



## The absence of reflection in the work with the commemorative dates in children education: in discussion the 'Day of the Woman'

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**ABSTRACT.** Among the commemorative dates worked in the Early Childhood Education, we choose the 'Women's Day', given the effervescence of various issues experienced and suffered by women in the various social sectors, to discuss the historical and cultural relevance of March 8<sup>th</sup>, when celebrates 'International Women's Day'. It is a theoretical text whose objective is to problematize the absence of reflection in the pedagogical referrals within the educational units. Fact that culminates in the passive and uncritical acceptance of discourses and stereotypes that propagate discrimination and violence. We intend with the writing of this text to collaborate for the re-signification of the pedagogical work, fomenting new perspectives to focus on curricular elements that consider the child as participant of the educational process on a critical bias. The moments of work, in Early Childhood Education institutions, need to be committed to providing experiences that aggregate knowledge, identify elements of the culture, society in which children are inserted and broaden their perspective and capacity for reflection to make them think about how things are and how they came to be that way.

**Keywords:** Childhood; curriculum; commemorative dates; violence against women.

### A ausência de reflexão no trabalho com as datas comemorativas na educação infantil: em discussão o 'Dia da Mulher'

**RESUMO.** O objetivo do artigo é problematizar a ausência da reflexão nos encaminhamentos pedagógicos pautados em planejamento assentado nas datas comemorativas nas unidades educativas. Trata-se um texto de cunho teórico e elegemos como foco o 'Dia da Mulher', dada a efervescência de várias questões vividas e sofridas pelas mulheres nos diversos setores sociais, para discutirmos a relevância histórica e cultural deste tema para as crianças. O trabalho pedagógico na Educação Infantil tendo como mote as datas comemorativas, a partir das experiências vivenciadas por nós como professoras, tem sido realizado de maneira superficial, fato que culmina com a aceitação passiva e acrítica de discursos e estereótipos que propagam discriminação e violência, nesse caso com a mulher. Pretendemos com a escrita desse texto colaborar para a ressignificação do trabalho pedagógico, fomentando novas perspectivas para focalização de elementos curriculares que considerem a criança como partícipe de um processo educativo reflexivo e crítico. Os momentos de trabalho, nas instituições de Educação Infantil, precisam ter o compromisso de proporcionar experiências agregadoras de conhecimento, identificar elementos da cultura, da sociedade em que as crianças estão inseridas e alargar seu olhar e capacidade de reflexão para levá-las a pensar sobre como as coisas são e como chegaram a ser dessa forma.

**Palavras-chave:** infância; currículo; datas comemorativas; violência contra a mulher.

### La ausencia de la reflexión al trabajar con fechas conmemorativas en la enseñanza primaria: en discusión el 'Día de la Mujer'

**RESUMEN.** El objetivo del artículo es problematizar la ausencia de la reflexión en los encaminhamientos pedagógicos basados en la planificación más específicamente en las fechas conmemorativas en las unidades educativas. Se trata de un texto de cunho teórico, además, elegimos centrarnos en el 'Día de la Mujer', dada la efervescencia de varios problemas experimentados y sufridos por las mujeres en diversos sectores sociales, para tratar la relevancia histórica y cultural de este tema con los niños. El trabajo pedagógico en la enseñanza primaria con las fechas conmemorativas como lema, a partir de las experiencias vividas por nosotros como maestros, se ha realizado superficialmente, un hecho que culmina con la aceptación pasiva y acrítica de los discursos y estereotipos que propagan la discriminación y la violencia, en ese caso con la mujer. Con la elaboración de este texto,

pretendemos contribuir a la resignificación del trabajo pedagógico, fomentando nuevas perspectivas para centrarse en elementos curriculares que consideren al niño como participante en un proceso educativo crítico y reflexivo. Los momentos de trabajo, en las instituciones de Educación Infantil, deben estar comprometidos con brindar experiencias que agreguen conocimientos, identifiquen elementos de la cultura, sociedad en la que se insertan los niños y niñas y amplíen su perspectiva y capacidad de reflexión para hacerles pensar cómo son las cosas, y cómo llegaron a ser de esa manera.

**Palabras clave:** niñez; plan de estudios; fechas conmemorativas; violencia contra la mujer.

Received on August 07, 2019.

Accepted on June 24, 2020.

## Introduction

The school curriculum that guides the educational work may end up directing prescriptive approaches in pedagogical practices that include commemorative dates. Among the various themes magnified by commerce and adopted by schools is the 'Women's Day', celebrated on March 8, also present in educational activities since Kindergarten. This theme comprises several points that deserve to be debated, such as the conception of gender, prejudice, femicide, among others, which are announced by the media and by the news, but often do not receive the necessary discussion in the educational sphere. As Kramer (2002) warns, the insufficiency of the debate on this issue within the educational institution is the result, among other aspects, of the weaknesses of the teacher education, the result of a compartmentalized educational system governed by a fixed planning. The configuration of teacher training courses is a factor that will affect the way in which the theme will or will not be worked with children in the teaching practice.

Faced with these issues, the objective of this text is to problematize the work with commemorative dates in Early Childhood Education, in particular, to reflect on how 'Women's Day' has been experienced by children and teachers in educational institutions. This work arose from the observation – in the course of our professional experiences over the last ten years in a Infant Education Center in the city of Guarapuava, Paraná – of resistance in the appropriation of reflective pedagogical practices in educational work related to commemorative dates and children. In general terms, we observe that the educational scenario imposed by a curriculum prepared by municipal managers and passed on to the institutions configures a routine in which, according to Micarello (2006), the logic consists in carrying out practices in order to account for the teaching work to the parents, with small works' and presentations on festive dates. As the author reflects, activities are commonly meaningless for the children, who perform them mechanically to fulfill the pedagogical 'ritualism'.

Based on our experiences, we identified that the treatment of this date in a romanticized way is commonplace, with work proposals that explore the affective side of the issue (which does not need to be neglected), but that favor the making of cards, paintings, posters and artistic presentations, which hides the discussions that lay bare the historical and social issues that gave rise to the creation of the date and the real conditions experienced by women in contemporary society. Practices like these bother us and make us uneasy, because, in addition to burying critical discussion, they end up subduing children, considering them as incapable subjects. This dynamic goes against contemporary childhood studies that consider children as social actors able to interpret, opine, create, learn and think (Pinto & Sarmiento, 1997).

Methodologically, we carried out a reflective analysis of this reality found in the light of a theoretical framework consisting of a bibliographical survey based on authors such as Kramer (2002), Meyer (2010), Paredes (2012), Pinto & Sarmiento (1997), among others, which enabled us to take a deeper look at the work with commemorative dates in educational institutions. We consider it pertinent to bring up this issue because it leads us to structural issues that permeate the role of education and lead us to question whether political, social and cultural aspects are incorporated in a way of producing a critical sense, or only an ideological bias.

Taking a more critical look at the commemoration of this date in the educational sphere is a necessary demand to face the demystification of concepts such as patriarchy, sexism, violence and prejudice that subject women to conditions of inferiority in society. This resignification can be built from Kindergarten, through conversations and debates with children that include thinking about the role of women in society, in everyday life, at work and, in contrast, the place relegated to them that places them and often sees them as inferior to men.

The intention is to contribute to the development of pedagogical actions based on criticality and on the perception of the role of facts and historical understandings in the social constitution of subjects. At first, we briefly present aspects of the historical trajectory lived by women in the struggle for their rights and, subsequently, data and information about the social condition experienced by them in contemporary times. Subsequently, we discuss the way in which 'Women's Day' has been part of the practices in Early Childhood Education and we ponder on possibilities that overcome impoverishment in dealing with issues related to this theme.

## Women's movement in history

Louro, Felipe and Goellner (2010), when discussing gender issues, record that the multiple discourses about the body are what shapes it and what indicates the place, the positions of subjects in society and exercise power games, which need to be known and be reflected upon in order to trigger confrontations against the conditions of submission that affect us.

The word gender, used in feminist studies, demands that we recognize that male and female genders are socially constructed in the cultural sphere and meanings elaborated in symbolic discourses are assigned to them. In practice, these constructions are constituted by binary and fixed oppositions, in which the subject is limited to one position or another, and the different is marginalized and victim of prejudice. The criticism of feminist scholars is that one of these positions is always more valued than the other and its socially recognized place is related to gender issues. In the dualities reason/emotion, war/peace, day/night, culture/nature, for example, it is clear that women are associated with emotion, peace, night and nature (Woodward, 2014).

For Scott (1995), gender becomes a way to indicate cultural constructions about female and male roles, that is, a social category imposed on a sexual body. For the author, the definition of gender rests on the integral connection of two propositions: “[...] (1) gender is a constitutive element of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes and (2) gender is a form of giving meaning to power relations”. In this understanding, we recognize that essentialist views and binary oppositions are engendered by power relations. Biological essentialism, for instance, affirms an identity to women that originates from the womb, of being a mother, sensitive and, therefore, having to take care of household chores. According to Meyer (2010), it is through the feminist movement that one begins to recognize that it is not the anatomical and physiological characteristics that justify gender inequalities. Her arguments are that:

[...] it is the ways in which female and male characteristics are represented as more or less valuable, the forms in which the recognition and distinction between female and male is made, what becomes possible to think and say about women and men that will constitute, effectively, what starts to be defined and experienced as masculinity and femininity, in a given culture, in a given historical moment (Meyer, 2010, p. 14).

This initial concept of gender was re-signified and complexified, as the author emphasizes, which introduces important epistemological changes. The understanding prevails that it is throughout life, through the various institutions and social practices, that we constitute ourselves as men and women, in an uninterrupted and non-linear process, because depending on the times and places in which we live, there will be many and conflicting ways to define and live femininity and masculinity (Meyer, 2010).

Meyer (2010), reflects on the naturalization and little questioning about the place destined to women in society, which would generate a condition of blindness in relation to the prejudice and inferiority that are conferred on them. The author emphasizes that “[...] gender remains a central conceptual, political and pedagogical tool when one intends to design and implement projects that call into question current forms of social organization as well as their resulting hierarchies and inequalities” (Meyer, 2010, p. 10-11).

The feminist movement historically fights against the one-sidedness of patriarchal order<sup>1</sup>. It represents a group of women engaged in social struggles that seek to defend their rights by promoting debates and reflections on women's participation in politics, on equal rights, abortion, the choice of marriage, motherhood and on the division of domestic tasks, among others. Themes that have been debated for a few decades, but given the social reality that still prevails, the legacy of struggle remains today.

[...] the feminist movement does not aim to fight sex masculine, but yes it is directed to the organization of women, to the mobilization of that half of the population that is inert to combat prejudices, regardless of who their agent is: man or woman (Schneider, 2017, p. 18).

March 8, dedicated to International Women's Day, is one of the fruits of the feminist movement and has had milestones in different years. In 1910, the German and socialist Clara Zetkin proposed the creation of an International Women's Day without setting a precise date. However, as stated by Blay (2001), the date is related, in Brazil and in some Latin American countries, to the historic fire that hit a fabric factory in New York City in 1911, that is, one year after the proposal by Clara Zetkin. The current of socialist feminists, in which Clara participated, emerged sometime after the publication of the Communist Manifesto and was developed in different countries, such as Russia and Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Patriarchy: social system where men maintain power over other members.

In 1917, a historic march of women in Russia, organized by the League for the Equal Rights of Women, manifested, among its protests, important links to issues related to hunger and the current provisional government. In 1922, March 8 was officially celebrated in Russia as Women's Day, having been decreed a year earlier at the International Conference of Communist Women. In 1975, the United Nations (UN) was established on March 8 as International Women's Day. Controversies aside, the date marks the beginning of a fight.

March 8th is dedicated to the commemoration of International Women's Day. It became a somewhat festive date, with flowers and bonbons for some. For others, its origin is remembered as marked by strong political and labor movements, strikes, marches and a lot of police persecution (Blay, 2001, p. 601).

In the Brazilian scene, in 1901, the social conditions of working women denounced a precarious and inhuman situation. According to Rago (1987), a women's workday ranged from 12 to 14 hours a day in factories, extended to household chores and work as seamstresses, which totaled around 18 hours. The author highlights that the working conditions inside the factories were terrible, as women suffered from poor hygiene, were not paid for the overtime they worked and were victims of sexual exploitation. They submitted to these categories for a number of reasons, including the fear of being fired, since male salaries were not enough to support the family. But beyond that, they feared falling back on their achievements, as they had recently entered the labor force. For them, losing their job also meant giving up their financial independence and the beginnings of their autonomy.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Berta Lutz was a great reference in the struggle of Brazilian women, especially in the elaboration of the right to vote for women. Mobilization attitudes of a political nature culminated in the granting of the right to vote in 1933, guaranteed in the Federal Constitution of 1934, but this was only actualized in 1945, when the Vargas dictatorship fell (Alves, 1980).

The decade of the 1960s was significant for the provisional union of the struggle of Brazilian women, until then they were under different influences, especially anarchists and communists. While the communists fought for the implantation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the anarchists believed that this system would reproduce as hierarchical relations of power, social and sexual. The struggle of women against the 1964 dictatorship revolved around the return of democracy, denunciations of political arrests and disappearances, and March 8 was a date that united them against the military.

The year 1975 was very significant, as there was the creation of feminist associations such as the Centro da Mulher Brasileira. The following year, Eunice Michilles was the first woman to hold the position of senator in Brazil. More recently, in 2010, the field of Brazilian politics gained a new configuration, electing the first ever woman to occupy the Presidency of the Republic. Dilma Vana Rousseff took office in 2011, being re-elected in 2014 and ended her activities in 2016, after suffering a misogynist coup, an understanding evidenced in a perspective of critical analysis of historical and political facts (Mattos, Bessone and Mamigonian, 2016; Ramos & Frigotto, 2016; Bastos, 2017).

Take, for example, the use of misogynist speech, with images representing the president in a disrespectful and sexist way, in the cover of *Isto É* magazine, in April 2016. Dilma was depicted as a hysterical woman, under the headline 'The President's angry outbursts'. According to Lemos (2017), it is very common for the press to determine what will receive focus and in what form, making room for manipulations according to political interests. In the country's recent history, there has already been the case of support, later confessed, by the Globo TV channel to the candidate Fernando Collor, in the 1989 elections. The process was similar with Rousseff, the opposition articulated for months, with encouragement from the television networks, in addition to radios and newspapers, mobilizing street riots in favor of the impeachment:

The media intensified the campaign to discredit the president's image [...] with sexist and misogynistic gender arguments. It is important to emphasize that not only the president suffered this type of pejorative media representation. Generally, women who hold public positions are constantly the target of sexist and misogynistic comments with the aim of disqualifying them from acting in the public sphere (Lemos, 2017, p. 6).

Thus, it is clear that the media is recurrently used to oppress and subordinate women, creating stereotypes and reinforcing their objectification. The events briefly reported seek to show that 'Women's Day', long before being a date publicized and praised by the media and of great interest to commerce, represented a movement of women's struggle for their rights and for a dignified place in society. Although they have acted collectively in defense of these rights, on a daily basis dozens of women are still victims of violence and discrimination, as well as a lack of working conditions and decent wages.

## Women, violence and discrimination

In 2016, 4,645 women were murdered in Brazil, an average of 13 women a day, one every two hours. The Atlas of Violence released by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) in 2018 shows that the rates of violence against women have risen by 6.4% in ten years, mainly in the North and Northeast regions, and that the main victims are the black women. Violence is one of the main strategies used by patriarchy to exert power over women.

Patriarchy is defined by Paredes (2012) as a system of oppression, exploitation, violence and discrimination experienced by all humanity (men, women and intersex people) and nature, historically built on the sexual body of women, it is a system of death.

It was and is the first structure of domination and subordination in history; on this is based the system of all oppressions that even today continue to be a basic system of domination, it is the most powerful and lasting system of inequality (Paredes, 2012, p. 102, our translation<sup>2</sup>).

It comprises rules, customs, traditions, prejudices, laws and education, which culminate in the naturalization of gender roles. But when this ideological apparatus is not enough to maintain subordinate subjectivities, violence punishes the dissidence of women (Paredes, 2012).

Nine years after the implementation of the Maria da Penha Law<sup>3</sup> in Brazil, the Femicide Law was approved, in March 2015. The law refers to crimes against women for reasons of the female condition, that is, when their deaths are involved in crimes motivated by hatred, disgust and aggression because they are women. According to Teixeira (2017), naming these murders and qualifying them as femicide was a great achievement of the feminist movement, because by continuing to be called homicides, these crimes kept the particularities of crimes against women erased: "Situating femicide as a practice misogynist means that these crimes are filled with disgust, contempt and hatred for women, often demonstrated in the refinement of cruelty with which they are practiced" (Teixeira, 2017, p. 56). References in studies on femicide, Russell and Radford (2006, p. 57, our translation<sup>4</sup>) define the term as follows:

Femicide is at the most extreme point in the anti-female terror continuum that includes a wide range of verbal and physical abuses, such as rape, torture, sexual enslavement (particularly prostitution), incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional beatings, sexual harassment (on the phone, on the street, in the office and in the classroom), genital mutilation (cliterodectomy, excision, infibulations), unnecessary gynecological operations, forced heterosexuality, forced sterilization, forced motherhood (by criminalizing contraception and abortion), psychosurgery, food deprivation for women in some cultures, cosmetic surgery and other mutilations in the name of beautification. Wherever these forms of terrorism result in death, they become femicide.

Most women face or have been victims of some type of violence during their lives, whether on the street, at home, at work, at leisure, with aggression commonly perpetrated by acquaintances and family members. More conservative political and cultural contexts, as we have experienced in Brazil in recent years, harden and strengthen crimes against women as they propagate a sense of guilt on the part of victims and disqualify speeches that defend their rights. Today, we have an elected president who, in his campaign, explicitly used misogynistic, racist, homophobic, and sexist speeches to convince voters that his hallmark would be the end of political correctness. Since then, open attacks on women, blacks, gay and lesbian, have been increasingly frequent, whether on the streets or on the internet.

One of the aspects of gender violence is its dimension as a political mechanism, and its purpose is to keep women at a disadvantage and inequality in the world and in relationships with men, exclude women from access to goods, resources and opportunities, contribute to devaluing and frighten women and reproduce patriarchal rule. The constitution of modern western thought in a dichotomous way between categories such as man/woman, reason/emotion, nature/culture, barbarism/civilization explains the brutality with which indigenous, women and enslaved people were treated since colonial times. In these binary oppositions, one term is always more valued, seen as the norm, and the other as deviant. This thought system supports the

<sup>2</sup> In the original: Fue y es la primera estructura de dominación y subordinación de la historia; sobre esto se funda el sistema de todas las opresiones que aún hoy sigue siendo un sistema básico de dominación, es la más poderosa y duradera de las desigualdades.

<sup>3</sup> Law that entered into force in 2006 and creates mechanisms to curb domestic and family violence against women.

<sup>4</sup> In the original: El feminicidio se encuentra en el punto más extremo en el continuo contra el terror femenino que incluye una amplia gama de abusos verbales y físicos, como violación, tortura, esclavitud sexual (particularmente prostitución), abuso sexual infantil incestuoso y extrafamiliar, golpizas físicas y emocionales, acoso sexual (por teléfono, en la calle, en la oficina y en el aula), mutilación genital (cliterodectomía, escisión, infibulaciones), operaciones ginecológicas innecesarias, heterosexuality forzada, esterilización forzada, maternidad forzada (al penalizar la anticoncepción y el aborto), psicocirugía, privación de alimentos para mujeres en algunas culturas, cirugía estética y otras mutilaciones en nombre del embellecimiento. Dondequiera que estas formas de terrorismo tengan como resultado la muerte, se convierten en femicidio.

exercise of possession and depredation of the female body, by denying the representation of the totality of humanity, and constructing a figure of a dichotomous, subordinate and passive pair.

In many cases of femicide, impunity is common due to bad investigations and police mobilization, botched investigations, jurists colluding with macho practices and governments involved in maintaining this system. Femicide is a State crime when it is a structural part of the problem for being patriarchal and for not guaranteeing women and girls the security that guarantees their lives (Navaz, 2008). Crimes against women and girls are linked to other social conditions and promote extreme marginalization and social, legal and political exclusion and, thus, violence against women does not affect all equally. Studies on intersectionality allow us to understand the intertwining's between gender, class and race.

For Lugones (2008), it is part of Western history that only white bourgeois women are considered women. Historically, the others were not only their subordinates, but also seen and treated as animals, in the deep sense of beings without gender, without characteristics of femininity. "When they were gendered as similar to the colonized, they received the inferior status that accompanies the female gender, but none of the privileges that constituted this status in the case of white bourgeois women" (Lugones, 2008, p. 25, our translation<sup>5</sup>). In Brazil, in the last ten years, the homicide rate for every 100,000 black women increased by 15.4%, while among non-black women there was a drop of 8% (Lugones, 2008).

As Lugones (2008) notes, indifference to violence against women is a contempt for deep social transformations, which makes even men who are also victims of domination and exploitation not recognize their collaboration to maintain this system. The moment has been one of hardship and setbacks and, as an example of this scenario, we can remember that, in 2015, there were actions in the legislative houses of states and municipalities to remove the gender theme from local education plans. The movement had a large participation of religious layers who understand the treatment of this issue in schools as an apology for abortion, homosexuality and other behaviors considered to be immoral. For these conservative groups, a discussion of these issues must be limited to family discussions, which have the right to decide on the choices of their children.

For the purposes of this text, understanding how the gender theme works in school curricula - because it operates in the school environment in a significant way, with the difference that, without its inclusion in education plans, it continues to operate as it always did, due to gender discrimination, by prejudice, by misinformation, etc. - it is important for us to understand a legitimacy and continuity of the violent and genocidal patriarchal system established and active in our society. By trying to officially omit the discussion of gender violence - the rights of women, gays, transsexuals and lesbians - we continue to operate in favor of the murder of many people. An unreflective action can also take its tow depending on which dates are considered commemorative by the institutions and how this is handled.

[...] what causes concern is not the presence of these dates, as it is not the school's responsibility to despise, with impunity, memory, history, the past, as one of its functions is the education of new generations, leading them to our collective heritage and the common good of learning and knowledge. But rather the dimension that the yearbook of parties, events, and special moments occupies in the organization of pedagogical work (Barroso, 2018, p. 23).

The human condition, in its most diverse forms of being and existing, must be the object of reflection in educational institutions from Early Childhood Education, otherwise the exclusion or denial in the curricula, as well as superficial and stereotyped work with certain themes, immobilize confrontation and nullify the capacity for indignation in the face of cases of violence.

### **'Women's Day': a pretext for activities or an opportunity for reflection?**

The experiences lived in pedagogical work with children aged 0-5 years have revealed a daily life marked by actions that are a pretext for putting together a range of activities in order to produce 'small works' with children. Ostetto (2012), when presenting the most common forms of planning found in Early Childhood Education, analyzes each one of them, including the one based on commemorative dates.

From this perspective, the planning of daily practices is guided by the calendar. The schedule is organized considering dates considered important from the adult's point of view. Also listed here are various activities, but these refer to a specific date, a commemoration chosen by the calendar (Ostetto, 2012, p. 181).

<sup>5</sup> In the original: Cuando fueron clasificadas como similares a las mujeres colonizadas, se les dio el estatus inferior que acompaña al género femenino, pero ninguno de los privilegios que constituían ese estatus en el caso de las mujeres burguesas blancas.

The author's analysis helps us to think about the criteria for choosing the dates to be worked on and the historical conception that permeates this selection, which often omits or ignores the different facets of reality and relies on truths disseminated by the media. In addition, she points out that the one who gains from all this is the market, which sells its goods and makes people believe that people or things deserve to be remembered only once a year with 'dance, souvenirs and small works'. The pedagogical work, in this sense, fragments knowledge, despises the children's capacity for thinking and jettisons the role of the Early Childhood Education institution of questioning what circulates in mainstream society.

As we have seen, the data show us a reality in which women are victims of various forms of violence, which leads us to consider that the term 'celebrating' is questionable and should be discussed, that is, we celebrate 'Women's Day', but we do not reflect on the alarming numbers of femicides that occur daily, on the role of women in society, among other aspects. Given the social function of educational institutions, if the option is to take 'Women's Day' as a date to remember, possibilities for reflection and dialogue with children emerge that consider their experiences, their points of view and help them to understand the need to confront and overcome the condition of submission to which women have historically been entangled.

With regard to Early Childhood Education, this view is contemplated, for example, in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education, which advocate that:

[...] from a very young age, children must be mediated in the construction of a worldview and knowledge as plural elements, to form attitudes of solidarity and to learn to identify and fight prejudices that affect the different ways that human beings are constituted as people [...] (Brasil, 2009, p. 89).

The aforementioned document, by supporting a conception of the world and knowledge that embraces diversity, opens up possibilities for a field of debate towards the development of training based on respect, dialogue, understanding and recognition of differences, which will be forged from the reflection on the social and material conditions that surround children and on the survey of ways to face and combat injustices. Even young children can talk about situations they experience or follow in the media, as these are facts that affect them on a daily basis. The understanding of children as protagonists, producers of culture in the relationships established with the environment and with their peers is explained in the Guidelines document (Brasil, 2009, p. 89).

In our society, in everyday actions, we end up marginalizing women by putting them in a secondary place with chauvinist and sexist practices when we do not encourage boys to participate in household chores or when we say that a certain father only 'helps' with the daily tasks. It is the responsibility of both men and women to raise children, meet their daily needs, think about how the house works, work, among other functions. If in educational institutions we divide the children and indicate that boys will play with the ball and girls will play house or if we 'decorate' girl materials in pink and boy materials in blue, we are reinforcing culturally created stereotypes that deepen the separation between genders. These issues were discussed by Finco (2003) and Cruz and Carvalho (2006), who reflect on how the games experienced by children institutionally explain gender relations and shape behaviors that need to be faced and fought.

Thus, the concern with working with commemorative dates must be part of the management of institutions and, if the option is to privilege practices based on this organization, the activities associated with them need to be meaningful for children, expand their repertoire of experiences and take to reflection on problematic situations that need to be tackled and overcome. For Barroso (2018), commemorative dates can exist inside schools as long as they become strategies to consider memories, discuss the real conditions of life associated with the theme, as well as serve as a mechanism for reiterating identity.

However, inserted in the pedagogical proposals of a large number of institutions, the commemorative dates commonly trigger projects that meet the determinations and guidelines of the educational units. Ostetto (2012) recalls, however, that the frequent change in the theme of the projects can make the link and association between the theme and the commemorative date in question unfeasible. In addition, this dynamic stagnates teachers and requires them to make a set of preparations that take time and energy.

We dare to warn that the commemorative calendar can also be harmful to the Early Childhood Education professional. On the one hand, it depletes its intellectual potential by enabling the adoption of routines and recurrences devoid of nexus, pleasure, and challenges. On the other hand, it sucks their physical and psychic energies, taken by the urgency of deadlines and the numerous tasks that are intertwined in this type of event (Barroso, 2018, p. 27).

A consequence of this situation is the fact that, if the dates are addressed only in a commemorative and festive sense, with the absence of reflective, critical and historical work, the date is used as a pretext and a set

of activities is developed in a superficial way that repeats itself year after year. Another worrying point is that most of the work involved in making cards and souvenirs with flowers, painting of photocopied drawings, dances and decorated poems mischaracterizes the effective participation of children and does not constitute a creative process.

To silence children is to ignore their participation in the planning. Hiding their voices is to leave out the main actor in this process, it is to centralize, in the professor or in the institution, the selection of which dates and themes are relevant to be worked on. We do have an important role as adults, but listening to the little ones and counting on their participation allows the child's perspective to play an important role in our practices (Lira, Dominico, & Martins, 2018, p. 148).

In addition, it is worth considering that planning based on a romanticized vision is not consistent with the reality experienced in most families, in which women perform numerous activities and are responsible for supporting and raising children, often alone. In the field of work, wage differences persist between men and women in the same position, which reveals unjustifiable disparities, as women perform the same tasks and have become increasingly qualified. In other words, reality is not a bed of roses as suggested by the cards given by the children!

This way of approaching 'Women's Day' in Early Childhood Education institutions is also anchored in the vision disseminated by the media and publicity that presents an idealized scenario in which men, sons and daughters are invited to give gifts to 'honorable women'. Reinforcing this discourse does not help to reflect on the real conditions of life of women in society and strengthens an idealized conception by dealing with such an important issue with meaningless referrals. Meyer (2010, p. 11) remembers that:

[...] it would be up to us, educators, to invest in educational projects that make it possible to change the usual focuses of the current teaching-learning processes: from the search for ready answers to the development of the capacity to prepare questions; from certainties to doubt and provisionality; from the prescriptive character of pedagogical knowledge to an approach that encourages the de-naturalization of things we have learned to take for granted.

As a way to give new meaning to these practices, we were supported by the concept of memory treated by Nora (1993), which allows us to approach this subject from the perspective of the reminiscence of women's actions in society and their consequences. The author highlights that “[...] what we call memory is, in fact, the gigantic and dizzying constitution of the material stock of what is impossible for us to remember, an unfathomable repertoire of what we might need to remember” (Nora, 1993, p. 9). In this sense, the purpose of commemorative dates would be to rescue collective history so that it remains alive, passing from generation to generation, and it is also through memory that forms of resistance and struggles are established. From this conception, social movements organized by women, in the fight for their rights, have an important role in remembering the degrading conditions to which they were historically subjected and those that are still ingrained in our daily lives and, therefore, need to be known, debated and surpassed.

It is worth noting the study by Gomes and Monteiro (2016), who, when investigating the existence of work with commemorative dates in the municipal network of a city in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, highlights that there were differences in dealing with this issue, being the most prevalent in some regions of the city than in others. This situation helps us to recognize that there is no standardization of practices around commemorative dates, although to a greater or lesser extent it is present in most institutions.

This makes sense since practices are the expression of a curriculum, interspersed by hierarchical power relations, which not only reproduce knowledge, meanings, ideas and cultural aspects, but effectively produce meanings and identities with the intention of shaping bodies to subject them to a dominant model.

In the words of Silva (2006, p. 27), “[...] the curriculum is centrally involved in what we are, what we have become, what we will become. The curriculum produces, we are produced by the curriculum”. Thus, language is not a mere expression device, as it works to include or exclude meanings, ensure or marginalize certain behaviors. In this sense, the curriculum also teaches many behaviors related to gender, being a space “[...] in which the regulatory norms of gender mark their presence to teach right, wrong, expected, adequate, inadequate, the normal, the abnormal, the strange and the 'abject' in relation to gender behaviors” (Paraiso, 2016, p. 208).

By failing to problematize issues related to gender such as violence and inequality, teachers end up, even if unintentionally, operating through representations, they mask reality and thus contribute so that it is not an object of transformation. As discussed above, girls suffer from situations of violence and discrimination from childhood and, many of them, will only be able to understand such situations many years later, and Early



Childhood Education could contribute to the understanding and overcoming of existing oppressive gender and sexual relations. The silencing of themes like this in the curriculum acts to maintain the patriarchal and misogynist relations that are part of the model of society and of modern and society in which children are inserted and broaden their perspective and capacity for reflection to make them think about how things are and how they came to be that way. With this purpose, they will be able to collaborate for the development of criticality and, with more elements, it will be possible to think about whether the dates should and deserve to be celebrated and how they can do this. Certainly, children admire their mothers and other women who are part of their daily lives and celebrating this day may be their decision, but as long as it is made from the awareness of the many aspects and variants that intersect it.

## Final considerations

The reflection on the work executed with the 'Women's Day', in Early Childhood Education, must necessarily be accompanied by an attentive and careful look at the historical and social issues experienced by women. The understanding of these aspects deserves to be replicated for other dates as well, which have often been made visible in institutions that work with young children, but in a wrong way, such as 'Indian's Day', 'Water Day', 'Father's and Mother's Day', among others. The reflection presented here had as a background localized experiences that don't allow us to state that all the work with commemorative dates in Early Childhood Education such as 'Women's Day', in other institutions, follows the line of commerce and a commemoration laudatory without issues. However, the lived reality draws our attention to the necessary problematization of these referrals and the conceptions that support them.

It is our role to clarify situations without being hostage to a practice established in institutions that endorses a mere training in manual skills in making 'souvenirs' for women-mothers. As a terrain of disputes and conflicts around the production of social and cultural meanings and identities, the Early Childhood Education curriculum needs to be thought of based on silencing and, thus, we come to understand that, in terms of curriculum, we cannot claim naivety or ignorance, because every speech, officially present or not, produces and reproduces.

By focusing on issues such as violence and gender discrimination, both historical and political, we contribute to the construction of subjects committed to transforming reality. This posture is based on the understanding that, although children need adult care given their age, they are inserted in society and live and interact with different situations, express their perceptions and, therefore, need to be considered as competent interlocutors to talk about themselves, the world and those who live with them.

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**Note:**

The authors were responsible for designing, analyzing and interpreting the data; critical writing and review of the manuscript content and approval of the final version to be published.