

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL MOTHERHOOD IN SCHOOL?¹

Qual o lugar da maternidade lésbica e bissexual na escola?

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ABSTRACT: The existence of families formed by lesbian and bisexual women challenges compulsory heterosexuality and therefore questions the family model traditionally reproduced by social institutions, especially the school. This binary family composition preserves, as an ideal matrix of family, the model composed by the father, the mother and the children, which perseveres alongside changes and dismemberments that have occurred in family configurations since the 1970s. In this perspective, it is in the school context that the presence of children of lesbian and bisexual mothers breaks the binary logic, while promoting other possibilities of forming families. By considering this debate, this article aims to problematize the place that lesbian and bisexual mothers occupy in the school context. To this end, we organized a bibliographical research based on the Feminist Theories and studies on gender relations. In the final considerations, we present justifications that contribute to scientific research interested in the perspective of relations between school and families.
KEYWORDS: Feminisms; Lesbian and Bisexual Motherhood; School Education.

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RESUMO: A existência das famílias formadas por mulheres lésbicas e bissexuais desafia a heterossexualidade compulsória e, por conseguinte, questiona o modelo de família tradicionalmente reproduzido pelas instituições sociais, especialmente a escola. Esta composição familiar binária que conserva como matriz de família ideal aquela composta pelo pai, mãe e filhas/os, parece perseverar ao lado de mudanças e desmembramentos ocorridos nas configurações familiares desde a década de 1970. Nesta perspectiva, é no contexto escolar que a chegada das crianças filhas de mães lésbicas e bissexuais rompe com a lógica binária promovendo outras possibilidades de conceber e viver em famílias. Ao considerar este debate, o presente artigo tem como objetivo problematizar o lugar que as mães lésbicas e bissexuais ocupam no contexto escolar. Para tanto, organizou-se uma pesquisa bibliográfica pautada nas Teorias Feministas e nos estudos sobre as Relações de Gênero. Nas considerações finais, apresentam-se justificativas que contribuem com investigações científicas interessadas na perspectiva das relações entre a escola e as famílias. **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Feminismos; Educação escolar; Maternidades Lésbicas e Bissexuais.

INTRODUCTION

The family model traditionally reproduced by social institutions, especially schools, is based on the association between “alliance-filiation” and “sexuality-reproduction” (CÔTÉ, 2009). These associative structures are used to define the heterosexual nuclear family understood as the couple (a heterosexual man and a heterosexual woman) and the children born from this union. However, since the 1970s, with the Brazilian Divorce Law, the control of reproduction, and the emergence of alterative family configurations, we see the dismemberment and transformations of new meanings of conceiving and living in families. We have moved from the idea of a standard family model to a plurality in family configurations. In this way, homoparentality, which consists of the conjugal union between two mothers or two fathers, destabilizes this family model maintained through “compulsory heterosexuality”².

Thus, this article aims to problematize the place that families formed by lesbian and bisexual mothers occupy in schools of Early Childhood Education and Elementary School. This discussion is based on feminist theories (CÔTÉ, 2009; HIRATA, 2014; RICH, 2003) and has the purpose of reflecting about school education in relation to

² Introduced by Adrienne Rich (2003), the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” emerged to signal the imposition of a model of relationship between women and men that defines social relations by binary difference, centered on biological sex.

perceptions about these families. We understand that lesbian and/or bisexual mothers who have children attending Early Childhood Education and Elementary School can establish, within the school context, opportunities for the socialization and internalization of respectful attitudes and guarantee democratic rights. Through social relations between the school and the families of their students, we can underline the possible daily influences experienced by children whose families do not correspond to the nuclear family model. Since the family called “standard” is encircled by heterosexuality, fixed as unique (CÔTÉ, 2009) and therefore reproduced by school institutions, it can provoke gender inequalities and place children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers in a “non-place”, generating discriminatory conflicts and various types of constraints, including the invisibility of their families and, along with it, the feeling of non-belonging.

We emphasize that it is in the school context that the existence of children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers can promote other conceptions regarding the relationship between family and school for the effective exercise of democracy as a right, and for guaranteeing these children’s citizenship, therefore claiming the legitimacy of this family configuration. Hence, the invisibility and non-representation of family configurations composed of homoparentality and, especially in this text, lesboparentality³, question the application and implementation of educational policies that seek protection and care for children in the school context. For example, the Brazilian law “Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional” (Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education) (BRASIL, 2017, p. 23), in article 32, paragraph IV, predicts “the strengthening of family bonds, human solidarity ties and mutual tolerance on which social life is based”. Therefore, it is the school’s duty to establish and strengthen the bond with families, as well as consolidate attitudes that demonstrate affective/social ties as a right.

This article is divided into two sections. In the first one, we discuss the importance of feminist theories in order to establish a place of visibility for mothers who are lesbian and/or bisexual and their children in school education. Furthermore, based on Rich (2003), we address the naturalization of motherhood for women alongside the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality”. In the second one, we discuss the existence of lesbian and/or bisexual motherhood in school as possibilities to overcome differences such as asymmetry by contextualizing how children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers can constitute a significant learning experience about democracy and equity in school.

³ In this article, we use the term “lesboparentality” to refer to the family configuration of lesbian and/or bisexual motherhood in which the parental function is exerted by two women with their children. To learn more about this, *cf.* Côté (2009) and Amorim (2018).

In the final considerations, we point out reasons that contribute to thinking about the place of lesbian and bisexual motherhood in school as an instrument of existence and resistance. The presence of LesBi⁴ mothers and their children in school contexts displaces the hegemonic heterosexuality, while tensioning the patriarchal structure, its existence, and the existence patriarchal families, as well as questioning some certainties about the standard family model, and thus collaborating for a more just and consequently democratic education.

FEMINISMS, LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD, AND SCHOOL EDUCATION

I perceive the lesbian experience as being, like motherhood, a profoundly female experience, with particular oppressions, meanings, and potentialities we cannot comprehend as long as we simply bracket it with other sexually stigmatized existences (RICH, 2003, p. 28).

According to Adrienne Rich, the experience of lesbian motherhood is crossed by singular meanings and oppressions, thus it is important to understand the interweaving of the various forms of violence that mark women's bodies and subjectivities, especially when it comes to the naturalization of motherhood. In this way, it seems interesting to us that LesBi motherhood be understood from the different feminisms that traditionally debate motherhood as an essential category to think how its meaning is reproduced socially. The dynamics experienced by LesBi mothers and their children in school can help studies in the field of education that debate the government's normalization and regulation of women and children, which is exercised by the patriarchal society (fathers, the judiciary system, and male doctors, specialists, religious and politicians). As a social institution, the school reproduces heterosexist norms that guarantee the maintenance of this exercise of power—represented by the model of the white, Christian, heterosexual, middle-class man in our society—through educational processes (MOCHI, 2019).

Different social elements can help in understanding the political role that studies on homoparentalities and education have acquired in recent years, especially the studies on motherhood, which base their historical roots by remaking the ideological elements of the term “motherhood”. The term “homoparentality”, coined in 1996 in France by the *Association des Parents et futurs parents Gays et Lesbiens* (APGL – Association of Gay

⁴ The term “LesBi” is used to give visibility to lesbian and bisexual women. In Brazil, the term gained popularity with the Meeting of Lesbian and Bisexual Women of Bahia (ENLESBI). Cf. Zuleide Silva (2016).

and Lesbian Parents and Future Parents), aimed to name “[...] the situation in which at least one self-designated homosexual adult is (or intends to be) the father or mother of at least one child”⁵ (ZAMBRANO *et al.*, 2006, p. 10). This terminology, however, has not been sufficient to meet all family arrangements since these are multiple. Family configurations composed of LesBi mothers and their children require proposals that help to discuss the different crossings that machismo and patriarchal society impose on women.

Elixabete Imaz (2016), a feminist author, points out that the main issues we have been able to raise regarding the pre-existing limitations that the patriarchal model entails for women are those of previously established roles, such as the woman as the family’s axis and the only person responsible for the safety of the children. In this way, the author makes an important consideration about contemporary families and the place of women in these families:

Thus, the new forms of family are intricately linked to how women, from their new and diverse social situations, face and exercise motherhood. The transformation of women’s place in society (their greater participation in the public sphere, the development of an extra-domestic dimension) and also the changes that have occurred in the couple’s relationships, imply the need to redefine what a father is and what a mother is, the roles that correspond to each one and the type of participation of each one within the family project: hence, the generalization of late motherhood, working mothers who prefer to continue working, social acceptance of new forms of family, such as single mothers by choice or mothers in a lesbian relationship (IMAZ, 2016, p. 489)⁶.

Discussions about the relationship of LesBi mothers with their children’s school can foster different debates about the family model established by social institutions. This topic comes closer to most of feminist literature and Gender Studies, bringing together different debates about corporeality, sex, desire, gender norms, sexualities, and

⁵ Original: “a situação na qual pelo menos um adulto que se autodesigna homossexual é (ou pretende ser) pai ou mãe de, no mínimo, uma criança.”

⁶ Original: “Es así que las nuevas formas familiares están íntimamente vinculadas a cómo las mujeres, desde sus nuevas y diversas situaciones sociales, encaran y ejercen la maternidad. La transformación del lugar de las mujeres en la sociedad (su mayor participación en lo público, el desarrollo de una dimensión extradoméstica) y también los cambios que se han producido en las relaciones de pareja, conlleva la necesidad de redefinir qué es un padre y qué es una madre, los roles que a cada uno le corresponden y el tipo de participación de cada uno dentro del proyecto familiar: Por ello la generalización de la maternidad tardía, las madres trabajadoras que mayoritariamente optan por continuar en el trabajo, la aceptación social de nuevas formas familiares como las madres solas por elección, o las madres en relación lesbiana.”

the naturalization of motherhood. In this sense, feminist studies provide a theoretical advance that helps to understand how important the existence of LesBi mothers' children in school is. Since feminisms tension and provoke displacements in gender relations that go beyond the hierarchical axes of social markers, they contribute to the dialogue within the family relationships, which are fostered by affection and human/educational/social development of the children in Early Education and Elementary School.

Therefore, the presence of children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers in the school context enables rich possibilities for reconstructing the school's modes of socialization and democracy and the development of concrete attitudes for an education that goes beyond polarized inequalities, free from machismo, sexism and LGBTphobia. Likewise, the meaning of motherhood as we know it is the result of historical and hierarchical constructions that were founded on the idea of bourgeois conjugality, which established norms and vigilance in family life, especially for women. The debate about family is operated by controls that establish some forms of family configurations as legitimate and valued and, consequently, forms of family that are unacceptable and susceptible to discrimination and stigmas, subject to silence, deprivations, and various imbrications of vulnerability. According to Flávia Biroli,

This implies not only unequal social recognition, but also unequal access to rights and material resources. From electiveness for public policies and housing financing to common access to private health and insurance plans, children adoption and inheritance transmission, there is a whole spectrum of issues directly implicated in the norms and values that define what is recognized as family (BIROLI, 2018, p. 92)⁷.

The author draws attention to the fact that although changes and transformations have happened throughout history, the weight of both family life and sexual division of labor is still placed more heavily on women in modern social relations. Whether in intimate relationships or in the public sphere, unequal practices between women and men persist in domestic tasks, in the care and management of the house and the children, and in the distribution of responsibilities, which are unevenly assigned and overburden women.

Families are constituted and established by relationships of affection and social processes. Thus, they are interconnected with institutional, material and representative

⁷ Original: "Isso implica não apenas reconhecimento social desigual, mas também acesso desigual a direitos e recursos materiais. Desde a eletividade para políticas públicas e financiamentos de moradia até o acesso comum a planos privados de seguridade e saúde, a adoção de crianças e a transmissão da herança, há todo um espectro de questões diretamente implicadas nas normas e nos valores que definem o que é reconhecido como família."

fields (BIROLI, 2018). Although they correspond to a multitude of possible configurations, families (re)exist on the frontier of legality, which exerts weight “between different forms of organization of daily life and the experience of affective, marital, parenting and cohabitation relationships”⁸ (BIROLI, 2018, p. 91).

Therefore, same sex parentality and family constitution can have a destabilizing effect on the concept of the nuclear family usually reproduced and evidenced as a standard family model. This can be analyzed in the interconnections of the social and cultural fields, which have laws and public policies that structure the nuclear family. In a particular way, family relations are managed by social institutions, among which the school seems to be a field that favors the (re)production of models and behaviors only because they are “socially accepted”, and especially and particularly the model of family consisting of a father, a mother, and their children—which uses heterosexuality as a basis to conceive the standard norm of family.

The idea of motherhood as a natural fate for women in our patriarchal society no longer seems to have the same naturalized meaning for lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women. From these groups, motherhood can be seen as deviant, outside the norm and thus a “non-place”. By associating motherhood with a naturalized fate for women and not with a choice that is socially adopted as a policy and a public and private existence of LesBi mothers, the principle of selective authorization is assumed. This conduct distinguishes legitimate motherhoods from motherhoods that are considered non-legitimate based on binary stigmas and compulsory heterosexuality. Therefore, LesBi motherhood raises ambivalences because, if on one hand there are the social constructions about it and consequently the attributions of care as a female predicate, on the other hand there is the designation of heterosexuality imposed on women, especially for those who are mothers.

The naturalization of motherhood and the assumption of heterosexuality as a solution for all women can cause those who are mothers and at the same time lesbians and/or bisexuals to tension this predetermined place in Western society. Thus, the existence of lesbian and/or bisexual motherhood in the school context contributes to a political and affirmative action of citizenship. In the words of the French sociologist Isabel Côté (2009), lesbian motherhood displaces the standard and naturalized family: “lesboparental families have deepened this dissociative logic by refuting sexual duality as the basis of reproduction and claiming their legitimacy”⁹ (CÔTÉ, 2009, p. 25).

⁸ Original: “entre diferentes formas de organização da vida cotidiana e de vivência das relações afetivas, conjugais, de parentalidade e de coabitação.”

⁹ Original: “Les familles homoparentales ont poussé cette logique dissociative plus loin en réfutant la dualité sexuelle comme base de la reproduction et en réclamant sa légitimation.”

Côté (2009) discusses a research study she developed in Quebec with lesbian mothers whose objective was to understand to what extent lesboparental families are different from standard families. The sociologist concluded that if there is subversion of norms, there is also conformation, because although lesboparental families challenge the nuclear and standardized structure of gender relations—and, consequently, of the family—by their own existence, they also conform the norm. The daily life of children in this lesboparental family, their daily school life, the responsibility for care and representations of affection in the family, the core that strengthens the couple, and the engagement of the family with intergenerational ties demystify lesbian motherhood as illegitimate.

Homosexuality is openly denounced by some people as a Pandora's box challenging the family institution, which is presented as the basis of Western and Christian civilization. Yet are homoparental families so subversive? Our analysis with lesbian mothers [...] suggests that if there is subversion, there is also reproduction of norms (CÔTÉ, 2009, p. 25)¹⁰.

When considering this broad debate about the heteronormative patriarchal perspective of family, we resort to Adrienne Rich (2003), who perceives the lesbian experience, as well as motherhood, surrounded not only by oppressions, but also by the meanings and specificities that cannot be understood in parallel with other stigmatized existences. To know the difference between what it is to be a “mother” and the term usually used as “parents” is to understand “the particular and significant reality of being a parent who is actually a mother”. These are “outlines [that we] we need to discern, which are of crucial value for feminism and for the freedom of women as a group” (RICH, 2003, p. 28). Heterosexuality, when examined as a political institution, makes us realize that power is taken from women. By examining heterosexuality as a natural thing, the questions about the mechanisms of oppression are likely to be transformed. According to Rich,

The institutions by which women have traditionally been controlled—*patriarchal motherhood, economic exploitation, the nuclear family, compulsory heterosexuality*—are being strengthened by legislation, religious fiat, media imagery, and efforts at censorship (RICH, 2003, p. 11, highlights by the authors).

¹⁰ Original: “L’homoparentalité est décriée sur la place publique par certaines personnes comme une boîte de Pandore remettant en question l’institution familiale, présentée comme le fondement de la civilisation occidentale et chrétienne. Cependant, les familles homoparentales sont-elles si subversives? Notre analyse des familles lesboparentales [...] nous porte à croire que, s’il y a subversion, il y aurait aussi reproduction des normes.”

Some families are socially and institutionally recognized, whereas others need to explain their configurations and fight for the guarantee of rights, existence and public policies of recognition. This seems to be a continuous reproduction of the heterosexual couple (man and woman) based on the definition of what comes to be family, while the “non-place” is reserved for lesbian and bisexual mothers. Perhaps this modular difference happens because women’s autonomy and equality can threaten the patriarchal structure. Therefore, discussing LesBi motherhood in the field of education is a path to establishing the debate of the multiple ways of being and being part of a family. It is in school that the existence of LesBi families and their children can contribute to the disruption of the heterocentric logic as dominant.

LESBI MOTHERHOOD IN SCHOOL AS A POSSIBLE PLACE FOR THE EXERCISE OF “LEARNING”

At a party or a parents’ meeting at school, these two mothers can come, but they cannot hug or hold each other’s hands. If they behave like two friends, then they can come. Maria Lacerda, teacher, 37 years old (MOCHI, 2019, p. 57)¹¹.

This excerpt is part of a teacher’s interview in a 2016 master’s research, which was conducted with pedagogues and teachers who work in the initial series of Elementary School in a city of the state of Paraná. The teacher was questioned if the school was prepared to welcome lesbian and bisexual mothers to school meetings. In her answer, she narrates what seems to be, in her opinion, the “appropriate” behavior for LesBi mothers to attend school activities.

The teacher’s narrative points to how much education can learn from lesbian and/or bisexual conjugalities within the school space. There is an announced prohibition for erotic-affective relations between women: the delight of female friendship, which cannot be associated with the desire and erotic-affective relationship that exist in human relations. This certainly applies for lesbian, bisexual and transgender women. The presence of these women’s bodies in the school corridors has a political value which by itself is able to break with the silence and mystery that strengthen the maintenance of power. Furthermore, children of LesBi mothers are already in school spaces; thus, there

¹¹ Original: “Em uma festa ou reunião de pais na escola, essas duas mães podem vir, mas não podem se abraçar ou pegar na mão. Se elas se comportarem como duas amigas, aí pode. Maria Lacerda, professora, 37 anos.”

is no need (nor time) for preparation, but, above all, there is urgency to make all the family pluralities existing in school visible.

The expression of the teacher in the interdiction/condition for lesbian and/or bisexual mothers to attend school meetings can mean the historically transmitted idea that sexuality for women should be in the field of forbidden and should only be characterized as “friendship” when it comes to relationships between women. The perception found in these discourses seems to be the same tool used to connect motherhood and sexuality in order to control women’s autonomous capacity.

The existing bond between women not necessarily lesbian and/or bisexual is what Adrienne Rich (2003, p. 11) considered a “politically activating impulse”. According to Rich (2003), we need to build meanings from the depth, breadth and identification of the bond between women, which remains constantly, despite the omission, through compulsory heterosexuality, a politically activating impulse beyond the authorization of people’s lives. The bonds and identification between women as active triggers for female resistance transform the lesbian experience perceived through heterosexuality into a floating scale that starts from the feeling of denial and evolves to the feeling of being deviant, or even to be simply invisible. According to Rich,

Any theory or cultural/political creation that treats lesbian existence as a marginal or less “natural” phenomenon, as mere “sexual preference,” or as the mirror image of either heterosexual or male homosexual relations is profoundly weakened thereby, regardless of any contributions it may have (RICH, 2003, p. 13).

However, at the same time that the school contributes to the fixity of the interdictions of gender relations, the existence of conjugalities composed by two women within the school “loosens the knots” and opens the way for the school institution to learn from the difference and not from the maintenance of the axes that intersect categories of inequalities. Helena Hirata (2014) focuses on the multiple forms of oppressions that occur in the correlation of power relations and are practiced in different ways in gender, class, race and sexual orientation categories: “[...] the intersection is of variable geometry, and may include, in addition to the social relations of gender, class and race, other social relations, such as sexuality, age, religion etc.”¹² (HIRATA, 2014, p. 66).

In the same way, school practices act in the sense of “training” the bodies and subjecting girls and boys to differentiated patterns, which results in asymmetries and

¹² Original: “a intersecção é de geometria variável, podendo incluir, além das relações sociais de gênero, de classe e de raça, outras relações sociais, como a de sexualidade, de idade, de religião etc.”

inequalities. By regulating bodies and affectivity, the school (re)produces the control of family experiences. Questioning the place of lesbian motherhood in school is important to elicit necessary displacements in the binary and naturalized conduct that the school develops daily, as in the ideal and modular definition of family. If we do not consider the gender debate and feminist approaches as powerful tools from the point of view of democracy, we will be further away from overcoming inequalities and various forms of violence in school spaces.

The existence of families formed by lesbian and/or bisexual mothers in school expands the development of new emancipatory and democratic practices, establishing within (and also outside) these institutions plural and welcoming spaces for all children. It is possible to learn how to deal with differences through the reception and visibility of families who care for and protect their children in the school.

The school, understood as a social institution, is characterized as an imperative space in the conduct of gender relations, and, through this prism, the school environment can contribute greatly to democratic actions based on respect and for the recognition of the multiple ways of forming families. We recognize the school as an important socializing environment which, as constituted of signs of different identities, is capable of expanding the process of building scientific knowledge.

In this perspective, the existence of LesBi motherhood in the school context can mean a learning experience for the entire teaching staff and also for all the families of the children who attend this space. Once guided by plurality, LesBi families can update the hegemonic social relations marked by the differences that result from the bias of inequality. However, it will only be possible to guarantee a school with democratic practices if we manage to build appropriate responses for the establishment of educational mechanisms that do not delegitimize such motherhoods. Thus, it is necessary to activate the feminist perspective in an actively militant and also academic way, recognizing that “heterosexuality may not be a ‘preference’ at all but something that has had to be imposed, managed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by force [...]” (RICH, 2003, p. 26).

Hence, the school context figures as a significant environment for learning difference, considering the school space as a possible place for debating gender relations and the difference as a plural value, which enables the access and permanence of students from various family arrangements. However, for this learning to be effective, the school needs to be concerned with the quality of educational services, with an egalitarian involvement and the necessary conditions for the politically active impulse of girls, boys and their mothers.

We emphasize that the great contemporary challenge of school education is to know how to deal with personal, individual, family, cultural and social differences, boldly promoting “a freeing-up of thinking, the exploring of new paths, the shattering of another great silence, new clarity in personal relationships” (RICH, 2003, p. 27).

Thus, social and family relations are closely linked to school learning and are guided by the Brazilian law “Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional” (Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education), whose article 12, paragraph VI predicts the “articulation with families and the community, creating processes of integration of society with the school” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 14).

By considering the different social relations that are based on affirmative actions and, therefore, are respectful for all families within the school space, we will also be able to reduce the reproduction of social inequalities, which are based on the unjust relationship between dominant and dominated groups. In this sense, Helena Hirata (2014) contributed to thinking about how women have always occupied a place in history which has been determined from the point of view of power relations with intersections that adjust oppressive nodes in asymmetrical relationships between genders.

From this perspective, the idea of a point of view from the experience and from the women’s place is replaced with a point of view from the experience of the conjunction of the power relations of gender, race, and class, which makes the very notion of “situated knowledge” even more complex because the positions of power in the relations of class and gender, or race and gender, for example, can be asymmetrical (HIRATA, 2014, p. 61)¹³.

Although we recognize that it is not possible to eliminate all forms of violence, discrimination, and constraints from the school, we know that the struggle of different feminisms will always be a possible lesson for directors and teaching staff to engage with. This needs to be a daily exercise in order to interrupt, inside and outside the classrooms, discriminatory practices against women and children, and the increasing discrimination and prejudice against women, especially LesBi mothers and their children. Transforming the school space into a safe place, which is committed to true social transformation, also enables the effectiveness of democracy.

¹³ Original: “Nessa perspectiva, a ideia de um ponto de vista próprio à experiência e ao lugar que as mulheres ocupam cede lugar à ideia de um ponto de vista próprio à experiência da conjunção das relações de poder de sexo, de raça, de classe, o que torna ainda mais complexa a noção mesma de “conhecimento situado”, pois a posição de poder nas relações de classe e de sexo, ou nas relações de raça e de sexo, por exemplo, podem ser dissimétricas.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The existence of lesbian and bisexual motherhoods in school contributes to the disruption of school processes as mechanisms that reproduce inequalities in the categories of gender, class, race, and sexual orientation. By challenging heterosexuality as a norm, these families tension the patriarchal structure and question the old certainties about the standard family model, traditionally celebrated by the school institution.

The different feminisms prevail as multiple ways to confront and overcome the oppressive imbrications developed by the patriarchal power, which legitimizes some families over others. Although it is not their main intention, children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers produce a denouncing effect that fosters strategies on respect, democracy and Human Rights that can be seized by other children and their families, which contributes significantly to the elaboration and intervention in educational practices.

The considerations presented in this article collaborate to pointing out the presence of children of lesbian and/or bisexual mothers in the school context and, consequently, the breakdown of the binary logic of gender relations. This can foster new learnings on the idea of family by the school and the school community. It is an invitation to get along with (and learn from) new plural ways of forming a family.

Finally, we think it is important to reiterate that the feminist conception of education collaborates to a new pedagogical model, which is capable of overcoming patriarchal relations of domination and can be configured into a powerful strategy to deal with and subvert inequalities. The existence of lesbian and/or bisexual motherhoods transcends the space of schools, constituting an active and purposeful fight for public policies that transform progress and resistance into liberating connections, with equal rights and existence for all people, especially women and children. After all, as we pointed out, LesBi mothers escape from the naturalizing imprisonment of motherhood since they change the game of social control organized by the patriarchal society. This configures a way of resisting and (re)existing in the face of current setback attempts in issues regarding relations of both gender and sexuality, while also guaranteeing more equitable educational policies.

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