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State Intervention in the Face of the Exposure and Adultization of Children and Adolescents on Social Media: Protection of Fundamental Rights in the Digital Age

Intervenção estatal frente à exposição e à adultização de crianças e adolescentes nas redes sociais: proteção dos direitos fundamentais na era digital

La intervención estatal frente a la exposición y la adultización de niños, niñas y adolescentes en las redes sociales: protección de los derechos fundamentales en la era digital

Gislaine de Oliveira Ferreira – Centro Universitário Afya - Itaperuna, oliveiragislaine989@gmail.com
Bruna Marcelle Bastos Dias Marinho – Centro Universitário Afya - Itaperuna, bruna.marinho@afya.com.br
Renato Marcelo Resgala Júnior – Centro Universitário Afya - Itaperuna, renato.resgala@afya.com.br

Abstract:
The present study aims to examine the role of the State in protecting children and adolescents from exposure and adultization on social media, in light of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Brazilian legal system. The specific objectives are: (i) to contextualize the phenomenon of exposure and adultization of minors on social media, considering the sociocultural and technological transformations of the digital age; (ii) to investigate the impacts of early exposure in the virtual environment, especially on psychological, social, and moral development; (iii) to analyze the applicable Brazilian legal framework, with emphasis on the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, the Federal Constitution, and the General Data Protection Law, observing mechanisms of protection and accountability; and (iv) to examine public policies and state actions aimed at protecting children and adolescents in the digital environment, identifying challenges and limitations. The study is based on the following research question: how can the State ensure effective protection for children and adolescents against exposure and adultization on social media? The hypothesis is that, although there are legislative advances and state initiatives aimed at protecting children in the digital environment, the effectiveness of these measures remains limited, particularly due to difficulties in enforcement and the fast-paced dynamics of digital platforms. The methodology adopted consists of bibliographic and documentary research, with a qualitative approach, based on the analysis of doctrine, legislation, case law, and concrete cases. As a result, it is observed that, although the Brazilian legal system presents relevant advances in the protection of children and adolescents, its practical application still faces limitations in light of the new demands of the digital age. It is concluded that improving enforcement mechanisms and promoting coordinated action among the State, society, and digital platforms is essential to ensure a safer, more ethical virtual environment that is compatible with the full protection of children and adolescents.

Keywords:
Social media; Adultization; Digital exposure.

Resumo:
O presente estudo tem como objetivo geral examinar o papel do Estado na proteção de crianças e adolescentes diante da exposição e da adultização nas redes sociais, à luz dos direitos fundamentais garantidos pelo ordenamento jurídico brasileiro. Como objetivos específicos, busca-se: (i) contextualizar o fenômeno da exposição e da adultização de menores nas redes sociais, considerando as transformações socioculturais e tecnológicas da era digital; (ii)

investigar os impactos da exposição precoce no ambiente virtual, especialmente no desenvolvimento psicológico, social e moral; (iii) analisar o arcabouço jurídico brasileiro aplicável, com destaque para o Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente, a Constituição Federal e a Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados, observando os mecanismos de proteção e responsabilização; e (iv) examinar as políticas públicas e ações estatais voltadas à proteção de crianças e adolescentes no ambiente digital, identificando desafios e limitações. O estudo está assentado na seguinte questão-problema: de que maneira o Estado pode garantir a proteção efetiva de crianças e adolescentes frente à exposição e à adultização nas redes sociais? A hipótese levantada é que, embora existam avanços legislativos e iniciativas estatais voltadas à proteção da infância no ambiente digital, a efetividade dessas medidas ainda é limitada, especialmente em razão das dificuldades de fiscalização e da dinâmica acelerada das plataformas digitais. A metodologia adotada consiste em pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, com abordagem qualitativa, baseada na análise de doutrina, legislações, jurisprudências e casos concretos. Como resultado, observa-se que, embora o ordenamento jurídico brasileiro apresenta avanços relevantes na proteção da infância e adolescência, sua aplicação prática ainda enfrenta limitações diante das novas demandas da era digital. Conclui-se que é imprescindível o aprimoramento dos mecanismos de fiscalização e a atuação integrada entre Estado, sociedade e plataformas digitais, a fim de assegurar um ambiente virtual mais seguro, ético e compatível com a proteção integral de crianças e adolescentes.

Palavras-chave:
Redes sociais; Adultização; Exposição digital.

Resumen:
El presente estudio tiene como objetivo general examinar el papel del Estado en la protección de niños, niñas y adolescentes frente a la exposición y la adultización en las redes sociales, a la luz de los derechos fundamentales garantizados por el ordenamiento jurídico brasileño. Como objetivos específicos, se busca: (i) contextualizar el fenómeno de la exposición y la adultización de menores en las redes sociales, considerando las transformaciones socioculturales y tecnológicas de la era digital; (ii) investigar los impactos de la exposición temprana en el entorno virtual, especialmente en el desarrollo psicológico, social y moral; (iii) analizar el marco jurídico brasileño aplicable, con énfasis en el Estatuto del Niño y del Adolescente, la Constitución Federal y la Ley General de Protección de Datos, observando los mecanismos de protección y responsabilidad; y (iv) examinar las políticas públicas y acciones estatales dirigidas a la protección de niños, niñas y adolescentes en el entorno digital, identificando desafíos y limitaciones. El estudio se basa en la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿de qué manera puede el Estado garantizar la protección efectiva de niños, niñas y adolescentes frente a la exposición y la adultización en las redes sociales? La hipótesis planteada es que, aunque existen avances legislativos e iniciativas estatales orientadas a la protección de la infancia en el entorno digital, la efectividad de estas medidas sigue siendo limitada, especialmente debido a las dificultades de fiscalización y a la dinámica acelerada de las plataformas digitales. La metodología adoptada consiste en una investigación bibliográfica y documental, con enfoque cualitativo, basada en el análisis de doctrina, legislación, jurisprudencia y casos concretos. Como resultado, se observa que, aunque el ordenamiento jurídico brasileño presenta avances relevantes en la protección de la infancia y la adolescencia, su aplicación práctica aún enfrenta limitaciones frente a las nuevas demandas de la era digital. Se concluye que es imprescindible perfeccionar los mecanismos de fiscalización y promover una actuación integrada entre el Estado, la sociedad y las plataformas digitales, con el fin de garantizar un entorno virtual más seguro, ético y compatible con la protección integral de niños, niñas y adolescentes.

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Palabras clave:
Redes sociales; Adultización; Exposición digital.

INTRODUCTION

The integration between the daily lives of children and adolescents and the social media ecosystem characterizes contemporary social dynamics. However, this digital omnipresence fosters urgent legal discussions, especially regarding the phenomenon of precocious adultification, since it is directly linked to the process in which strictly adult behaviors and aesthetics are anticipated by individuals still in the developmental stage.

This scenario raises fundamental questions about the vulnerability of children and adolescents, individuals who already enjoy special protection due to their natural condition within society, but who find themselves even more vulnerable in the digital environment. This occurs because these individuals are still undergoing biopsychosocial development, a phase in which the lack of cognitive maturity and incomplete critical discernment make them easy targets for the algorithmic stimuli and marketing appeals of the platforms.

Given this reality, the present study is dedicated to investigating the State's role in the exposure and adultification of minors in the virtual environment, from the perspective of the Brazilian legal system. The research is anchored in the field of Child and Adolescent Law, seeking not only to understand the possibilities of the current legal framework, but also to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies aimed at realizing the comprehensive protection provided for by the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA).

The choice of this theme is justified by the perception that, despite the robustness of national protective norms, the speed of digital transformations imposes unprecedented challenges, requiring the legal system to adapt to curb new forms of rights violations. The central object of this analysis lies in the capacity of the Public Authorities to respond to the risks arising from the excessive exposure and monetization of childhood on social networks.

In this sense, the problem guiding this investigation can be summarized in the following question: to what extent has the State been able to guarantee the effective protection of the rights of children and adolescents in the face of exposure and adultification in the digital environment? The hypothesis is that, although a relevant normative basis exists, the practical application of these norms and state actions still present structural gaps, hindering the confrontation of the accelerated dynamics of digital platforms.

With the aim of providing input for improving legal discussions and public policies on the subject, this work was organized to allow for a progressive understanding of the matter. The first chapter contextualizes the phenomenon of exposure and adultification, examining how sociocultural changes and technological advancements influence the early behavior of children and adolescents. The second chapter then investigates the psychosocial and educational impacts of this reality, highlighting the potential harms of intensive presence in unprotected virtual environments.

The third chapter focuses on examining the Brazilian legal framework aimed at protecting children and adolescents in the digital environment. Through scrutiny of the Federal Constitution, the Statute of Children and Adolescents, and the General Data Protection Law, it seeks to identify the normative advances achieved, as well as the gaps that still hinder the practical application of these precepts.

Finally, the fourth chapter addresses public policies and state actions aimed at child safety in the virtual environment, mapping existing initiatives and reflecting on the challenges necessary to ensure the full and healthy development of new generations in the digital age.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach, exploratory and descriptive in nature, aimed at understanding the mechanisms of state protection against the exposure and adultification of children and adolescents on social media. The methodological approach is primarily based on bibliographic research, through the analysis of doctrinal works, scientific articles, and academic studies that address children's rights, the impact of digital technologies, and the limits of state action in contemporary times.

Furthermore, documentary and normative research is employed, based on the systematic interpretation of provisions such as the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA), the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), and the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet, in addition to international treaties ratified by Brazil on the subject. Complementarily, the study utilizes jurisprudential analysis from higher courts, such as the Superior Court of Justice (STJ) and the Supreme Federal Court (STF), as well as the examination of concrete cases of legal repercussion. This procedure aims to illustrate the practical application of the norms and identify the trends of the Judiciary regarding the exposure of minors in the virtual environment.

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This convergence of methods allows for the necessary rigorous examination of the effectiveness of public policies, regulations, and legal measures adopted in the Brazilian legal system. Consequently, the chosen methodology provides the necessary basis for critical reflection on the subject, enabling the proposal of improvements that ensure the protection of the fundamental rights of children and adolescents in the digital realm.

Childhood, the Digital Environment, and Fundamental Rights: Contemporary Challenges

The phenomenology of exposure and the adultification of children and young people in the digital environment.

Historically, the concept of childhood and the dynamics of socialization were intrinsically linked to physical space and face-to-face interaction. In previous decades, play was predominantly practiced in open environments, such as streets and parks, where contact with the outside world was mediated by the direct supervision of caregivers and by community life limited to the geographical space. For this reason, it is important to highlight that this scenario delineated the boundaries between the world of play and the responsibilities of the adult world, ensuring that community life served as a space for protection and the construction of social identity (FACHINETTO, 2015, p. 18).

However, with the advent of the Digital Revolution, an abrupt transition in leisure spaces has been observed. Currently, it is observed that children are exchanging old games, such as collective play in squares and face-to-face community interaction, to live in a digital state, where the mediation of social relations occurs primarily through highly complex algorithms.

This migration to the virtual environment replaces the natural maturation time with a logic of constant exposure, in which the child begins to perform adult behaviors in search of algorithmic acceptance. As Fachinetto (2015, p. 18) asserts:

> Community life is the cornerstone of identity protection; when this identity is transferred to unregulated social networks, the child loses their safety filters and is prematurely pushed into the world of responsibilities and aesthetic pressures of adult life.

To put it better, a rupture occurs in the spontaneous maturation process, in which the spontaneity of play is replaced by the rigidity of digital performance. In this context, the child

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ceases to interact in an environment protected by neighborhood and kinship ties, and is instead inserted into a market logic that demands the spectacularization of their own image.

As Maria Berenice Dias (2017, p. 95) points out, "comprehensive protection is a principle that demands that the State create public policies and take preventive action, guaranteeing the healthy development of minors." In other words, recognizing the child as a full subject of rights requires that their stage of development be safeguarded from external interferences that compromise their moral formation.

From this perspective, premature adultification represents not only a behavioral change, but a direct violation of the Principle of Integral Protection. By being subjected to algorithms that encourage aesthetic competition and the consumption of adult standards, the child is deprived of the freedom to experience their own age group, transforming their identity into a data asset. As Stolze (2020, p. 312) reinforces, the right to privacy and the free development of personality requires that the individual be protected from exposures that exceed their capacity for self-determination, under penalty of causing irreversible damage to their human dignity and their future life project.

Furthermore, physical interactions have been progressively replaced by screenmediated experiences, shifting development to the ecosystem of social networks. According to Dias (2017, p. 95), this migration has broken down traditional protective barriers, as the boundaries between public and private space have become blurred, exposing children and adolescents to previously unprecedented risks.

In the digital environment, children and adolescents cease to be local agents and become part of a global showcase, without the territorial control they once had. For this reason, the sociocultural transformation that has paved the way for the phenomenon of precocious adultification, characterized by the anticipation of behaviors and aesthetics that do not correspond to the biological maturity of the individual.

The danger of this exposure is aggravated by the commercial logic of the platforms, which often ignore the unique condition of developing individuals. The exploitation of children's images in *cyberspace* , whether through influencer *marketing* or systematic exposure, directly interferes with personality rights. As Stolze (2020, p. 312) observes, personality rights, notably privacy and image, are direct expressions of human dignity and, therefore, deserve special protection in the face of the risks posed by the virtual environment. Reflecting on this issue, it becomes clear that childhood, previously safeguarded within family and school circles, is increasingly vulnerable to the influence of adult values reproduced by social networks.

Furthermore, the fragility of this new childhood lies in the immutability and permanence of virtual records. While the interactions of past generations were ephemeral, the actions and images exposed in the virtual environment generate indelible digital footprints that can compromise the individual's future. This early documentation of private life violates the right to the free development of personality, as it deprives the individual of the possibility of reconstructing their image without the burden of exposures occurring during a phase of absolute cognitive vulnerability.

3.2 Impacts of virtual overexposure on the development of children and adolescents

Overexposure in the virtual environment should not be understood merely as excessive screen time, but as a profound interference in the structuring of the child's and adolescent's psyche, given that the child is exposed to various pieces of information that they should not have access to due to their age and, for this reason, it hinders their cognitive development and their capacity for moral discernment.

From the perspective of Developmental Psychology, Piaget (1975, p. 72) highlights that each stage of growth requires an appropriate environment for the maturation of cognitive structures. Thus, bringing up the issue of abrupt digital exposure disrupts these stages, forcing the child to deal with the social demands of adults before possessing the necessary emotional support.

The anticipation of complex interactions and the consumption of hyper-stimulating content cause a reversal in the logic of personality formation, in which the spontaneity of play is replaced by the rigidity of virtual performance. This leads to a skipping of biological and psychological stages, where the child is compelled to process an informational load for which they do not possess the adequate assimilation and accommodation tools.

When children are prematurely introduced to the social media ecosystem, they replace symbolic thinking and learning with physical play, which are fundamental for the development of intelligence and the mimicry of adult performance behaviors.

From a Civil Law perspective, this aesthetic pressure violates the right to psychological integrity. Psychological integrity, as an aspect of the right to health (Article 6, Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988) and personality rights (Articles 11 to 21, Brazilian Civil Code), protects the individual against aggressions that, although invisible, compromise their emotional balance and free development. From this perspective, when the virtual environment bombards the hyper-

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vulnerable with unattainable ideals of perfection, a direct violation of the fundamental principle of human dignity occurs.

According to Stolze (2020, p. 312), personality rights represent essential projections of human dignity, which is why psychic integrity deserves special protection against any practices capable of compromising emotional balance, self-determination, and the full development of personality. In the context of digital overexposure, the imposition of unattainable aesthetic standards ceases to be a merely social phenomenon and becomes a vector of existential harm.

In this context, aesthetic pressure in cyberspace ceases to be a merely social phenomenon and becomes a vector of severe existential harm. By imposing unrealistic beauty and success standards on children and adolescents, individuals whose cognitive structures are still maturing, according to Piaget's logic (1975), digital platforms wound the subject's inner self. This silent aggression destabilizes the child's self-image, forcing them into a relentless pursuit of perfection mediated by filters and algorithms, which nullifies their spontaneity and permanently compromises their mental health.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting another impact, given that the absence of filters and the phenomenon of *sharenting* deprive minors of autonomy over their own trajectory. Unlike past generations, whose mistakes were restricted to the physical space, contemporary youth have their actions perpetuated by an indelible digital footprint, which in the future may cause irreparable damage to their professional, social, and emotional lives. Along the same lines, the systematic exposure of intimate and vulnerable moments creates a public and permanent dossier, depriving individuals of the right to manage their own image and to dissociate themselves from childish or immature behaviors.

From this perspective, the permanence of data on the internet directly clashes with the free development of personality. As Dias (2017) points out, the publication of private information without the conscious consent of a minor, since they do not yet have the discernment to assess the risks of the internet, compromises their informational selfdetermination. In the future, this digital past could be used against the individual in recruitment processes, credit assessments, or social circles, generating a lifelong social stigma that prevents the rehabilitation of their reputation, thus violating the core of human dignity.

Furthermore, this early and compulsory documentation of private life ignores the Right to be Forgotten, a principle that, although debated, is essential for individuals to evolve without the burden of records made during phases of absolute vulnerability. As Stolze (2020, p. 315) teaches:

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> The protection of privacy should be understood as the guarantee that the individual has control over the information that defines them before the community. When parents or society expose a child excessively, they impose a pre-molded and immutable identity on them, which nullifies the freedom to construct their future "self" and subjects the young person to perpetual public judgment, initiated even before their full legal capacity.

Finally, it is imperative to recognize that the harms of overexposure are multidimensional, affecting the fundamental right to healthy development enshrined in the Federal Constitution. The need to prematurely manage a public image robs minors of the playfulness and security of the private environment. Therefore, responding to this phenomenon requires shared responsibility between family, the State, and technological platforms, ensuring that the best interests of the child prevail over algorithmic visibility and the commercial exploitation of their image.

3.3 Legal protection in Brazil: an analysis of the Constitution, the ECA (Statute of Children and Adolescents), and the LGPD (Brazilian General Data Protection Law).

The protection of children and adolescents in the digital environment is grounded in the 1988 Federal Constitution, especially in its article 227, which establishes that it is the duty of the family, society, and the State to ensure, with absolute priority, the realization of the fundamental rights of childhood and youth (BRAZIL, 1988). Based on this provision, the principle of integral protection is consolidated, according to which children and adolescents are recognized as subjects of rights and recipients of special protection due to their unique stage of development.

In this context, excessive exposure and adultification on social media can compromise fundamental rights, such as human dignity, privacy, image, and the free development of personality. As Dias (2017) teaches, comprehensive protection requires not only repressive measures, but also preventive actions capable of ensuring the healthy development of children and adolescents in the face of the new vulnerabilities of the digital environment.

At the sub-constitutional level, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (Law No. 8.069/1990) reinforces this protection by guaranteeing the right to freedom, respect, and dignity. Article 17 states that the physical, psychological, and moral integrity of children and adolescents is inviolable, encompassing the preservation of their image, identity, and autonomy, while Article 18 determines that it is everyone's duty to protect them from vexatious, embarrassing,

or degrading situations (BRAZIL, 1990). Therefore, excessive digital exposure and premature adultification can constitute violations of personality rights, requiring effective action from the protection mechanisms provided for in the legal system.

Furthermore, the General Data Protection Law (Law No. 13.709/2018) broadened the protection of children in the virtual environment by establishing, in its article 14, that the processing of personal data of children and adolescents must observe their best interests (BRAZIL, 2018). This provision demonstrates the legislator's concern with the collection, use, and sharing of personal information by digital platforms, especially given the increasing exposure of minors on social networks.

According to Stolze and Pamplona Filho (2020), personality rights constitute projections of the dignity of the human person, which is why psychic integrity and privacy deserve special protection against practices capable of compromising the healthy development of the individual. From this perspective, the undue exposure of the image and data of children and adolescents goes beyond the merely technological sphere, assuming legal and constitutional relevance.

Therefore, it is clear that the Federal Constitution, the Statute of Children and Adolescents, and the General Data Protection Law form the main normative framework for the protection of children in the digital environment. However, despite legislative advances, challenges related to the monitoring and effectiveness of these norms persist. Thus, strengthening public policies and control mechanisms becomes indispensable in order to ensure that the development of children and adolescents occurs in a manner compatible with the principles of comprehensive protection and the dignity of the human person.

3.4 State intervention and public policies: challenges and limitations for the effectiveness of legal protection in the virtual environment.

In recent years, there has been a strengthening of initiatives aimed at protecting children in the digital environment. Among these, awareness campaigns promoted by the National Council of Justice (CNJ), SaferNet Brasil, and child protection agencies stand out, seeking to guide parents, educators, and guardians about the risks of excessive exposure of children and adolescents on social media. These measures demonstrate that comprehensive protection requires joint action between the State, society, and family, especially given the growing influence of digital platforms on the formation of children's and adolescents' identity.

In addition to public awareness policies, the enactment of Law No. 15.211/2025, popularly known as the Felca Law or the Digital Statute of Children and Adolescents, deserves

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highlighting. This law was created in response to the increase in cases of excessive exposure, early sexualization, and exploitation of the image of children and adolescents on social media. The legislation arose in response to the increase in complaints involving excessive exposure, early sexualization, and exploitation of the image of children and adolescents on the internet.

In this sense, the rule reinforces the need for joint action between the State, society, family and technology companies, recognizing that comprehensive protection must keep pace with the transformations imposed by the digital age (BRAZIL, 2025).

The Supreme Court's jurisprudence has consistently demonstrated concern for adopting procedural mechanisms capable of reducing the impact on victims during the production of evidence. In this regard, the judgment of RHC No. 121.494 stands out, in which the Supreme Court recognized the legitimacy of the early production of evidence through the so-called "Deposition without Harm," a procedure that later served as the basis for the creation of Law No. 13.431/2017. The decision highlighted the need to preserve the psychological integrity of the victim, avoiding their revictimization throughout the criminal prosecution (STF, 2014).

Furthermore, the Brazilian Supreme Court has reiterated that the constitutional protection of childhood must prevail over private interests when the fundamental rights of children and adolescents are at stake. From this perspective, the Court recognizes that the improper disclosure of information, images, or circumstances capable of identifying minor victims of violence represents an affront to human dignity, privacy, and the best interests of the child—principles widely protected by the Brazilian legal system.

It is also observed that the decisions issued by the higher courts have an important educational and preventive function. By reaffirming the absolute priority of children's and adolescents' rights, the Supreme Federal Court (STF) and the Superior Court of Justice (STJ) contribute to the consolidation of a legal culture focused on the protection of childhood, conveying to society the message that any form of violence, exploitation, or undue exposure of children and adolescents must be rigorously combated.

As recognized by the Superior Court of Justice, application providers can be held civilly liable for maintaining offensive content involving minors after formal notification, in observance of the principle of full protection and priority guardianship ensured by the Brazilian legal system (STJ, 2021).

Summary. CIVIL, CHILDREN'S AND TELEMATIC LAW. APPLICATION PROVIDER. SOCIAL NETWORK. MORAL AND IMAGE DAMAGES. OFFENSIVE PUBLICATION. CONTENT INVOLVING A MINOR. REMOVAL. COURT ORDER. UNNECESSARY. INTEGRAL PROTECTION. DUTY OF ALL

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> **SOCIETY. RELEVANT OMISSION. CIVIL LIABILITY ESTABLISHED.**
> 1. The Statute of Children and Adolescents (art. 18) and the Federal Constitution (art. 227) impose, as a duty of all society, the obligation to safeguard the dignity of children and adolescents, protecting them from all forms of neglect, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression, with the aim, among other things, of preventing any type of vexatious or embarrassing treatment.
> 1.1. Laws protecting the rights of children and adolescents are of a very special nature, belonging to the category of legal instruments that permeate all other norms, with the function of protecting specific subjects, even if they are also under the protection of other special laws.
> 1.2. In order to comply with the principle of comprehensive protection enshrined in children's and youth law, it is the duty of the internet application provider to remove content involving a minor – related to accusations that their parent committed sexual crimes – immediately after being formally notified of the offensive publication, regardless of a court order.
> 2. An application provider that, after being notified, refuses to remove offensive content involving a minor, should be held civilly liable and required to pay compensation for the moral damages caused to the victim of the offense.
> 2.1. Civil liability, in such circumstances, must be analyzed from the perspective of the relevant omission in their conduct, since they failed to adopt measures that, undoubtedly within their reach, would have minimized the effects of the harmful act committed by a third party, which was their duty.
> 2.2. In these terms, the isolated application of Article 19 of Federal Law No. 12.965/2014 appears insufficient, which, interpreted in light of Article 5, X, of the Federal Constitution, does not prevent the service provider from being held liable for other forms of unlawful acts, which are not limited to noncompliance with the court order referred to in the special law provision. 3. Special appeal denied.
> Judgment. The Fourth Panel, by majority vote, denied the special appeal, in accordance with the opinion of the Reporting Justice. Justice Marco Buzzi dissented , voting to grant the special appeal. Additional reasoning was provided by Justices Raul Araújo and Maria Isabel Gallotti. Justice Marco Buzzi dissented . Justices Luis Felipe Salomão (President), Raul Araújo, and Maria Isabel Gallotti voted with the Reporting Justice.
> Case No. REsp 1783269 / MG. SPECIAL APPEAL 2017/0262755-5. Rapporteur: Minister ANTONIO CARLOS FERREIRA (1146). Judging Body: T4 - FOURTH PANEL. Judgment Date: 12/14/2021. Publication Date/Source: DJe 02/18/2022. RSTJ vol. 265 p. 620

Thus, the analysis of jurisprudence demonstrates that Brazilian courts have been expanding the mechanisms for protecting the rights of children and adolescents, seeking to adapt the interpretation of norms to the new forms of vulnerability existing in contemporary society. This stance reveals the commitment of the Judiciary to the realization of human rights and to guaranteeing the full and healthy development of children and adolescents.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

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This research revealed that the excessive exposure and adultification of children and adolescents in the digital environment constitute phenomena that go beyond the social transformations resulting from technological advancement, reaching a significant legal dimension due to the impacts they can have on the physical, psychological, and social development of individuals in a unique stage of development. Throughout the study, it was found that the increasing inclusion of minors in social networks has contributed to new forms of vulnerability, especially in the face of the dissemination of inappropriate content, the overexposure of their image, and the anticipation of behaviors incompatible with childhood and adolescence.

It has also become evident that practices such as *sharenting* and the early formation of a digital identity can compromise fundamental rights related to privacy, image, informational self-determination, and the free development of personality. In this context, it was observed that the permanence of virtual records and the wide circulation of personal information can generate lasting repercussions in the lives of minors, requiring special attention from the family, society, and the State. From the perspective of personality rights, authors such as Gagliano , Pamplona Filho, and Maria Helena Diniz emphasize the importance of protecting psychic and moral integrity as an extension of the dignity of the human person.

An analysis of the Brazilian legal system demonstrated that the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Statute of Children and Adolescents, the General Law on the Protection of Personal Data, and, more recently, Law No. 15.211/2025, provide relevant instruments for the protection of children's and adolescents' rights in the digital environment. Furthermore, it was found that the jurisprudence of the higher courts has contributed to strengthening comprehensive protection, reaffirming the vulnerable condition of children and adolescents and the need to interpret the norms in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis initially presented was confirmed, since, although there are legislative advances and legal mechanisms aimed at protecting children in the virtual environment, challenges related to oversight, the effectiveness of regulations, and the speed at which new technologies and forms of digital interaction emerge in contemporary society still persist. Thus, the comprehensive protection foreseen in Article 227 of the Federal Constitution demands permanent and coordinated action between the State, family, society, and digital platforms.

Finally, it is clear that the challenges posed by the digital age demand constant updating of public policies and legal protection instruments. In this sense, this study sought to contribute to a deeper discussion about the exposure and adultification of children and adolescents on

social media, highlighting the need to strengthen preventive, educational, and supervisory measures. Technological evolution imposes on the legal system the task of keeping pace with new forms of vulnerability, in order to ensure that the digital environment remains compatible with the principles of comprehensive protection, human dignity, and the best interests of children and adolescents.

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