatory framework is one of the most progressive in Latin America, however, its application in the daily lives of women is far from being desirable, since an element that is structural in our culture persists in a deeply rooted way. our society: patriarchy. Patriarchy is a basic element in societies that Rubin (1975) named sex-gender systems and that he defines as the “set of provisions by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which they are satisfied. those transformed human needs” (p. 97), which constitutes, for this author, the genesis of the historical oppression and subordination of women. In this way, "the patriarchal system is understood as the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children within the family and its extension over women in society in general" (Lerner, 1986, p. 341).

The existing social institutions "are patriarchal to the extent that their function allows the reproduction of inequalities and the various forms of discrimination against women" (Facio and Fries, 2005, p. 282). For Segato (2016), patriarchy in the 21st century must be understood in its high-intensity colonial-modern character, which, hand in hand with capitalism, transforms "lethal assaults against women into 'problems of particular interest' or 'issues of minorities' to counter any movement that destabilizes and challenges it" (p. 96).

In this sense, all violence against women is always an expression of the patriarchal system that has transformed its mechanisms of control and subjection of women during the course of history. Through patriarchal institutions, such as school, religion and family, the relationships of violence that are most deeply rooted in subjectivity are reproduced, mainly in the traditional family model, which places women in subordination to male power, of the



patriarch, and disposes of his sexuality and his body for the sexual and reproductive control of the men under whose domain they are, be they boyfriend, husband or father (Facio and Frías, 2005, p. 281).

One of the most subtle ways by which the patriarchal system reproduces this model of violence is affectivity, emotions and feelings, among which is love. From a social analysis, affectivity is not limited to an individual subjective process, but is the result of a sociocultural process, a consequence of human interactions. This principle makes it possible to question the reduction of the affective process as a biological process and, thereby, open the possibility of "dismantling the assumptions of affective life as a natural place for women" (Velázquez, 2021, p. 20).

In the dichotomous vision of the world imposed by patriarchy, women have been stereotyped as essentially sentimental, affectionate, loving, in such a way that a woman does not fully realize herself as such if she does not marry and have sons or daughters; In addition to this, she must be faithful to a single marriage and dedicate herself to the care of her husband and children (Cumes, 2012; Lagarde, 2005; Muñoz, 2012).

According to Velázquez (2021), in studies on love in the Mexican and Chiapas population, this model of patriarchal subjectivity is found in its forms of romantic love, fidelity or monogamy and appears as the basic sustenance in stories of young single mothers in studies on infections. of sexual transmission such as HIV and also as a central element in the choice of a partner by young indigenous women, particularly in cases of transgression of local customs of arranged marriages.

Romantic love is for Velázquez (2021) one of the products of capitalism, specifically in its neoliberal turn, which reproduces the pattern of violence against women. Velázquez himself (2021) defines it as follows:

A model of sexual-affective relationship, created in the West to help support the recently established capitalism and whose founding characteristic is to be placed as supreme in relation to other love interactions. It can only be experienced as a heterosexual couple, so it demands monogamy, particularly from women, and is sustained by the romantic fantasy of omnipotence and eternity. (p. 78).

This refers to the cultural association between sexual practice and the emotional and affective dimension directed exclusively towards women and that results in the reproduction of relationships that keep them subordinated to culturally superior values of



men: such as maintaining virginity until marriage or pay the guilt that his transgression entails.

As a product of sexual practice, human procreation is a biological process, however, motherhood and fatherhood are social constructions, since they are repositories of meanings and meanings that refer to specific social practices (Berger and Luckman, 1984). Sánchez (2016), who reviews the historical studies and theoretical debates on this topic, argues that:

Motherhood is crossed by power relations, inequalities of class, race and ethnicity, which underpinned a hegemonic model made from modernity. While these mechanisms were inserted as systems of control and surveillance of women and their bodies. The production and reproduction of this model organizes relationships, practices, discourses, political conditions, as well as legal forms, which produce the mother subject and, in turn, provide guidelines for the surveillance and punishment of those mothers who challenge it. (p. 924).

As a hegemonic model, motherhood not only establishes a mandate, that is, the obligation to be a mother, but also the correct ways of being one. Sánchez (2016) puts it this way:

The sensitive, selfless and self-sacrificing mother model is intimately linked to the essence of femininity, marked by the collective imagination and the construction of subjectivity that leads to values and models that socially represent women-mothers within social structures. and of power (p. 937).

The interruption of pregnancy or abortion is a subversive act of this hegemonic model, because it contradicts the mandate of motherhood, it is the other side of the coin of the subjugation of women: the materialization of unwanted motherhood. In many cases, it is the expression of a personal will or an intimate desire that the patriarchal system insists on annulling, silencing and, ultimately, prohibiting.

Based on the historical review of various authors such as Bellucci (2014), Lamas (1992, 2009) and González and Jaramillo (2020), we can understand abortion as a moral construction to control the body of women, with the aim of perpetuating the patriarchal power. This construction is associated with the Judeo-Christian influence that made abortion synonymous with sin and crime, establishing that the soul is already present in the human being in formation from the moment of gestation. However, the progress made in the conquest of women's human rights includes the right to legal abortion and the



application of the pro persona principle in any situation of violence. Although not free from debate and strong resistance, the process of decriminalizing abortion is gaining ground worldwide.

This social system is present throughout human development, although in specific ways at different times. Adolescence is a stage of life in which various physiological and subjective factors intervene. In terms of Martell, et al. (2018):

Factors such as the pubertal process, acceptance of body image, discovery of sexual needs, personality development and the establishment of one's own system of sexual values participate in the development of the adolescent, all while the adolescent is under pressure. exercised by their peer group or their parents' reactions to this sexual development (p. 16).

In the case of women, this process is made more complex by the validity of the western patriarchal system, which marks gender patterns that turn sexual differences into key elements of inequality, which places them in situations of greater vulnerability to transition towards adulthood. (Arias, 2021; Czech, 2005).

We share the proposal of Barrios-Klee (2017) when he states that it is very important to account for gender-based violence and that "placing these debates on the agendas of both social movements and academic and university spaces contributes to dismantling imaginaries and power relations, to move in the slow process towards an equitable and fairer society" (p. 9).

## Methodological process

This work was carried out within the framework of the research project "Adolescent pregnancy and school violence in the municipality of Tzimol, Chiapas 2018-2020" of the academic body "Education and contemporary social processes" of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, University of Sciences and Arts of Chiapas, Mexico, with the specific purpose of recovering the knowledge, knowledge and experience of adolescent women attending high school about sexuality, sexual practices and relationships with parents in a rural community of Chiapas, Mexico.

A phenomenological qualitative methodological perspective was used, with a feminist analysis approach. The qualitative method allows us to understand the meanings and definitions that people give to the phenomena and situations that they experience in





everyday life, to which the researcher gives meaning through an interpretive process (González and Patiño, 2017). From phenomenology it is possible to account for the experiences and interpretations of people in the face of the different phenomena that are of interest to study (Álvarez, 2003). While from the feminist methodology, the recovery of the situated experiences of women is prioritized, considering that these are always the product of a social, historical and cultural context that gives senses and meanings to practices and social relations (Castañeda, 2008 ).

In accordance with the methodological perspective, the focus group technique was used, with the intention of giving the participants a voice and narrating their experiences and interpretations of sexuality, sexual practices and relationships with their parents.

The research context was San Vicente La Mesilla, one of the communities in the municipality of Tzimol, in the state of Chiapas. The municipality of Tzimol is located in the XV Meseta Comiteca Tojolabal socioeconomic region, which is considered an urban area of priority attention, for having a population that registers high rates of poverty, marginalization, the existence of marked insufficiencies and lags in the exercise of the rights to social development (Ministry of the Interior, 2020). San Vicente la Mesilla has a population of 2971 inhabitants, 51.9% are women and 48.1% are men. It should be noted that 12.25% of the population is illiterate. The illiteracy rate is higher in women (7.03%) compared to men (5.22%); This same trend is observed in the level of schooling by sex: while men have an average of 6.27 years of schooling, women have 5.9 (National Institute of Statistics and Geography [Inegi], 2021).

In San Vicente La Mesilla, as in many rural communities, a dialogue is established between the rural and the urban; its streets are paved, it has educational infrastructure up to the high school level, there is an important commercial dynamic for clothing, basic products, food, prepared meals and maintenance and repair services for vehicles and cell phones. Their daily dynamics are influenced by an important tourist center that provides them not only with economic income, but also with the presence of national and foreign tourists.

Regarding the rural and urban in Latin America, there is greater agreement among scholars that "the historical processes of the regions and territories of Mexico have a social, cultural and economic conformation that brings the rural closer to the urban and the urban to the rural. " (Ramos, 2018, p. 13). However, the communities closest to rural areas in



Chiapas are characterized by greater deficiencies in terms of public services, urbanization and access to technological means of communication.

The most important economic activity in San Vicente La Mesilla is work with the land and water (through irrigation canals) in the production of sugar cane, which employs the labor of South American migrants who, although they are a temporary population, in some cases they have been established for several years in the locality. It is a community with access to the information media, mainly open television and radio that reproduce, in their programs, traditional roles and gender stereotypes that, as has been shown by various studies, favor gender violence (García, 2018; Federal Institute of Telecommunications, s. f; Rodríguez, Pando and Berasategi, 2016).

The participants were 14 female high school students from the San Vicente La Mesilla community, aged between 14 and 17 years, who represent 60% of the female population of the school. Two focus groups were held on different days. Each group was made up of fellow volunteers from the same school grade to promote an environment of trust between them that would allow the fluid expression of their ideas. The first semester group consisted of six members and the fifth semester group with eight participants. Two sessions lasting two hours each were developed. These sessions were held in the classrooms of the same school, with the informed and voluntary consent of the participants; For this, the project was presented to the educational authorities and teaching staff and an invitation was made to all the groups of the school with the presence of the school counselor.

In qualitative research, dialogue and interaction are weighted as strategies to investigate the subjectivity of people (González and Patiño, 2017). And in this sense, the focus or focused group technique is useful to generate discussions and active participation around opinions, knowledge and experiences in a space of interaction, which produces an invaluable wealth of feelings, ideas, conceptions and representations of a situation. or topic of study (Hamul y Varela, 2013).

After the first session, the information collected was reviewed and interventions were planned to address pending issues and delve into the most significant issues. In the second session the topics were exhausted and the contents of the participations were repetitive, in other words, there was information saturation. A thematic guide on sexuality, sexual practices and relationships with fathers/mothers was used. These themes guided the narratives and speeches about their experiences and interpretations, which were audio-recorded and transcribed in Word format for review and analysis. The words of the



participants, the interventions of the researcher and listening were important instruments to account for the realities experienced by the female adolescents in this study.

The procedure followed was the following. The research project was presented to the authorities and teaching staff of the school to obtain authorization; Subsequently, all the groups were informed and the women were invited to participate, with the accompaniment of the school counselor. After identifying the days and hours available, the focus groups were carried out with the consent of each group for the recording of the audio and the use of the information obtained in future academic publications, respecting confidential data and ethical codes.

Analysis, in qualitative research, does not constitute an independent stage of the investigative process (Izcara, 2014; Ramírez, 2016). In this case, from the development of the first session of the focus groups, the information was reviewed, working hypotheses were built, which defined the second session and outlined the emergence of categories. Specifically for the analysis, the speeches of the participants that were captured in the audios were literally transcribed in Word format. This material was read and reread to get a general overview of its content and outline forms of organization, segmentation or purification of information. Significant discursive units were identified, all those that had the same meaning were grouped and then the categories of analysis were constructed.

## Results

Based on the three axes of discussion raised in the focus groups, which were sexuality, sexual practices and the relationship with parents regarding the issue of sexuality, we found that there is a general recognition among the participants that sexuality is more than intercourse or sexual act, they share the idea that “sexuality is something that defines us when we are born; if we are men or women” (Lily),<sup>1</sup> while sexual practice is understood as coital sexual relations between a heterosexual couple.

Although this conception of sexuality expresses a differentiation between sexual practice and sexuality, it also reflects the conception of such a difference from gender roles, since being "men" or being "women" marks, for them, patterns of behavior and define their way of being and being in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> The names assigned to the testimonies that illustrate the collective experiences are pseudonyms to preserve the anonymity of the participants.



We are talking about behaving like the people we are, for example, if I am a woman, the most logical thing would be to dress like a girl, use haircuts like a girl or do activities that women normally do; it would be a way to exercise our sexuality too (Dani).

Regarding relationships with their fathers/mothers on the subject of sexuality, all of them acknowledge having figures of family authority: biological father/mother or grandparents/grandmothers as normative referents of their sexuality. In this way, the following categories are established as a result of the analysis of the participants' discourse.

In the first place, the presence of romantic love as an axis present in the subjectivity of these young adolescents that marks their conceptions regarding a relationship, which is not conceived without love.

Secondly, the denial of information from parents about women's sexuality as a way of controlling the decisions of young women, given their condition as girls in a relationship of dependency towards father/mother figures.

Third, submission as a patriarchal mandate, which in this studied population is expressed through three forms of violence: meaning pregnancy as a misfortune that is sanctioned by the community and that must be paid for with subordination to authority figures; the imposition of motherhood as a personal responsibility through the prohibition of the interruption of pregnancy and having a child is synonymous with confinement to the domestic sphere and being under the guardianship of adults.

### **Romantic love**

Sexual practice, for these young women, entails a fundamental difference in the affective experiences between men and women; for them, women experience it as something special that involves feelings and emotions, while men experience it more as a natural need, of organic origin, of the body, which does not involve feelings.

This is more evident when it comes to first sexual intercourse, as shown in the following dialogue (focus group 1):

Lily: [Having sex] is something that doesn't happen at any time. If it's your first time, you can say that it's something more special for women because men don't, but women do, because it's the only time they can experience it, while men don't.

Ledy: It can be done several times but...

Estrella: But she talks about the feeling that she feels at the first time.

All: Ahhh, ok

Nina: Well, but the man also does it for the first time, although obviously we are more sentimental and [that's why] we feel it differently than a man.

While men also have a “first time”, this act does not have the same meaning of “special” as it does for women, and the defining element is the feeling involved for them. Being "sentimental" is a direct allusion to the emotionality culturally associated with being a woman, for which there are specifically special ritual acts for women such as "marrying in white" (Star), which symbolizes the purity of women, which accounts for his virtue and his ability to wait to “have sex until we get married” (Dani), that is, not to have sex before marriage.

The foregoing accounts for a process of romanticization of women's sexual life, that is, it converts an act considered of natural necessity for men, and therefore without any moral charge, into an act of love and affection that it imposes the subordination of women before the loved one, who in all cases cannot be more than a man; and that, in addition, it presents this form of relationship as the best and the only socially acceptable one so that the relationship lasts "until death do them part", as the religious slogan of marriage says, which is also part of the romantic construction that surrounds the availability to men of women's bodies.

### **The denial of information about sexuality**

Among the references of the participants regarding the relationship with their parents or guardians, the most significant experience that arises is the childish condition in which they are placed regarding the issue of sexuality, which is commonly imposed on the family from the authority of the dad. "They think 'you're my girl.' For parents, we will always be like ‘their’ little girls” (Nely). Under this logic, talking about sexuality is something that does not occur within the family, on the contrary, it is a subject considered inappropriate, particularly for women. "Parents are very closed on this issue, they consider that you are too young to know about it" (Sara).



However, this silence of information on the subject does not imply ignorance of the existence of the sexual dimension of life, since it is talked about through the prohibition. “They just [tell me] not to have sex [...]. They are more of 'Don't do this!'. It's not like they tell you 'Take care of yourself', it's more like 'Don't do it!'” (Star).

This prohibition accounts for the violent social structure that is sustained by the patriarchal imposition that tries to control, by denying information about women's sexuality, an experience that cannot be avoided, much less in puberty and adolescence, as the participants in the study put it very well.

What they do not take into account is that we are growing, we are developing, our bodies are growing, we have needs and, for example, exercising sexuality is also a need, it is not something that I am going to do just for fun or because I am rebellious or for whatever reason, but it is a need that all human beings have. So they don't stop to think that at any moment we can make the decision to, um, start practicing this (Rosa).

This constitutes a mechanism of patriarchal appropriation of the women's body, since the denial of relevant information to guide the informed decisions of adolescents results in consequences that apparently are desired to be avoided: risky sexual practice and pregnancies at a very young age , which subject young women to the reproduction of relations of inequality and subordination in front of the authority figures on which they are dependent.

### **The submission mandates**

The sexual practice for the participants is directly associated with adolescent pregnancy, and this, in turn, with various circumstances that constitute evidence of systematic structural violence that imposes a subjectivity of submission to social norms in the absence of alternative options.

### **Not fall from grace**

The general response of the participants to the possibility of a pregnancy at this time of their lives is rejection, fear, as a very bad situation personally, and in family terms, it would be a "disgrace" in front of the community. . A misfortune is something that is not wished on anyone. “Most people would see it as a disgrace, it can be said in that sense,



because it is not something that everyone would like [...], I feel that it would be a mockery [object of ridicule]" (Anita).

Adolescent pregnancy represents for them a mistake, a way of failing the father, that is, a transgression of the patriarchal mandate to be a good girl, because its consequences not only affect family dynamics, but also involve the entire community. On the one hand, it is a cause of family shame for disobeying the father and ignoring the advice of the mother, and on the other, it represents a bad example for the other young women; this is falling from grace, a condition in which young women would not want to be.

And it is that the error carries within itself the slogan of a guilt that the community itself has the task of making pay through criticism and gossip.

Ceci: As Jaqui says, it was criticism, gossip and more when the person you did it with doesn't support you, the criticism they make of you! And yes, the truth feels bad that they are criticizing you.

Anita: All the blame is given to the woman [...] and they take the man as "Ah, he already got someone else pregnant" and so, instead, the woman is left looking ugly [...]. The man is man.

The element of guilt for women is installed in the argument that parents give them all the conditions so that they can fulfill what is expected of them, and it is despite this that they make the mistake of getting pregnant, that is, they means pregnancy as a rational act, of free choice and decision on the part of the young woman, therefore, they are blamed and held responsible for its consequences. While for men there are no social sanctions, but acceptance and tolerance.

Some parents who give you almost everything, their hands full, well, that is, they do give you freedom, they do give you to study, they give you everything, and you make that mistake [...]. That is what my mother always advises me, that I should not do that, because it is a great responsibility and, well, if you want to continue studying, well, you have to be responsible and not make those mistakes (Estrella).

In this way, the experience of pregnancy for these young adolescents is the expression of a complex sociocultural mechanism: on the one hand, it seeks to discourage sexual practice through guilt and social punishment, on the other, it contradicts the conception of adolescents as girls. or infants, unable to understand and properly use information about their sexuality. What becomes evident then, is that the function of this



mechanism is the submission of the subjectivity and the body of the adolescents before the current patriarchal norms, which is reinforced with the complementary mechanism of acceptance, tolerance and non-sanction in against men for the same act.

### **The imposition of motherhood in the prohibition of abortion**

The discourse of the participants makes it clear that, although this is not the case for any of those present, they all know other young women who had to drop out of school because they were pregnant. It is very unlikely to find a young student pregnant; the immediate consequence is dropping out of school. Early pregnancy and childbearing seems to be common.

Here there are girls who at 12, 11 years old even, already have their babies and the truth is quite moving [...]. Girls younger than me and they already have their babies, like it's an extreme case that happens a lot here, you can even see it as normal to see a girl of 11, 12 years old, with her baby, even with two (Rosa).

The options of these young women in a situation of pregnancy, whatever the circumstance under which it occurred, is reduced to procreation and upbringing, with the consequent confinement to the domestic sphere. The idea of abortion is unthinkable. The reactions to his approach were, in unison for all the participants, that of not agreeing: "It is wrong", "I am against it", and arguments such as "What is the fault of that being that has been growing?" or "That's why you have to think things through before doing them!" (focus group 1 and 2).

Abortion is definitely not considered an option because it is seen as a violation of people's right to life, which includes as a person the product of a sexual relationship from the moment of conception. "Being pregnant, whether you are married or not, is a baby and now it is part of your body, you must take care of it in the best way [...]. You can't play with the life of a human being, it's something serious" (Dani).

For Dani, as for her companions, there is no difference between conception-gestation-pregnancy and baby. Baby refers to the meaning of a complete and defenseless human being, so that, for them, their right to life is an indisputable consequence from fertilization. From this meaning, the naturalized introjection of the duty to accept motherhood as a sublime capacity of women is observed: "Now it is part of your body, you must take care of it in the best way", which refers to the exclusive biological capacity, of





reproduction of the human species, of the body of women and that becomes an unquestionable responsibility to respect and protect. “There the mother has to think about her son and not just about her, because we are talking about a life” (Anita).

From this experience of Anita, the important life is that of the baby, the life of the woman-mother is subordinated to that of the baby. This patriarchal conception is sustained through religious institutions that mandate the consecration of the mother to the child, historically symbolized in the image of the Mother-Virgin-Pure and established through countless cultural devices, such as the celebration of Mother's Day, which is highly valued in these communities, and where the best mother is the one who gives her life to facilitate that of her children, particularly that of boys.

Similarly, there seems to be a clear awareness of the danger of death that abortion implies for adolescents.

Yes it is risky to abort a baby. With that life you are also at risk [...]. Those cases have happened that you can also lose your life, not only his, more if you are young, because you are a teenager, it is much riskier to abort (Sara).

Under these significant references, it is understood that being a mother, that is, assuming motherhood in a situation of teenage pregnancy, is the only option for the young women of this community, where the basic medical conditions to receive adequate care are also lacking. guarantee your health and well-being. The lack of basic conditions for health care for the population in general, and for adolescent women in particular, is an indicator of the structural conditions of the public service that, in terms of Segato (2016), can be read as a “lethal assault” against women, because it leaves them adrift in life or death situations in cases of risky pregnancies or deliveries, as well as in induced or spontaneous abortions. In other words, under patriarchal logic, this becomes a problem of particular interest to pregnant adolescent women: the responsibility of the State to provide medical care that guarantees the right to life of women and of all human beings is consequently minimized.

### **Seclusion in the domestic sphere**

The experience of most of the young women participating shows that all the young women who become pregnant in this community stop studying and do not work. In some cases, the parents themselves are responsible for taking care of them during pregnancy and after taking care of the grandson or granddaughter so that they can work and generate some



income. In others, when the couple remains, the young woman remains under the guardianship of the man's parents, who are responsible for the care of the new family.

Faced with a possible pregnancy, adolescents do not recognize any other option than to procreate the baby and assume all the consequences of motherhood: drop out of school and dedicate themselves to caring for the new family.

Jaqui: I think that I would be responsible, but it would be a bit difficult to continue with my studies, because that is what I want, I would have to wait, I don't know, until I am one or two years old so that, I don't know, my parents or someone I can take care of it.

Lilian: Because you have to take responsibility for all the household chores, you should take responsibility for your son and even for your husband.

These testimonies also show us the incorporation of guilt before the disobedience of the patriarchal subjugation mandate, by assuming without question the consequences of an act that is not individual, but of a couple, and assuming the obligation of a social payment for such guilt.

Rosa: I think it's bad because if she's already made a mistake [getting pregnant], [...] leave the burden to her parents, otherwise they'll pay for their mistake! She should also carry that, because if she doesn't, it will be easy for her to make that mistake again because she will say "It's okay, my parents take care of him" and so on.

Anita: I wouldn't want to leave my son with someone else and something would happen to him. I am very protective, and I would not like to leave him even with my parents, because they did not make the mistake, it is not so that they are taking care of him, that is, I would be responsible with my husband or alone.

These young women do not speak in the first instance of the implication of the male, adolescent or adult in the responsibility for upbringing, rather they assume themselves and their female companions as the only ones responsible, which is the result of a long process of socialization under the patriarchal logic of warnings and threats for the transgression of the mandate of obedience or submission. This does not deny the acts of resistance that are generated in these processes, rather it shows that what appears first in the

discourse of these adolescents is the product of gender conceptions that continue to be reproduced in a naturalized way.

In all cases, it is expected that the young women assume subordination to the husband, or to the adults who will take care of her, and fulfill the role of mother: care, protect and love the child, therefore, other options for growth and development are canceled, such as continuing to study, finishing a professional career and having a good paid job, which are seen, by these young women, as guarantors of better conditions of well-being in their lives.

## Discussion

The central element to understand a society as a sex-gender system, according to Rubin (1975), is sexuality, around which social devices revolve that have turned the biological differences between men and women into reasons for social inequality. that has historically affected women, which is confirmed through the experiences narrated by the participants in this study, as representatives of a common sociocultural context in the Chiapas territory.

Motherhood, with its biological referent of procreation and reproduction of the human species, is the natural condition par excellence that allows the articulation of cultural mechanisms aimed at subjugating the body and the subjectivity of women, which are particularly accentuated in their adolescence stage. This is what these adolescents show when they unquestionably assume social guilt and responsibility in the face of a pregnancy at an early age, which subjects them to the cultural punishment of dropping out of school and, with it, delaying and even canceling other life alternatives.

Our findings agree with those reported by Mejía et al. (2015), who undertook an investigation with 32 urban adolescents who came for prenatal care in a health center in Jalisco, Mexico, and found that "the most representative experience that the adolescents reported in the interviews was having to leave the school" (p. 246). Likewise, Quintero and Rojas (2015) found as a result of their qualitative research with pregnant adolescents or with children under one year of age that "the adolescent is forced to leave school and fulfill the life project of their sons / daughters", with a "cultural pattern of women providing care to others and nothing for her" (p. 227). This agrees with the view that the participants in



this study have regarding the fact that an eventual pregnancy would drive them to the domestic sphere and to assume the responsibilities of caring for the new family.

As a Western product resulting from the capitalist conditions of the late twentieth century, the romanticization of couple relationships is present through the idealization of the initial act of the active sexual life of these young women, but it transcends all other areas. of women's relationships. In terms of Velázquez (2021), being constructed as the love relationship with the highest social value, as the supreme way of loving and being loved, romantic love places women in a place of vulnerability, since the same culture does not demand the same reciprocity on the part of men.

Under this logic, it is understandable that the adolescents of San Vicente la Mesilla do not express as their main expectation, in the case of a pregnancy, that their partner shares the same responsibility as them in the gestation and upbringing of a baby and that they do not consider as possibility of the interruption of an unwanted pregnancy, moreover, allowing herself not to want a pregnancy does not appear in her speech. As Quintero and Rojas (2015) share in their own research:

The adolescents interviewed assume the historical role of women caring for third parties, now they are mothers and some of them become wives, therefore, the adolescents are providers and givers of care to their children and also to their parents. which ends up placing them only in private life, leaving aside public life (p. 230).

The condition of adolescent makes the process of infantilization that weighs on them more visible, reflected in the denial of information about their sexuality, being seen as girls, justified by paternal love, but which leads to being placed in a place of incapacity. to access processes considered typical of adults, such as emotional independence, autonomy in decision-making and freedom of thought. Placing adolescents as girls denies their capacity for emotional and intellectual maturity and turns them into people who can be manipulated in the face of the impositions of a system of structural violence.

## Conclusions

The approach to the population studied through attentive listening to the experiences of female adolescents made it possible to identify those discourses that show that gender violence, in contexts such as the one studied, is still valid, highly rooted in ideas, beliefs, customs and community habits. This listening is made possible by the qualitative interpretive methodology that, under a feminist analysis approach, is a valuable tool to generate research sensitive to social realities. Particularly in this study, it allowed a better approach with the population of adolescent women so that they could express themselves freely and that the researchers better understand their experiences and opinions.

Although we recognize that there is no clearly defined limit between the rural and the urban, the observed characteristics of the studied community bring them closer to the rural, which is particularly relevant from the feminist point of view, which recovers the role played by belonging to a specific context to understand the senses and meanings present in the experiences of women. In this way, the results found in this study contribute to understanding gender dynamics in spaces and territories identified as new ruralities.

From the recorded speeches it is possible to show that the expressions of patriarchal violence occur through the romanticization of love relationships in the heterosexual couple to control the sexuality and sexual practice of adolescents; as well as the denial and concealment of pertinent information that guides them about sexuality and sexual practices by parents, guardians or adults around them; as well as specific forms of submission to patriarchal norms.

These expressions of violence are patriarchal because they come from a social structure in which power falls into the hands of men and reproduces gender inequality relations through which women are subordinated to the authority and power of men.

## Future lines of research

Given these realities found in this study, it is very important to continue the investigative work with other adolescent women in the field of new ruralities to highlight the structural violence and experiences of oppression in which they live. Among other pending edges that can be observed, two lines appear with greater relevance. The first is to address the analysis of male subjectivity in the face of these patriarchal violence in adolescent males in school. A second line is to approach the analysis of the role that the



school institution plays as a socializing agent of these young adolescents, women and men in these same sociocultural contexts through the figure of authority that are the teachers.

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Rol de Contribución	Autor (es)
Conceptualización	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (igual)
Metodología	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (igual)



Software	No aplica
Validación	Germán Alejandro García Lara (igual) Jesús Ocaña Zúñiga (igual)
Análisis Formal	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (igual)
Investigación	Oscar Cruz Pérez (principal) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre Soledad Hernández Solís
Recursos	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre( igual)
Curación de datos	Germán Alejandro García Lara (igual) Jesús Ocaña Zúñiga (igual)
Escritura - Preparación del borrador original	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (igual)
Escritura - Revisión y edición	Oscar Cruz Pérez (principal) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (principal) Soledad Hernández Solís Germán Alejandro García Lara Jesús Ocaña Zúñiga
Visualización	Oscar Cruz Pérez (igual) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre (igual)
Supervisión	Oscar Cruz Pérez (principal) Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre.
Administración de Proyectos	Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre
Adquisición de fondos	Hildebertha Esteban Silvestre