

Memories of Childhood and Education: eliasian approaches on women

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ABSTRACT – Memories of Childhood and Education: eliasian approaches on women. Social relations between individuals are guided by educational and formation experiences that each one carries through life, by how they constitute themselves individually and collectively. From Elias and the methodology of oral history, the objective was to search, in the childhood memories of seven women, children's teachers, born between 1950 and 1970, the formation and education constituted in their childhood, in private and domestic spaces. It was learned that the professional choice is linked to female education, normalized by rules of control and civility.

Keywords: **Norbert Elias. Childhood. Education. Memories of Women.**

RESUMO – Memórias da Infância e da Educação: abordagens eliasianas sobre as mulheres. Relações sociais entre indivíduos estão pautadas pela experiência de educação e formação que cada um traz consigo ao longo da vida, pelo modo como se constituem individual e coletivamente. A partir de Elias e da metodologia da história oral, o objetivo foi buscar nas memórias de infância de sete mulheres, professoras de crianças, nascidas entre 1950 e 1970, a formação e a educação que se constituiu na infância em espaços privados e domésticos. Apreendeu-se que a escolha profissional tem vínculos com a educação feminina, normatizada por regras de controle e civilidade. Palavras-chave: **Norbert Elias. Infância. Educação. Memórias de Mulheres.**

Introduction

Norbert Elias' theories (1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1998a; 1998b; 2008) have been mostly used in human sciences human in various fields of knowledge, like Anthropology (Ferreira, 2014; Pereira, 2009), Education (Brandão, 2009; Honorato, 2011; Leão, 2007, Setton, 2013; Veiga, 2014), History (Gebara, 2016; Costa; Menezes, 2014). They offer visibility especially to the subjects of Sociology, in which the author worked more in depth. It can be observed that the contributions are strongly present in education, since, as Elias (2008) claimed, all social phenomena and processes involving people can be investigated. In this sense, education and formative processes of constitution of social groups can be researched supported on his theories.

Another aspect that defines and characterizes Elias' work (1993; 1994a; 1994b) is the emphasis on the empirical research as a perspective and a proposal of reading social phenomena. The empirical work establishes and nurtures the reflection and allows the theories to be evidenced and verified *in loco*, an aspect that is dear to the author. The empirical research presents as a basic context in human sciences, especially if we consider education, as a site in which social phenomena can become quite subjective and conceal actual experiences lived by the individuals.

These prolegomena allow us to indicate that we will work in this paper with Elias' theories to explain social phenomena and we will also make use of empirical research that endorses our reflections, especially on the intended thematic, that is, the Eliasian approaches on the female formation and condition.

We will present the empirical work, which will be discussed based on stories and memories of seven women, born in the 1950s until the 1970s, in different cities of the Central-West and Southeast of Brazil regarding the formation of ways, behaviors and belonging to the social group in which they live, work and are socially constituted. Our aim is to search in the memories of children's teachers, especially women, the formation and education that was constituted in the childhood, as well as in the private and domestic spaces and that date back to the times of their early formation.

Thus, we question about how these women perceived their education comparing with the education of brothers or boys from their own social group and which aspects mark this universe that was constituted or was conventionally called the social place of women. We do not want to incur into generalization, but we will work with fragments of the history of seven women from different generations, as well as diverse cultural and social contexts, but that have in common the family education and present, in their trajectories, similar elements in the constitution of a way of being, of a civilized behavior for girls/women. Such ways not only form them as individuals and bring them close by similarity, but also mark and characterize the professional choice, as all of them became children's teachers.

All the surveys of sources consisting of childhood memories are part of previous and current research that are being developed in projects with memories and oral history, resulting from a trajectory of more than fifteen years of research with several guided and published work on the theme (Campos, 2010; Sarat, 2004; Sarat; Campos, 2014).

We will primarily use three works by Elias (1993; 1994b; 1998a) on the theme, considering the feminine presence, but mainly the absence of women in the Eliasian theories. The author addresses, throughout all his work, the human relations between individual and society. To understand how such relations are established was his constant search and his intellectual effort throughout almost one century of life and, in this perspective, obviously women are included in the context.

In view of this, we will search for the presence of women in the inseparable and indispensable social constitution of all human groups, whose aspect is actual - although history can deny the place of women, biology and the genetics never could -, since when supported on popular language or saying, one can say that, in general, *women are half of the planet's population and the mother of the other half*. Thus, their presence is actual and undeniable, despite how theories and history consider them.

Specifically, in *The changing balance of power between the sexes* [*El Cambiante Equilibrio de Poder entre los Sexos* (Elias, 1998a)] the author presents and discusses the presence of women in history. This would be one of his few works on the theme and in it he reflects on the relations between men and women and the process of their development in Ancient Rome, considering a long-lasting period between the Antiquity and the constitution of the Roman Empire. This study indicates the long-lasting processes that established power relations between the sexes and establishes the social relations involving men and women in different periods and cultures, forming standards of behavior in the social groups in places of insertion of these individuals.

Due to the aspect of absence or disappearance of women, we evidence the books *The History of Manners* (*The Civilizing Process, Vol. 1*) [*O Processo Civilizador, volume 1: uma história dos costumes* (Elias, 1994b)] and *Power & Civility* (*The Civilizing Process, Vol. 2*) [*O Processo Civilizador, volume 2: formação do estado e civilização* (Elias, 1993)], which discuss especially, as part of the long-lasting civilizing process, the courtsation of the warrior, the monopolizing of the violence by the State and the pacification of the spaces of control and self-control of the emotions. A predominantly masculine and warrior society - women were not warriors - that becomes pacified by the courtsation process, when the spear is changed for the parliament capacity, replacing the warrior by the courteous man. According to documentary references and sources, such universe is historically masculine, but has a strong feminine presence in the backstage of the scene or, as Elias writes, "hidden behind the scenes of social life"¹, in the private spaces of human relations and small revolutions.

However, we continue being inspired by the author when he points to the significance that all phenomena need to be thought and analyzed in the light of the empirical references and, also, with the distancing of the historical perspective and the past and present time that constitutes us. It is important to notice that Elias (1998a) invites us to examine history with the due distancing and without the filter of present conceptions.

Undoubtedly, it requires a certain capacity for detachment to go back from the present times to consider the shifts in the power balance between the sexes in a social context which, to some extent is quite different from its present social context (Elias, 1998a, p. 247).

In this way, theoretically supported on these Eliasian references and trying to perceive the historical distancing that separates us, we want to present the empirical work that will be discussed from stories and memories of women.

Childhood and Constitution of the Individual: the civilization of children

Working with childhood is what constitutes us as researchers, but also founds our perception that this is a crucial period of human life, a founding and constituent phase of the individual and collective experiences that marked great part of the references that we carry for the adult life. Therefore, childhood (present in various fields of study) is intended in this article to be addressed by means of the look of History and Sociology indicating a historical, social and culturally constructed period, that is in constant constitution and that, in a long-lasting process, defines the individuals and their relations in various aspects.

In the modern conception of childhood, there is a conceptual construction that is born when children are perceived as individuals and begin to have social insertion. In this context, Modernity inaugurates the reflection² concerning the importance of perceiving the specificity of childhood pointing to their features in relation to the adult individual. Such shifts of conception allow a social process of insertion of children in their groups, leading adult individuals to begin to assign importance to this period.

Elias (1998b; 2001) will refer in a recurrent way to the need of perceiving the children as social individuals and subjects who, within a community, are the presence and the commitment of generational continuity and, therefore, need to relate with the adults to learn how to be part of the group. In the same direction, we can perceive in the author's studies the inclusion and the participation of childhood and children, when he addresses the social relations and demonstrates the need grounded in the younger generations in giving continuity to the group and, in this sense, emphasizes the early formation as an inherent part of childhood.

For Elias (1994b, p. 30), it is essential that the children participate in all the activities of their group since their birth, so that they can coexist with other human beings and, in this movement, become as human as one of their peers, since it is only in the relation with “[...] older and more powerful” individuals, who are responsible for introducing them socially, that the child will learn the group’s models and rules of behavior. Otherwise, according to Elias (1994b, p. 31), they continue being “[...] a little more than an animal”, subject to the primary dependence and the most primary instincts of the individual. It is only linked with a human interaction process with others from their group in the childhood that the child becomes a functional human being.

The Civilizing of Parents is one of the few works in which he will specifically address childhood [*La Civilización de Los Padres* (Elias, 1998b) or *A Civilização dos Pais* (Elias, 2012)], being an elucidative text that advances in the debate concerning the place of the child in history. Elias criticizes the historians of childhood, especially for considering it only as a process mediated by a few centuries, and figuring in the Modernity (17th century) the concept of childhood, advancing in the debate of longer, or long-lasting processes³. Therefore, in this text, Elias indicates the complexity of the prolonged process of constitution of childhood, highlighting at the same time, as the core of his thesis, three aspects: the constitution of power relations between parents and children; the new models of family; and the perspectives for an understanding of the power relations among family members. Thus, he suggests that the civilizing process in course changed the relation with the adults, presenting new perspectives to be perceived from the childhood on. For Elias (1998b, p. 446), “[...] adults stopped seeing children as a reflex of themselves, that is, as little adults. They know that human beings as children have distinct needs than their own”.

In this context, when thinking with Elias (1994a; 1994b), we perceive how much the childhood is essential for the constitution of new generations, as for the author, when we are born, we are dependent and extremely vulnerable in the relations with a stronger adult, and this situation demands a continuous process of education and formation. “Each individual is born in a group of people who already existed previously to him. And this is not all: each individual is constituted in such a way, by nature, that he needs other people who exist previously to him, so that he is able to grow up” (Elias, 1994a, p. 26-27).

Along ten or twelve years – the length of childhood in Brazil – we must submit ourselves to a range of learnings that will allow the social existence in a certain group. In this context, we make a pause here to indicate that, even though we are locating childhood in the first decade of the human life, currently it is present in different fields of study, a *plurality of childhoods*⁴ and the different contexts in which children exist socially. Therefore, it is undeniable that, just like women, the existence of the child individual is prone to inquiry as a social phenomenon, since they are all born as babies and pass through childhood as an actual age period in all human groups.

The childhood – or childhood(s) – is formed in territories of learnings in which the marks of our group are imposed and constitute ourselves as a person. For Elias (1994a), we need to trust these learning processes in the sense of socially existing. In other words, the construction of human individuality needs the models that are established by and in the group, as “[...] the child needs the social modelling to transform herself into a more individualized and complex being, the individuality of the adult can only be understood [...] in connection with the structure of the society where she grows up” (Elias, 1994a, p. 31).

Therefore, to think the relevance of the formation processes of children in different instances where she is immersed allows to extend the formative spaces and not consider the family group in the social models. The social modelling, in a wider sense, would be present in all the relations established by the individuals in the spaces where they participate during the childhood period.

Thus, the most up-to-date studies on childhood, or childhood(s), indicate the generational relations in constant movement and indicate the different learnings that happen both in generational and in intra-generational and intergenerational scope. Children learn by immersion in all social places of which they are part and, thus, they constitute themselves as individuals. On such debate, and resourcing again to Elias’ works, we quote the sociologist Lahire (2003, p. 34), for whom:

[...] the children from our social formations are increasingly more faced with heterogeneous, competing situations and, sometimes, even in contradiction one with the other under the point of view of the socialization principles that they develop.

In view of this, the idea of formation and education from a restrict family or school group dissolves and makes itself flexible. In the present time, this range of perspectives and options impose shifts in the constitution of the individuals and directs the spaces of socialization that are necessary in the coexistence and the maintenance of the relations between adults and children.

We work with the concept of relations between adults and children for understanding that the focus of childhood, which we will address empirically, is the formation of the girls who, when growing up, become children’s teachers. These adult women have been constituted in trajectories of individual and collective lives and, in this process, several elements are present characterizing their period of formation and directing the daily experiences, mediated by historically and socially determined characteristics, amongst which we have class, gender, and ethnicity, among others.

Also referring to such diverse contexts, that allow to think the plurality of childhoods and the generational and unequal relations between children and their peers, we have the contribution of the sociologist Manuel Sarmiento. He claims that “[...] childhood is, simultaneously, a social category, of the generational type, and a group of active

subjects, who interpret and act in the world” (Sarmiento, 2007, p. 36). This way, more than adults’ biological and generational need to take on their children and perceive their needs in the daily relations concerning care, maintenance and survival of the human species, the individuals have a relation of interdependence, in the continuity of their own existence and in the respect for these people who are individuals and subjects, act and interpret their actions and are essential in the social groups.

However, even though historically the studies point to a perception that, for a long time, children had been made invisible, receiving attention only from modernity on, Sociology’s references indicate their continuous, generational and founding existence with respect to the human species, which comes from remote times in a long-lasting process. The future generations depend on the children in the actual relations of the material existence and the production of the social life.

Such historical and sociological perspectives lead us to think about the specific interactions demanded by each group that places childhood in prominence in the history of life and social learning of the women, contemplating also the space of the debates concerning the gender relations in the formation of girls. We could suggest that childhood would be a time to civilize the boy and the girl, considering civilization as a defined process and directed by the social groups.

Women’s Memory and Stories in Elias

The idea of a civilizing process with the purpose of regulating the modes, ways of behavior, constraints, control and self-control of violence and emotions are significant processes, as much as the debate concerning the power between the sexes proposed by Elias (1998a) in the studies that we will use to provide visibility to the theme of the formation of women. However, as we have already mentioned, this paper results from research that have been developed for a long time, based on studies of memory and the oral history methodology. We want to make a pause to present the place from where we speak and the actual people who participated in the empirical research in different periods and contexts.

Considering that our methodological approach is formed by childhood stories and memories from women who are or were children’s teachers, it is necessary to emphasize that this universe of work with children, in the age group between 0 and 12 years, is mainly formed by women, who throughout the 20th century formed a teaching profession marked by *feminization of teaching*⁵, especially if we consider the insertion of the child in assistance institutions and the advent of the female work out of the domestic space.

For this paper, we will bring stories and memories of seven women who were born in the second half of the 20th century. The interviews were carried through between 2002 and 2012, from specific method-

ological procedures of oral history and their theories. In the case of this research, we produced a documentation from life stories and/or thematic oral history. They indicate the time lived and remembered by people in individual and collective contexts of different generations. Most of them lived the childhood in rural contexts or little towns in the interior of the Southeast and Center-West regions of the country (Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais and São Paulo states).

We emphasize that when analyzing childhood memories, it is important to evidence that they are selective remembrances that come to the surface as they are told – memories of adults in the present reporting a time passed from experiences and individual selection of each interviewee. Such aspect is mentioned because we want to keep the due distancing of the researcher attentive to the relation between the “coming close and the distancing” (Elias, 1997) of the intended object, mainly because the empirical material imposes this relation, that allows the assignment of academic rigor. We speak of the sources that are the memories of childhoods immersed in emotions and subjectivities at the mercy of the individual control of each one. Moreover, the act of accounting is permeated by complex situations that demand specific techniques and methodological procedures of collection, selection, treatment, analysis and filing of the verbal sources (Sarat; Santos, 2011).

We have chosen to emphasize in this text just a few aspects of the behavior ways and standards of regulation present in the private and domestic education of women/girls, educated aiming to the insertion in their social group. In this manner, when questioning about the relations between adults and children in the private family scope, we always searched for the objectives of this education that, in a significant extent, led the families to prepare their children to be inserted in the social group of belonging, even with all the limits and possibilities that the mentioned education imposed. Although we have in mind large generational differences – considering distances between four and five decades – we will search for, in the similarities and recurrences, the same standards of normatization of the feminine behaviors.

Along the research undertaken in these years, it has been possible to observe that girls are subject to a more controlling, conservative and formal conception of social rules, in relation to the male individuals in the same family. We take up here the aspect of pluralities of childhoods that allows us to say that the girls’ childhood is different from the boys’ childhood. It is, therefore, a matter of gender, in the sense of a useful category of analysis historically established in the studies that emerged in the core of the feminist discussions in the 20th century, opposing to the idea of essence, based on explanations of biological determinism, used to justify inequalities between women and men (Scott, 1995)⁶.

We intend to present such hypotheses from the fragments and excerpts of utterances of women who, when recollecting on themselves, had been repeating in their stories some relatively homogeneous standards of behavior, regarding to the model of femininity and the ways imposed and expected in the education of girls. We emphasize that the

ways of being in the private spaces indicated models with contents of submission and bigger control for the girls, even though it is important to highlight in the oral sources the account of uncountable attempts of subversion to the order and the insurgence against the fulfilment of the norms, even when incurring into later punishment, especially for the children.

These two aspects, when analyzed to the light of the Eliasian theories, show us that the relational power has been present in all childhood lived in the social spaces in which the girls lived. However, women's story indicates that they have been transforming the relations and imposing their weight on the balance of the pendulum in the *power scale*⁷. For Elias, along the civilizing processes, the female presence, that is shown in an actual way in the relations of procreation and generational continuity (women gave birth literally in a society of medieval warriors), indicates the place of women as the responsible ones for social transformations that begin in the private spaces and direct for other spheres of the relations between the sexes.

Thus, we evidence an aspect of the girls' education in relation to the domestic activities of work and the children games to initiate the debate of the inequalities in the standard of education between the genders, a recurrent aspect in the life of all girls who were children in the last decades of the 20th century:

My mother used to teach me to do things, but I always worked. Since I was really a small child I used to clean up the kitchen, I used to do a lot of things! (2002, 52 years old).

She didn't accept that I played with a ball, she didn't like it at all! It was always like that, I was raised to take care of the house, to play doll house... (30 years old, 2009).

I didn't have that freedom! Her upbringing was like this... boys on one side with more privilege. All my brothers were raised different from the girls (43 years old, 2009).

Boys and girls, we played doll house and there was the male figure and the female figure (33 years old, 2009).

It was like this... boys in one side, girls in the other one! Playing with a doll was for the girls only, the ball was for the boys only! (60 years old, 2002).

The education present both in the spaces of games and in the domestic tasks imposes the emphasis on the private spaces and the need of constraining their activities and action. The utterances evidence the mark of the inequality and the difference in relation to the educational models for the boys. One of the interviewees, at another moment, says that "the boys could much more" (40 years old, 2009), mentioning the freedom that was allowed to them in public spaces and activities out of the family scope. Such situation can be analyzed from two perspectives. One would be the repression and the submission to which the girls were subject by practices of constraint that imposed ways of being and behaving for men and women. The models of female education praised

the preparation of the girls for the marriage, household tasks, the obedience to the father and later to the husband as a rule for a good education and a socially desirable behavior, as “good manners generally go down socially. In a general way, the sensitivities and the manners valued by the established function as a model for the people of other social groups who aspire to the respectfulness and to the social ascension” (Wouters, 2009, p. 93-94). Therefore, this was the goal to educate girls to be integrated and established in the group, even though with more conservative, repressive strategies and constraints of emotions. On the other hand, and this is what interests us to discuss, it was the direction taken by this process of private education that created all the conditions for women to begin to dominate these spaces, as it allowed the creation of strategies to face divergences and to mediate conflicts using weapons like subtleness, politeness, sensitivity, sophistication, dialogue, dissimulation, curtsy, care, among other features. Such elements, developed in the private scope, permeated by the power, appeared in the relations and allowed the women to have control on the daily actions that involved the functioning of the family, the house, the employees, the kindred and the acquaintances at diverse historical moments. Possessing these qualities, it is possible to subvert the order, to transgress norms or to provoke a social disobedience in a movement that starts to corrode from inside out, transforming the order of the social impositions or assuring their maintenance according to the group.

We have chosen to walk in this direction when reflecting during the long-lasting civilizing process pointed by Elias (1998a) from the discussion of the place of women in the Roman society in *The changing balance of power between the sexes*, that indicated a crucial movement in the shift of power immersed in the relations established at that historical moment. This example, provided by the author, indicates that women had left the private sphere and expressed themselves publicly in a specific situation, what allowed them the right to the property. The text reports cases of loss of their spouses, in which case the law foresaw that, in situations of death in the wars, the Roman State took property of the goods of the deceased and left women and children adrift. In the occasion, a group of women invades the Roman Sanhedrin and demands for themselves and their children the rights to the inheritance, and they were sin what they were heard. Elias (1998a, p. 247) indicates that “[...] the effectiveness of the State in the protection of the person, as well as the access to the property by the women, was one of the factors responsible for the shifts in the balance of power between the sexes”.

Notwithstanding, history is made of ruptures and continuities and, following the reflection by a long-lasting process, later in the medieval society and the court society of the later centuries, women lose the rights to the inheritance and become perceived as a commodity. In a medieval society of warriors in which the valuation of physical force is emphasized and monopolized, women retreat again and start to only have social existence from the private spaces of the power relations among men. In accordance with Elias (1998a, p. 247):

It is useful to remember that the condition of equality that had been achieved by women was constrained and eroded when the central monopoly of physical force, one of the central parts of an organization of the State, was crushed; when this monopoly fell on strong men, native or foreign invaders, and the violence and insecurity were disseminated again through the whole society.

As it can be noticed, historically, the social organization presents movements of advance and retrocession that are determined by political, economic and cultural shifts that involve different human groups, with individual and collective interests and demands. And, in these clashes, we have the female presence in a historical process of frequent submission, violence and disputes. We cannot, and we do not want to deny, the constant movement of silencing and invisibility of women in history. However, if we perceive only through the eyes of submission and domain of a society of men in detriment of other groups, we will have simplified answers and difficulty in accepting how women inserted themselves and took possession of these intimate and private places and how, from them, they became protagonists of history as well. In this way, we understand that it is important to investigate how the strong female presence in private spaces, especially in the courts, was central for the construction of the new relations of sociability, of refining in the manners, the economy of affective and emotional exchanges, that were initially established in these social circles of power and, later, extended throughout the centuries to other social groups⁸.

The readings indicate us that, as social shifts happen in the female contexts and continue along history, it will occur a process of establishment of power spaces that normatizes intimate and private actions. Such relational power between men and women organizes the social life, becomes a key part as strategy in the scope of the sociabilities and begins to be interesting, from various aspects, be it financial, be it the maintenance or the alteration of the political, economic or religious power. These different configurations participate of a complex movement whose purpose is to establish the place of “established and or *outsiders*” groups (Elias; Scotson, 2000) of the power scale.

In a warrior society, women had the participation in social life restricted, as the mediaeval could not deal with the power control and, being the valuation of physical force eminent, this left them out of the public space. Now they could not solve divergences with the spear and the duel only as strategy of solution of the conflicts. It becomes necessary to learn to constrain themselves individually, to dominate their impulses for violence, inducing a constraint of the emotions. Here we allow ourselves to digress, imagining how many of these warrior and rude men needed their women to learn to constrain their emotions and the silencing of their wills in detriment of social survival, that becomes to be organized and monopolized by a State with laws and regulations that impose obedience and submission to all people.

Consequently, when a new high courtier class was formed, formed by members from the warrior nobility and the bourgeois detainers of

new ways of production of the wealth, the presence of women and families is bigger and starts to impose as mandatory the use of pacific conducts (Wouters, 2009). Thus, during this process of social modelling of the manners, the place of the feminine had a marked and indispensable presence to establish and keep the power and sociabilities in the pacified courts.

The constitution of the States and the great pacified courts need new forms of regulation of the behaviors, new modes and models of how to behave socially. In this slow process, such models will be learned from the domestic and private spaces of the courts, the palaces and the houses of the nobles, bourgeois and aristocrats. The meetings, parties, dinners, games are part of activities prepared in the domestic spaces under the supervision of women, either noble ladies or the female servants.

The movement of new sociabilities necessary to learn to live in the court, not as a warrior anymore, but as the courteous man, the *gentleman*, is extremely complex, needing an economy of the emotions that is planned and learned internally and socially. The individuals needed to learn to constrain themselves in a social and civilizing process, called by Elias (1994a) as sociogenesis and psychogenesis. Broadly, sociogenesis led to the primary submission, animal and primitive, to the level of civility and this social learning, which was internalized constituting the psychogenesis of the behaviors, generating part of the so-called second nature, in which the actions that were previously carried through in an impulsive and primary way become constrained and learned. The levels of repugnance, disgust, violence pass to other levels and are internalized so that the individual does not allow himself to visualize or come close of what is socially condemned, primitive and animal, previously tolerated. For instance, the cut of the animal at the table, that at this moment passes to the sphere of the “hidden behind the scenes of social life” (Elias, 1994b), like everything that is conventionally unnecessary, becomes privatized. The individual needs to learn and internalize this containment of the emotions so that this action becomes naturalized. This process happens with the use of symbolic codes in the social coexistence, mediated by, among other actions, the availability of civility handbooks, books of conduct and good manners, which are first introduced to the adults and later are also aimed to the children⁹.

From the novel need of these spaces of transit of the sociabilities, such activities become important spaces of negotiation and circulation of powers of all order. The presence and the participation of the women became indispensable, especially throughout the 18th century on, with the consolidation of the bourgeois classes and the new social models of family, that begin to be construct in the period, as such models will shape the conduct of men in their public affairs. Their capacity of negotiation, balance, security and power was supported by the way they led their families, their wives and their homes. These strata valued their place in the group.

Therefore, details that in principle were neglected made it possible to women the visibility and domain of a power that circulated, being perceived in the interior of the kitchens, of the halls, of the alcoves, in the domestic tasks, in the care with the children, in the management of the servants, in ceremonies and rites involving small groups. Places of giblets and seemingly mediocrity implied and contributed, in a striking way, with the constitution of a process of social modelling of the manners and the ways of regulation of behaviors in the groups. And they also allowed to the women the establishment and the domain from a marked and indispensable presence in the maintenance of the social organization.

Another aspect of the empirical sources that allows to think about the formation models of girls - also pointed in the civilizing process in Elias (1993; 1994b) and in Wouters' studies (2009; 2014) - refers to the containment of the modes of behavior focused on the clothes, the ways of acting and the control on their sexuality. These elements, initially, showed their closeness with questions linked to the moralization of the sexuality ruled by social, religious, cultural experiences and by habits and standards of family conducts that are constructed in diverse environments and contexts, besides the presence of the generational aspect. Considering that such reflection is in course, being part of a process of a long-term collective inquiry, we will make an analysis of this aspect pointing some incursions from our studies on the subject - also obeying to the quantitative norm of this work - and we will focus on the analysis of possibilities of subversion to the rule that, in the case of the accounted childhood, even when repressed, the child looks for ways to de se preserve herself, to protest and transgress the action.

This bias seems important to us, especially because we have reflected on the education of the children as developed mainly by women, represented by mothers, teachers, aunts, grandmothers, stepmothers. Until they are ten or twelve years old, children spend a great part of their time with a female guidance or supervision, working in the regulation of their conduct and their initial formation. The fragments of the interviews bring to us some elements to initiate the debate and to search for answers to the questions that are not exhausted in this work, but are results from other already developed (Dávalo, 2011; Kochi, 2012).

My mother was a little tight. She didn't like that we learned to whistle, because she thought that this was a thing of boys, and I always tried to learn it and I never did, I had to learn it hiding. My father had a truck and my mother didn't allow me to play in the truck. At that time only men drove! (43 years old, 2009).

I climbed the trees, to the top of the house, I played in the playground until late. When I arrived at home, my mother really beat me! I promised to Mom that I would never do that again and in the following day I would do the same (33 years old, 2009).

When I used a skirt or I went to school wearing a little dress, I always had shorts underneath, so that nothing would be shown. Thus, it was always like this, sitting straight. It was not that lose thing (43 years old, 2009).

My mother always said this: 'When you have your house, your children, your husband, you will need to be this way [...] Dressing a little cloth, you have to learn how to sit straight, not with your legs open!'. I had to be the little bibelot of the house... trying to be feminine! (30 years old, 2009).

I brought from home the habit of always being well dressed and wearing nice shoes. If we said: we are going there! My mother would say: no way, you are not allowed to leave, the children you invited are here, under my eyes, you are not going outside, not outside! Everyone in the backyard (60 years old, 2002).

When I had my period, I became ill, because I didn't know anything. I thought [...] I used to like it a lot climbing the trees and I thought that I had injured myself and now, how to talk with my mother? My mother is going to beat me! (55 years old, 2002).

The fragments lead us to the discussion of the regulation of girls' behavior, and we have chosen to present them, in this sense, when thinking about the domination of the domestic space by the women, especially in the figure of the mothers. Several aspects could be analyzed, but we will focus on this domination of the conduct restricted to the space of the house and the modes of formation of the girls. We perceive, in an interesting way along the research, a reproduction of the models criticized and rejected in their remembrance of childhood, repeating that now these same women are mothers and teachers in the present time. When inquired on their position in face of the education of children under their responsibility, they demonstrated a high degree of reproduction of the same standard received and passed to the daughters, granddaughters and female students. We will not be able, at this moment, to explore this issue in more depth, but we present next an example that elucidates the reflection and is present in the memory, told by one of the teachers concerning her experience as a mother and a grandmother.

I was always a very tight mother, with all of them! Nowadays one cannot do that because the child will have a trauma! I was more severe, the girls of my daughter make everything that they want, whenever they want, how they want and I can't stand that! My children weren't like this! (54 years old, 2002).

That said, we justify our analysis that will follow by two points that we believe reaffirm our initial proposal, when thinking about the force imposed by the presence of women in the power scale of the domestic space and in the ways how the formation of these power spaces directed all of them to the teaching work with little children.

The reproductive woman and mother, due to a moral and social duty, is a representation that has remnants of a religious formation and has in its genesis the control of the female sexuality. Such conceptions are constructed from the modernity on, are intensified in the constitution of a bourgeois morality and, in some European countries, as Cas Wouters informs (2012; 2014), are expanded in the Victorian age in England and are spread in the religious movements that expand in the processes of European colonization. However, this formation, supported

by the religious models of mother and wife, was spread in the female education and becomes controlled by this specific set of ideas¹⁰.

This perspective of women's education is present in the socially accepted and desirable power relations. The social charge for the women has a heavier weight in the pendulum of the power scale because it is founded on standards and rules of civility that historically oblige them to be within the domestic space. The conduct standards that regulate their sexuality are what impose the norms of the social acceptance. Therefore, they are supported by subjective and symbolic principles, like the ways of dressing, speaking, eating, sitting, establishing relations, dominating their own body and their desires. In this set of ideas, women are measured by the ways they present themselves socially outside of the domestic space. For this reason, in the account, one of the women tells that that her mother taught her to wear pants under the skirt so that, when seating in any way, she would not show her intimate parts. Sitting straight was an attempt of being feminine, as another one says: "Don't keep your legs open!" and "Trying to be feminine" (30 years old, 2009).

In the attempt to be feminine, the girls could not go climb trees, play in public until later, as they could become target of exposition for having a not desirable behavior in the group. In this manner, mediated and worried by social answers to be given to the other, based on the principles of social coercions, the mothers fulfilled their role of guards of the daughters. In this process, the external coercion imposes an internal coercion, regulation of the behavior of the individuals. For Elias (2006, p. 22, author's emphasis):

The social coercion to *self-coercion* and the apprehension of an individual self-regulation, in the sense of social and changeable models of civilization, are *social universals*. We find in all human societies a conversion of the external coercions in self-coercions. However, even though the external coercions - both of natural and social type - are indispensable for the development of the individual self-coercions, not all types of *external coercion* are appropriate to produce the development of individual instances of self-coercion, much less to massively foster them, therefore without affecting the individual capacity of satisfaction of affection and pulsions.

Thus, the attitudes and positions in face of the coercions of the group need to be learned and internalized by effective force and action from the social guardians of the children - in the case of our sources, the mothers and women who educated the little ones. However, this formalization, even though constituted in a rigid form, is also prone to being disobeyed, of being transgressed in the extent where the children run the risks and take on the punishments imposed upon their acts. In the excerpt, the teacher said: "I promised to my mother that I would never do that again, and in the following day I did the same" (33 years old, 2009), that is, she transgressed the imposed rules every day, even

knowing that she would be beat by her mother, she repeated the act that pleased her.

We understand this attitude as a dimension of the relational power between adults and children (Elias, 1998b; 2012), to understand that even the external coercions, the punishment due to the unfulfilling of the rule are not enough to suffocate the individual desire for the accomplishment of the act, in this case the trick. The emotion, the energy and the pleasure generated by the playfulness present in the action are worth the risk of the disobedience and later consequences. All these characteristics are guiding to understand the constitution of the human individuality and subjectivity, considering the individual and the power that permeates the relation established among their peers. As the individual takes on an act considered socially transgressive and agrees with the risks of being punished for that, it demonstrates an autonomous and reflexive perception of his own action and the way that it constitutes him as a person who has desires, wills, and takes on the management of her social existence in the group from movements between obeying, arguing and disobeying to the rules.

Such processes of thinking the regulation and power balance in the relation of parents and children are important, in the sense of considering childhood and the child as thinking and active subjects in their own perception and uniqueness. Even though when we are born we are dependent and vulnerable by a longer period than the other animals and, as Elias (1994b) teaches us, we need a stronger adult to warrant our survival, as we grow up and the educational process is widened, children become to exist and to insert in a way to assign continuity to their social group, from the establishment of a relational power between parents and kids and between adults and children. If we think on this generation of girls who were raised with these rigid codes of conduct that imposed more conservative standards in the private spaces, they all reproduce the model learned in the adult life and the teaching profession. When working with children, often they are, in their daily practices, invited in courses and continued training to reflect and to perceive in the children the actual individual, a social subject of rights, a person who, although being so young, is capable of making existential reflections, taking sides and being the protagonist of their own history.

Final Remarks

In our research, we worked with two groups that for a long time were historically invisible and silenced, that is, women and children. However, these social groups, even in the limits of darkness and non-existence, sought strategies of existing and inserting themselves socially in the complex relation of forces socially imposed. The force and power relations are vital in the formulation of models of conduct within the group. On this issue, Cas Wouters, quoting Elias, will say that:

In his lectures and publications, Elias always showed and emphasized that power and dependence are aspects of

the social relations, that all relations are power and interdependence relations, always immersed in nets or webs of interdependence. All the balances of control implied in a triad of controls are, in a considerable extent, power and interdependences balances: power and dependence of human beings on the non-human nature, on the others and on themselves (Wouters, 2012, p. 45).

That is, we are not exempt from models of social organization that constitute the groups in which we are immersed, nor can we be out of the control triad that, according to what the theory informs to us, is present in the relations of dependence, interdependence and power in all human groups. Therefore, what is up to us is to understand the force relations and to search, continuously, for alternatives for the social existence. The processes show us that the direction of women's emancipation happened by the domain of small and micro contexts and by the development of actions that pointed an education of control of emotions and regulation of behaviors.

Finally, our purpose was in the sense of presenting a will to understand – from the empirical material that we have – how theory is applied, providing clues to understand the movements in the female education, especially in childhood, a time of early learnings. We reflect of which way the theory of the civilizing process and the readings of the sociologist Norbert Elias contribute to understand the educational processes to which girls are subject during the childhood. Thus, more than dualist answers based on a relation of domination and dominated, oppressed and oppressor, strong or weak, the Eliasian theory instigates us to think the power that permeates the small spaces, here represented by interviews with anonymous women and teachers, but who continue making history and being part of it.

It is evident a constructed feminine presence constructed on the daily relations, in the clashes with their peers, not only in the interior of the family or the obscure spaces of confinement and privacy. History indicates that this movement has expanded to the public spaces, being constructed with their frequent and continuous participation. The theory allows to make flexible the certainties and to pose questions, in the sense of warranting rigor and consistency to the reflection that certainly does not finish in this fragment, but keeps contributing with the history of women and the education of children, our object of study and commitment. In this way, we do not make the giblets – history and education of women and children – apparent, as we believe in the small revolutions of the most silenced contexts.

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Notes

- 1 A concept developed by Elias (1994b), when he informs how, during the civilizing process, people are suppressing from themselves characteristics judged by them as uncivilized or animal and start to remove the unpleasant from the sight. As the author says (Elias, 1994b, p. 128, author's emphasis) "the repugnant aspects of life are "hidden behind the scenes of social life".
- 2 On this question, see Ariès (1981) and Badinter (1985).
- 3 Such long-lasting process has generated debates when addressed within the scope of Sociology in relation to History. However, we indicate that here we are founded on the works of research coworkers and partners with Norbert Elias, amongst whom we highlight Johann Goodsblom (2014); Abraham De Sawam (2014) and Cas Wouters (2014). In several ways, they emphasize the prolonged period of time resourcing to extensive periods since the earliest beginnings of civilization, when the primates come down from the trees and the first *homo sapiens* dominates the fire and starts to control the inhospitable nature for the survival of the species and to defend themselves in the most basic forms of existence (Gebara, Ademir; Costa, Célio J.; Sarat, Magda, 2014).
- 4 On the subject, please see Sarmiento (2007), Barbosa (2007), Lahire (2003), among others that are listed as references of this article.
- 5 Despite the big female presence in teaching currently, the first teachers of the school institutions were men, in general religious ones, represented in Brazil by the Jesuits. From this history, the term *feminization of teaching* was coined, describing a phenomenon portraying the predominantly feminine profile of teaching, mainly in the early years of K-12 education (Louro, 1997).
- 6 On the theme, please see the contribution of the recent publication *Dicionário Crítico de Gênero* (Colling; Tedeschi, 2015) in the bibliography of this work.
- 7 In this paper, the concept of power scale is based on Elias' texts (1998a, 2008), but we have a research in course that will advance through the studies of Cas Wouters concerning the place and the equilibrium of the pleasure scale, a concept elaborated by Wouters based on the Eliasian theories, that indicates the process of generational shift. The author presents the perspectives of the informalization of the rules and standards of behavior that place the women in other levels of the relation with men, from the 19th and early 20th centuries (Wouters, 2006).
- 8 We want to indicate our firm position in using an Eliasian theory, that is centered in the western, European and colonizing relations. Notwithstanding, we know that other geographic, social and cultural contexts are ruled by standards of conduct that did not emerge from Europe's absolutist courts, constituting other models.
- 9 The discussion on the history of good manners books is the source of Cas Wouters' research (2009), since they had also been transforming as social groups changed.
- 10 Obviously, considering all the exceptions to the cultural and differentiated contexts in which the colonization happened, it is undeniable that such movement brought in its core a historical process of domination and violence of religious imposition that dates to the inquisitorial period and the wars of religious conquest, imposing a religiosity considered civilized, white and founded on the principles of the Christian monotheism.

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