

# The role of school violence in teacher career dropout: a proposal for an analytical matrix<sup>1\*</sup>

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## Abstract

School violence has been a research topic in Brazil since the 1980's and it is one of the main challenges the national education system faces. The central objective of this article is to discuss the role of the experiences of school violence in the abandonment of the teaching career. To this end, we interviewed a former teacher who – as many others – had given up teaching after suffering emotional exhaustion due to the violence experienced at school. Based on literature and on the narrative inquiry of the former teacher's reports, we considered it important to realize that school violence is an experience which is objectively regulated and subjectively experienced. While an objectively regulated reality, violence can be classified as a crime, incivility and symbolic violence. As a subjectively lived experience, we can distinguish various levels of trivialization that – in Arendt's sense – designate the superfluity and the superficiality of the social relationships in totalitarian systems. Together, both dimensions – objective and subjective – constitute what we term as the school violence matrix, which is an analytical tool that is potentially useful for investigating how the violence can influence the paths of teaching professionals. Also, the results enabled us to understand how the several school agents (students, the principal and even the teacher) participate in the production of school violence and how the parties involved have conflicting perceptions. At last, implications for the teachers' education are discussed.

## Keywords

School violence – Teacher education – Teaching abandonment – Sociology of Education.

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## Introduction

School violence has been an important theme for the Brazilian educational system and a preponderant factor in the reasons for the abandonment of the career by teachers that feel like they have been violated (FAVATTO; BOTH, 2019; SOUTO, 2016). In times of teaching proletarianization and scarcity of teachers (CONTRERAS, 2002; RUIZ; RAMOS; HINGEL, 2007; WATANABE; GURGEL, 2017), it has become essential to understand the structural role of violence in the constitution of school life to prevent this problem from continuing as well as reduce its effects on who are still in the teaching system, also preventing the increase of teachers' deficit in Brazil (LIMA JUNIOR, 2018; TARTUCE; NUNES; ALMEIDA, 2010).

Several researches have discussed about school violence from the students' perspective, as it is a sign related to school exclusion (DUBET, 2004), to gender, class and race relations (DUBET, 2004; SILVA NETO; BARRETO, 2018; SANTOS, 2001; WILLIS, 1977), to identity (ARAÚJO, 2001), to the reaffirmation of masculinity (CARVALHO, 2003; SILVA NETO; BARRETO, 2018), to drug trafficking (CUNHA, 2014; PRIOTTO; BONETI, 2009; SILVA; ASSIS, 2018), to the lack of access to public policies, opportunities and work (PRIOTTO; BONETI, 2009; SILVA; ASSIS, 2018) and to the loss of school and diplomas legitimacy as a form of social ascension (SILVA; ASSIS, 2018; SILVA; SALLES, 2010; WILLIS, 1977).

Some studies analyze the experiences of violence from the teachers' memories. These investigations are based on the student memories from when those teachers were younger and that somehow contributed to putting off their desire of being a teacher. Also talking about violence, Watanabe and Gurgel (2017), for instance, argue that the symbolic violence works as an engine that maximizes the class and color discrimination experiences in the school environment, what helps to ensure that the negative memories of Sciences and Math teachers remain on these people's memories.

However, when we start to look at the teachers and their relation to the school violence, we notice that many of them do not feel prepared enough in the beginning of their career (GESTRADO, 2010; NUNES; OLIVEIRA, 2017), and one of the challenges that must be faced is the change of the context to which they are used to (GESTRADO, 2010). Indeed, undergraduate courses have denied access to a set of knowledge about violence and because of that, they make teachers' life more difficult in contexts marked by this type of experience.

Given this situation, we put forward the following research question: what is the role of the violence experiences in the teaching career?

As part of a wider research project, we present an analytical matrix that adds the notion of the banality of evil (ARENDDT, 2018) to the classification of school violence proposed by Charlot and Émin (1997). This analytical matrix will be put into practice during the narrative investigation (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1990) of the professional experiences of Madalena Valente, a young, white, middle-class and History former teacher in the public system of Goiás. Graduated in one of the greatest Brazilian universities, Madalena gave up on teaching after going through some violence experiences in the beginning of her career.

We believe that the narrative investigation of Madalena Valente's experiences can collaborate, in a first moment, so that other teachers who live violence experiences can identify themselves to her story. In a second moment, we hope that this research can contribute to the decrease of the levels of the teaching career abandonment and that the elaborated matrix of school violence be able to bring advancements for the existing literature.

## **Theoretical basis**

The matrix of school violence, which has arisen when we investigated the stories told by Madalena Valente, is based on the simple assumption that all the school violence experiences are (1) objectively regulated and (2) subjectively lived. To confirm the objective regulation of school violence means to state that it is related to social norms and institutions that exceed the limits of the individual action. Norms and institutions can provide penalties for some violent acts while it can legitimate others. In this regard, school can be considered a key institution to regulate and practice the legitimate violence (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009), besides others State apparatus (ALTHUSSER, 2013). Otherwise, legitimate or not, every violent act can be experienced or noticed in various ways by different individuals. This is not due to the existence of an essential and pre-social individuality in each of us, but precisely because variations in the socialization process are likely to produce very different forms of being and act in the world (LAHIRE, 2005).

## **Objectively regulated school violence**

Historically, surveys about school violence have focused on the violence against the student, specially from teachers that use sanctions, penalties and punishment as part of the work of the school (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009). In a complementary way, contemporary literature has privileged the study of school violence in a strict sense, discussing the one that is practiced among students or by the students against the private property of the school. Therefore, there is some difficulty to define what is called school violence in a wide sense, since it designates a quite diverse group of experiences that has in common the deconstruction of the fantasy which says the school is a "haven of peace" (ABRAMOVAY, 2015, p. 21).

As a response to the struggling to define the contours of school violence facing the conceptual polysemy and the existing analytical models (GARCÍA; MADRIAZA, 2006), Charlot and Émin (1997) recommend distinguishing it into three types.

The first kind of violence concerns the one that is typified as a crime and corresponds to any violent act that justifies police action for being registered as an offense in the legal system, for instance, bodily injury, homicide, sexual violence, robbery, theft and damage. The second type embraces violence as incivility, which is characterized by acts with no criminal typification or with a doubtful one, but these acts disregard moral and coexistence norms, such as humiliations, insinuations, rude words, and obscene gestures (ABRAMOVAY, 2015; DEBARBIEUX; BLAYA, 2002). Finally, the symbolic violence is considered any act of imposition practiced in a pedagogical action by a pedagogical

agent. It is a power that impose significance and does that as if they were legitimate, which conceals the relationships of force that are at its base (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009) and becomes part of any pedagogical work, whether it is legitimate or not.

This conceptualization is relevant to explain that when talking about school violence, we are designating a very varied set of experiences. For example, we can refer to the violent acts (robberies, aggressions, sexual assaults, homicides) that justify triggering the State's repressive apparatus and that damage students and educational professionals. Concurrently, school violence can designate non-authoritarian experiences of imposition which even being provided for by the "normal" running of the school, they still represent acts of violence.

As far as this typification of school violence is well-proven in literature (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009; CHARLOT; ÉMIN, 1997), we are not going to exhaust its meanings. For the purposes of our matrix, it is important to notice that the concepts of crime, incivility and symbolic violence enable placing the violence experience regarding the social structures, norms and institutions. By this way, violence is an objective reality because it exceeds the limits of skin and perception.

The typification of a crime must not depend on how offenders and victims realize and justify their actions. Intentional or guilty, because of torpid or passionate reasons, a homicide is still a homicide. Similarly, the symbolic violence (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009) committed by the teacher by imposing significations as they are legitimate ones is still an objective imposition when it is accepted and desired by the students. When received with docility, the imposition becomes more efficient. Therefore, within certain limits, the experiences of violence can be identified despite how their offenders and victims feel and justify themselves in these acts. This is only possible because violence is not a phenomenon that is strictly individual, voluntary, but it is regulated (e.g. typified, repressed, legitimated, encouraged) by social structures, norms and institutions that go beyond the limits of individual awareness.

## **Subjectively experienced school violence**

For the second dimension of the matrix, we relied on the concept of banality of evil developed by Hannah Arendt (2018) over the judgement of the nazi official Adolf Eichmann, who was responsible for organizing the Jewish deportations and taking them to the concentration camps. This work has been considered one of the most polemical writings in the English language during the 1960s years towards the number of articles, public letters, debates, replicas and rejoinders among its supporters and detractors (ANDRADE, 2010).

Hannah Arendt tried to stay away from controversies about her book, answering only a few friends and intelligentsia who looked for her. There was a state of dissatisfaction coming from many individuals: from the Jewish people, which was accused of a lack of resistance and passiveness; from the Jewish elite, which was accused of a certain ingenuity and complicity; from the German people, which was accused of omission and convenience; from the German politicians, which were accused of lack of punishment

to the nazi officials that were still working for the government; and from the youth of Germany, which was accused of “dramatization” of a collective guilt (ANDRADE, 2010).

Eichmann was considered a *hostis humani generis* (enemy of humankind) that took part in a mass killing promoted by a totalitarian regime. This picturesque figure is described as a bureaucrat, a criminal that can only be seen as an agent of an organization. According to Arendt (2018), the bureaucrat’s role is not the responsibility for the act, but for its execution, that is why he says “I just follow orders”. In fact, that was Eichmann’s main argument: “I am not the monster they pretend I am. I am a victim of fallacy” (ARENDR, 2018, p. 269)<sup>4</sup>.

Eichmann used to present himself as a virtuous and honest man – “my honor is my loyalty” (ARENDR, 2018, p. 121) – and to state that his only mistake was to follow the superior orders and he did not understand why he was accused of being a criminal in that court, because he was a good citizen, even though in a murderous State. If he were in a fair State, he would be a great citizen. Eichmann was indeed a great law-abiding for rigorously following his responsibility of sending thousands of Jews to their death. According to Arendt (2018), Eichmann used to show a conditioned personality and with no apparent motivation, what made him able to commit the worst atrocities. Those aspects led him to be convinced that Eichmann was not a monster, instead, he was an ordinary man, as ordinary as other Germans: “Eichmann’s problem was just the fact that many people were like him, and many people were neither perverted nor sadist, but they were and still are terrible and frighteningly” (ARENDR, 2018, p. 299).

Arendt refused to believe that the genocide would be the result of a moral deviation.

Eichmann’s behavior of normality scared Arendt (2018), who searched for other theoretical models to explain “the evil” beyond the historical determinism and the moral distortion that was identifiable on the nazi ideology. According to psychologists and clergy who examined Eichmann, his behavior “is not only normal, but completely desirable”, “a man of very positive ideas” (ARENDR, 2018, p. 37). Eichmann was a man that besides seeming normal, he was a great father of a family, an exemplary, dedicated son and brother. Another Eichmann’s characteristic that caught the author’s attention was his difficulty expressing himself spontaneously, since his speaking was full of clichés that he himself admitted: “my only language is the oficialês” (p. 61). Eichmann’s speeches appealed to Arendt’s ironic sense.

Despite all the prosecutor’s efforts, everyone could notice that this man was no “monster”, yet it was hard not to doubt that he was a clown [...]. For my part, I was effectively convinced that Eichmann was a clown. (ARENDR, 2018, p. 67).

According to Andrade (2010), Hannah Arendt displaces the Kantian conception that the evil is radical - what has been already consolidated in the moral thinking – for a new concept in which the evil is superficial. Therefore, Arendt refutes the Kantian conception of evil and inscribes it as part of the normality of human relations. She was convinced

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**4-** Translation note: this and all other quotes have been translated by the translator of the main article.

that the evil had no roots, depth or seed, but it could spread over the mass of citizens who are unable to think by themselves and also unable to give a meaning to the events through their own acts (ANDRADE, 2010).

Arendt (2018), however, explains that Eichmann’s banality did not mean neither his innocence nor his normality. She was sure that he was guilty so he had to pay for his crimes. Consequently, the concept is not a way of exempting unlawful acts, but to understand them. The banality also does not correspond to what is common, ordinary. We say something is a “common place” when it comes to an ordinary and trivial phenomenon, something that happens regularly, in a certain way. The banal, on the other hand, happens in the superficiality and superfluity. For the author, the banal would not be something common nor trivial, but something that earns space exactly for being noticed and practiced as something superfluous.

Arendt argues that the superficiality of executioners and the superfluity of their victims result from the *emptiness of thinking*, that is the central core of the banal according to the author, what means the lack, the absence, a non-being (DINIZ, 1995). If a human is not able to have a relation of depth with another human being, for Arendt (2018), that means that something is missing for him, that there is an absence that, in Eichmann’s case, was filled by the ideology of a totalitarian regime.

## Methodology

### The analytical matrix

As it can be seen, violence takes various roles in people’s lives. The matrix presented in this article consists in an analytical instrument to investigate the role of violence in the abandonment of the teaching career. Based on the assumption that violence is objectively regulated (by law, by customs, by school) and subjectively experienced (through several different levels of superficiality and superfluity), our matrix classifies the teachers’ experiences of violence in the crossing of two dimensions. The first dimension deals with the objective regulation of violence by distinguishing: (1) violence typified as a crime; (2) violence as incivility; and (3) symbolic violence. The second dimension (the horizontal one) distincts the violence experiences according to how they are subjectively experienced: (1) noticed violence and (2) banalized violence.

**Chart 1** – Matrix of school violence experiences

	Noticed violence	Banalized violence
<i>Violence typified as a crime</i>		
<i>Violence as incivility</i>		
<i>Symbolic violence</i>		

Source: elaborated by the authors.

The noticed violence (first column) is the type of violence that still shocks us as human beings, and it is the opposite of the banalized one. It connects us to one another through deep empathic relations. This empathy is related to the recognition of the importance of every human being as well as to our capacity of feeling affected by our vulnerability when the other is a victim of violence. Though, the banalized violence (second column in the matrix) is characterized by the superficiality and superfluity of the violent human relations (ARENDT, 1963). In this kind of relation, the agent is not able to recognize the violence since his connection with the victim is empty, with no deep roots and, then, dehumanizing. It is as if the individual who assaults and the one who suffers the violence, both present in the same scene, were inhumane (CAVARERO; BUTLER, 2007). The executioner becomes inhuman for denying the human condition of another human being, and the victim does that for being the object of this denial (CAVARERO; BUTLER, 2007).

In the matrix lines, we distinguished violence regarding its objective regulation (e.g., the one conducted by institutions and costumes that exceed the individual scale). The first line represents the experiences of school violence that, typified as a crime, are susceptible to coercion by the repressive apparatus and regulated negatively by some kinds of punishment provided by law. In contrast, there are the experiences of school violence which are legitimately performed as part of an educational process (which can be promoted by the school, church, police or any other institution that detains the legitimate exercise of any type of violence). In the middle of that, the incivilities constitute contempt of social costumes and norms which are never specified very clearly and because of that, they tend to lead to questions regarding their typification and regulation. Each of these three types of violence can be noticed or banalized.

Finally, the matrix of the previous violence comes as an analytical tool so we can understand how the different experiences of school violence that are reported by teachers can reverberate a possible abandonment of the career.

## **Procedures and methods**

Although we presented the matrix of school violence as if it had been done from a theoretical background, this was not the way that led us to come to it. The possibility of organizing the teachers' experience in such way had arisen during the narrative investigation (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1990; CLANDININ, CONNELLY, 2011) of Madalena Valente<sup>5</sup> (pseudonym), a former teacher in the public system of Goiás who abandoned her career after experiencing many episodes of school violence. The concept of experience that was used in this study is based on the tridimensional narrative of Clandinin and Connelly (2011), which is supported on the experience theory of Dewey (1938), and it is structured in three dimensions: personal and social; past, present, future; and location.

Madalena was interviewed by the first author of this article, who did not know her yet, but he was aware that she had abandoned the teaching career very early for experiencing a series of episodes of school violence. Madalena's speech was recorded and

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**5-** The interviewee authorized the publishing of her interview through the preservation of her identity, as well as the reported institutions.

subsequently transcribed. The empathic comprehension of her reports and the critical perception of power and authority relations were key instruments to conduct the interview and to analyze its results (BOURDIEU, 1998). The interview had no script, but the free dialogue between the interviewer and the former teacher had a clear purpose of answering the following questions:

(1) Which violence experiences were lived by the interviewee during the exercise of her profession?

(2) How did these experiences contribute to the abandonment of the teaching career by the interviewee?

It is relevant to point out that by asking about violence, the interviewer did not give any definition of what type of violence would be discussed about. He also let the interviewee talk freely, without interruptions, about her experiences, in her point of view.

## **Analysis**

Our discussion of the results will be presented in two movements. First, we present a first-person narrative of Madalena's history of life. In this narrative, who says "I" is the first author of this article, who is responsible for conducting the interview and finishing the history. The choice of writing in first person has made it possible to highlight how the interviewer takes his position regarding the interviewee, what conflicts and feelings he experiences during his process of listening. Following this first movement, we categorize the reported experiences according to the proposed analytic matrix, which allows us to distinguish the various kinds of violence that can be seen during the narrative.

### **School violence as a routine**

Madalena Valente was a 27-year-old woman by the time of the interview. We met her at a cafeteria in the city of Goiânia, and she proved herself to be very willing and comfortable to talk about her experiences, which had occurred more than five years before. Despite this, the level of details that she could remember from the scenes and dialogues was impressive. Madalena was chosen for the interview because the second author of this article has already known her experiences of violence and the unfolding of her formation previously. Through Madalena's speech along with the theoretical conceptions approached in this article, the matrix of violence was elaborated.

Any person of empathy would be sensitive to what she told. To narrate this history, I felt the need to put myself in Madalena's position, to try to see it through her eyes, what was not an easy task, after all, I am a professor but also a police officer, and as far as I deal with violence daily, I may not realize how a violent act can hurt, because the place of another is not always perceptible. One consequence of having violence as an object of work is to take the risk of becoming less sensitive human beings, as bureaucrats who do not pity the victim's pain. From a more empathetic place, I could realize the violence suffered by Madalena and I could comprehend her reasons for giving up on a promising career.



Soon after her graduation, at around 22 years old, Madalena was approved in a civil service examination and she was sent to a school in an upper-middle class neighborhood next to her residence. There, she ministered Human and Social Science lessons for the young people who used to come from a quite violent and vulnerable area at the borders of Goiânia and Trindade: the Jardim Cerrado neighborhood. Madalena worked in the second grade of the studying acceleration program, which is equivalent to the high school but of a shorter duration and it consists of students that, for any reason, could not graduate from high school in the regular period.

Madalena said she used to have a “horizontal” relationship with the students, but she implied a traditional model of education.

I am a very calm teacher. I have always treated teenagers in a horizontal relationship [with no hierarchy]. I have always been a teacher who maintains a two-way conversation in class. With me, during my classes, I used to even authorize to some level that the students had side conversations. I do not mind as long as I see the conversation is related to the lesson topic, even though it may be a joke.

Primarily, she told me what her life in the classroom was, where the students were from and how everything apparently had a strange “order” characterized by various types of violence. Madalena reported frequent fights at school and her attempts to prevent them from happening: “I used to see fights in the school courtyard and I have already tried to break up some fights between my students”. As Madalena had just graduated at that time, she was young and had no previous experiences with the type of violence that populations of the periphery were constantly put through, her interventions carried a mixing of nonconformity and inexperience.

## **The rise of aggressiveness**

In a certain moment of her class, Madalena asked the students to do an activity in groups, but unlike the previous works, she organized the groups according to the level of students’ competence.

I realized that every time I gave them a group activity, they grouped themselves according to their affinities. They used to have a poor job done and they were happy with that. Then, I had a brilliant idea... I would choose the groups! I got the attendance list. It was almost the end of the year, and I already knew the students. So, I splitted them up into groups like that: the ones who had more facility and the ones who had more difficulties in the subject. [...] I knew bad words were coming. When they started to drag their chairs, I said: “Hold on! The work is in groups and I am going to choose the members”.

At that moment, one of this teacher’s most beloved students, one who has always treated her with great affection, has changed his behavior stating that he would not fulfill what has been asked.

“*Damn it*, teacher! If you ask me to do it with that guy, I won’t do that!” Then, he was there, and I noticed that he didn’t move around, so I came closer and I faced him: “what’s going on? Aren’t you going to do the activity with your classmates?” He answered: “I will not do it! I will do the activity alone”. “I will not allow that you do it alone”. He said: “No! I won’t do it!”, he got the sheet of paper and started writing something. I told him: “that’s where you are wrong, I told you the rules and that’s what I am going to do. What’s the matter?!”

At that point, things got a little tense and the class kept silent. Maybe other people knew the reasons that the student had to do the activity alone, but Madalena would know it only after some time and she continued to treat the student’s behavior as a disrespect to her authority as a teacher. To pressure the student, she used one of the most common and legitimate sanctions in school education:

When I reaffirmed that I would offset his grade, he freaked out: “you are a *shit little teacher*, you are such a bourgeoisie whose father comes to pick you up after work. You know nothing about life! You think this UFG diploma is worth anything? *It’s not worth it a damn thing, girl!* You don’t know anything about life! Get over yourself! If I told you I would do the activity like this, I will do it like this”. At this time, he was yelling at me from a meter of distance from me. I was in shock, without moving myself. He called me a *bitch*, a *son-of-a-bitch*, these traditional insults, I was totally in shock. Today I wouldn’t react the way I did, I would do it differently. Today I would be calm.

The insults (incivilities) were not unusual and were present in the school daily routine. For the students, insulting was a banality: “they used to insult one another all the time!”. For the teacher, it was extremely offensive behavior. As long as Madalena was not the target of the aggressions, she was able to get over the embarrassment. However, when the verbal attacks came in her direction, she got paralyzed. Without understanding it, she insisted that her order should be followed and she threw the student’s sketchbook out of the classroom. The student had a lot of affection for that notebook, because he enjoyed drawing airplanes and he always said that his dream was to join the Air Force. From that moment, the student resorted to the use of physical aggression while throwing a chair against the teacher, who could deviate herself from it and hide herself in the restroom.

A teacher that was in the next room heard the screaming but she didn’t know what had happened, she went to the toilet and told me to find the principal and talk to him. So, I went to the principal’s office, told him what happened and he said: “Listen, you are very young, you shouldn’t have done that because they have a lot of animosities among them, but are you okay? Did the chair hit you?” “*No.*” “Alright, then! Take a breath and come back to the classroom.” If that happened today, I would say: “Come back to the class! Are you insane?!”. But I came back to class that day.

First of all, this episode shows us that the exchange of insults between the teacher and the student was in a high tone – yelling, as the interviewer stated –, which means that it was possible to listen to it from outside of the classroom. Secondly, it stands out

the attitude taken by the principal that minimized such strong violence experience in class, which seems not to bother him anymore since it was considered normal facing an environment where people are exposed to this phenomenon. Looking at the principal's reaction, we can conclude that he used to view a superficial relation with the teacher and felt that she was a superfluous person, who was not worthy of a greater attention. Consequently, he acted like the bureaucrat described by Arendt (2018).

While narrating that, she showed her indignation at the attitude taken by the principal. Her pain was noticeable when she was telling this episode and her frustration of listening to the principal asking her to come back to the classroom. As far as she was inexperienced, she came back. At the time she was returning, she described the fear she had of being assaulted again, as well as how she was vulnerable at that moment when thinking of the possibility of getting alone with the aggressor. After all, she could have been seriously injured if the furniture that was thrown had hit her.

When the spirits were calmer, both the aggressor and the assaulted (the teacher and the student) entered into an agreement so the episode could be forgotten and the classes could be moved on. Despite that agreement, the teacher was not the same anymore. Over time, she started having some symptoms of depression and panic syndrome. She said that she felt breathless when she was hanging out with her friends and at noisy places. The episodes of violence have deeply marked her.

Some time later, the teacher came to know the reason why that student had become an aggressor. While telling me that, she showed a genuine feeling of understanding, as if she understands the student's reaction. She told me that anger was because she had put the student that assaulted her in the same group of the brother of his cousin's murderer, who was assassinated due to debts regarding drug dealing. When the teacher found out about that, she realized that the violence the student had suffered was much stronger than his notebook that was thrown. She could imagine how hard it was for that student to be in the same place as the executioner of a beloved family member and, furthermore, to be obliged – by her determination – to work together. All of them were affected by the violence and nobody remained immune to it.

## **The parties at school**

During October, the students wanted to learn more about Halloween. As a teacher of humanities, Madalena gave a lesson about Halloween, and then the class decided to throw a party on Friday morning. They chipped in to buy the materials needed and to decorate the place in simplicity. "I gave them about twenty minutes – before the end of the class – to arrange the auditorium, so they did not have to arrive earlier on Friday". Madalena did not know that the place had been renovated by an Evangelical Church that used the place every Thursday.

The next day, when I arrived - right after leaving my car - some students came towards me saying: "Teacher, did you see what happened in the auditorium?" "No, I have just arrived." "They destroyed everything! They tore everything and threw it in the trash bag. And we are going to

beat up who did that!" I found the principal and asked him what happened. He told me that it must have been the people from the Church, which was a very traditional church. The church people had torn everything and threw it away.

In that incident, the church practiced symbolic/institutional violence against the class that had confectioned all the props for the Halloween party. That violence was notorious, since it was characterized by the imposition of Christianity as a dominant culture. By tearing up the props, she made a statement that must have seemed legit: we do not accept this here!

In other times, the school arranged a June Festival which was attended by all the students – the ones from the Studying Acceleration classes, that used to come from Jardim Cerrado taking the transport provided by the Secretary of Education, and the ones from the regular high school, that used to live in the middle-class neighborhood where the school was located in. When the bus from the Secretary of Education had arrived, all of Madalena's students were frisked by the police before they could get into the party. Teachers, students and other local residents were dismissed.

When they arrived at the little stand, because everything turns into a joke for them, the students from Setor Bueno [upper-middle class neighborhood in Goiânia] were saying in jest (since they were all friends): "marginals must be frisked indeed!" Then, one of my students turned to me and said: "PM [militar police] is a jackass, right teacher? Because who brings the drugs is the people from Setor Bueno". [...] After that, I went to the principal's office to check if there had been any report that could justify the police approach, but he told me that he had required their support because he thought that it would be safer in that way. I told him that I was not frisked and he said that the search was not for me. So, I said that if it was a security procedure, everybody should be frisked, or then nobody should. I think that the situation the students had to go through was very embarrassing. [...] Besides that, drugs and guns could get into the school by other means, through people who had not been frisked. Then he said: "I got it, I got it, teacher, but you have to understand my side as well".

During the misguided usage of legitimate violence, the Military Police frisked all the buses that were coming from Jardim Cerrado. It is relevant to notice that the motivation for the approach did not come from the police, but from the school principal, who had instructed the proceeding. It seems like Madalena was the only person who was bothered by the situation. For the others, it was a banal procedure. In the principal's case, it is possible to highlight the false sensation of carrying out their duty.

## **Categorization of violence experiences**

By observing the experiences narrated by Madalena Valente, we could notice that those experiences are quite varied and that besides the regulation that was objectively done by social institutions and norms, the subjective perception of violence is essential to understand how the actors give sense and orientate themselves regarding what they live.

Finally, chart 2 seeks to summarize the former teacher’s speech by showing how the school’s violent environment marked her life history.

**Chart 2 – Matrix of the scholar violence experiences of Madalena Valente**

	Noticed violence	Banalized violence
<i>Violence typified as a crime</i>	The chair throw and fights in the school courtyard (noticed by the teacher).	The chair throw (noticed by the principal).
<i>Violence as incivility</i>	Insults (noticed by the teacher).	Insults (noticed by the students).
<i>Symbolic violence</i>	Threat of reducing student’s grade (noticed by the student); and Halloween props tore by the church members (noticed by the students).	Threat of reducing student’s grade (noticed by the teacher); and police approach in the June Festival (noticed by the principal).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

It should be emphasized that experiences represented as a chart have their limitations since the boundaries among the categories of the matrix are, indeed, fluid. The marking between noticed or banalized violence and among crime, incivility or symbolic violence cannot be well defined. Furthermore, what we are classifying here as symbolic violence is a violence that is legitimately exercised by the teacher through a pedagogical action at school that is considered legit and also by an institution whose authority is relatively recognized (the school, the police, the church) – for that reason, it has symbolic effects. In fact, the symbolic violence is the most transverse and limitless one since each and every violent act (legitimate or not) has symbolic effects.

## About the abandonment of the teaching career

The experiences of school violence lived by Madalena Valente had an overall impact on her life, even interrupting her career. Those experiences do not reverberate only in the professional sphere, but also in her personal relationships, although the teaching abandonment after experiencing situations of violence is not a rule. There are teachers who prefer to continue in their careers even under negative circumstances (e.g., precariousness of education, racism, class, color and violence) in their scholar and teaching background (WATANABE; GURGEL, 2017). On the professional field, Madalena left her academic convictions when she faced a reality that was totally ignored by the undergraduate courses. A noticeable transformation was the change in her behavior regarding the students. Before the episodes of violence, she tried not to follow a traditional teaching system so she could attempt to make her classes more attractive by being lovely and kind with everyone. After the episodes of violence, she remained friendly but she has distanced herself from the students. Regarding psychological aspects, the teacher reported that violence experiences have damaged her pleasure of being in class, beyond the fact of living with an accumulation of the anxiety disorder, such as the panic syndrome. She often used to get home crying and she locked herself in her room. As soon as it was possible to take a new civil service exam, she left the teaching career.

## Final remarks

This work aimed to explore the concepts of school violence for the purposes of understanding its role in the abandonment of the teaching career. To do so, we presented a matrix of the school violence so we could capture the episodes of school violence experienced by teachers. The matrix was elaborated considering two dimensions: the objective regulation and the subjective experience. The first distinguishes crimes, incivilities and the symbolic violence, while the second dimension differentiates the perception or the banalization of violence.

It has become clear that the school violence had a great influence in the decision to abandon the teaching career taken by the interviewed former teacher (FAVATTO; BOTH, 2019; HONG, 2010; SOUTO, 2016), adding that factor to the exhaustion caused by the emotional distress (HONG, 2010). That impacts all the educational system in a direct way, since that if considering the current deficit, every teacher becomes important for the setting up of the national education (GOBARA; GARCIA, 2007; TARTUCE; NUNES; ALMEIDA, 2010). However, it is significant to consider that violence can also be committed by the teacher, which can build negative memories about school that can be internalized and carried throughout the whole life (WATANABE; GURGEL, 2017).

Therefore, we could comprehend that school violence is an important social component regarding the reality of our schools and it must receive some resonance, mainly in the formation of teachers so cases such as Madalena's one do not become more recurrent. We could also identify a practice that must be inhibited in the educational system, which corresponds to allocating more inexperienced teachers to the most challenging positions. After all, their formation has not been completed yet, since it is also built by the ongoing interactions established in the workplace (HONG, 2010). Because of that, Madalena's case is a great example for showing the recently graduated or still inexperienced teachers that there is a necessity of seeking information in the school environment that can contribute to decrease the possible risks.

From these issues, we could notice that the aims of this study are based specially on the approach of staves about violence in undergraduate courses and on the normalization resulting from this, as well as on the capacitation regarding the experiences of school violence suffered by teachers, administrators and all the school community that coexist daily in this environment, as experienced professionals. Hence, it is possible to adapt ourselves to the social conditions that exist in the various social spaces that we go through during our career and which have been noticed in Brazil, in terms of research, since the 1980s.

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