

# Religion, teacher training and gender socialization<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article discusses the interface between religion, teacher training and gender socialization of a group of students enrolled in a pedagogy course in a federal institution in the south of Brazil. The data were collected through written surveys distributed from 2012 to 2014 to a group of students who started their course in 2012. The survey was intended to identify their socioeconomic profile, the reason for choosing the pedagogy course and their habits concerning their religious practices. The next step was an interview with six of these students, five considered religious and one without such practices. The analysis had as basis Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Setton's concept of hybrid habitus and socialization. It revealed three views concerning gender production and sexual orientation and identity: a) the naturalization of gender differences; b) the recognition of social impositions but also the heavy value attributed to biologic determination; c) the understanding of gender as a social construct. Considering a variety of non-complementary socializing agents, the norms of behavior and conduct advocated by different religions are greatly valued and define which views can be assimilated during teacher training and which ones are refused, thus constituting a habitus with hybrid dispositions, sometimes secular, sometimes religious.

## Keywords

*Habitus* – Teacher training – Religion – Gender.

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# **Religião, formação docente e socialização de gênero<sup>I</sup>**

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## **Resumo**

*O presente artigo pretende discutir a interface entre religião, formação docente e socialização de gênero de um grupo de alunas que cursam pedagogia em uma instituição federal do sul do país. Os dados foram coletados por meio de questionários distribuídos entre 2012 e 2014 a um grupo de estudantes que ingressaram no curso em 2012, com o objetivo de traçar seu perfil socioeconômico, conhecer os motivos pela escolha do curso e perceber hábitos relativos à vivência religiosa. Em seguida, foram realizadas entrevistas em profundidade com cinco alunas consideradas religiosas e uma sem essa vivência. A análise, fundamentada no conceito de habitus, a partir de Pierre Bourdieu e de habitus híbrido e socialização, segundo Setton, apontou para três posicionamentos, sobretudo, no que se refere às questões relativas à produção de gênero, orientação e identidade sexual: a) naturalização das diferenças de gênero; b) mescla entre o reconhecimento da imposição social, mas com peso maior para questões biológicas; c) compreensão do gênero como construção social. Frente a agentes socializadores diversos e não complementares entre si, as normas de comportamento e condutas veiculadas pelas diferentes religiões têm um peso maior e definem o que pode ser incorporado durante a formação docente veiculada pelo curso e o que deve ser rechaçado, constituindo, assim, um habitus com disposições híbridas, ora seculares ora religiosas.*

## **Palavras-chave**

Habitus – Formação docente – Religião – Gênero.

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## Introduction

Due to recent attacks of Islamic extremists to the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine, in Paris, religion came back to the spotlight in the news all around the world<sup>1</sup>. The focus tends to be the advance of fundamentalism, often without any in-depth analysis, as well as the necessity of the harmonious existence of freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Even if in a smaller proportion, Brazil also stages news concerning religious intolerance. The presidential elections featured two self-declared evangelic candidates (Marina Silva and Pastor Everaldo) in 2014, making religious themes to appear among the most debated during the electoral process and caused dispute of the evangelic voters among the candidates.

When it comes to education, there are innumerable accounts of religion intolerance among students, from teachers towards students and from students towards teachers. It is also important to mention the strength of the religious representatives in the Brazilian congress during the discussions surrounding the approval of the National Plan of Education<sup>2</sup>, who barred important guidelines concerning the combat against gender, race and sexual identity discrimination. Before that episode, the religious representatives had already managed to remove a material called "School without Homophobia" which was to be issued to the Brazilian school system. Although we live in a constitutionally laic State, Cunha (2013) states that discussions surrounding Brazilian education legislation has always been heavily influenced by religious pressure, often Catholic, especially concerning the defense of religious education. According to the author, although Evangelicals tend to appear more in the media in recent affairs, some sectors of the Catholic Church were also behind the aforementioned pressure. The

**1**-<http://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2015/01/troteio-deixa-vitimas-em-paris.html>

**2**- The "Plano Nacional de Educação" (PNE), in Portuguese, determines the directives, goals and strategies for educational policies for the next ten years in Brazil (translator's note).

author concludes that the establishment of a secular culture does not always follow the establishment of the laic State.

Such facts most certainly already justify the interest in the relations between religion, society and education, considering their articulations. Also from an academic standpoint, we highlight two articles that indicate how religion enters school gates, even though we live in a laic State and proselytism is not part of the official curriculum.

Andrade (2014) states that religion is present in the school, in different levels of education, beyond the official religious education classes. Religious teachers, just like most Brazilians, do not leave their religion outside their professional – pedagogical – practices. Instead, they hold tight to their personal religious convictions and make choices having them as basis, forbidding the use of hats during prayers, as well as the use of Candomble<sup>3</sup> beaded necklaces, for example. In addition, students who question the Christian faith are persecuted. The author states that religious intolerance is the base of such actions of these teachers, especially from Christians towards other religious beliefs or disbeliefs.

Valente (2014) analyzed the religious socialization in the school and realized that it occurs in a diffused albeit constant fashion, even in schools that do not offer the religious education subject. It occurs by means of figures of speech, the use of clothes and accessories, murals and celebrations, causing the naturalization of the Christian religion in school life. The author also emphasizes that religion often guides teachers in their didactic choices, especially when it comes to the selection of literature. It is thus possible to hypothesize that religion is a strong conductor of school practices.

Such information leads to the need of better comprehending the influence of religion

**3**- Candomble is an African-American religious tradition practiced mainly in Brazil, officially originated in Salvador, Bahia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (translator's note).

during teacher training. The goal of this article is to present the results of an investigation concerning the interface between religion and teacher education, especially issues surrounding the portrayal of gender and sexual orientation and identity.

## The research

The data analyzed here are part of a broader research whose goal is to better understand how teaching is learned during the initial training of future teachers. This period is a crucial moment of professional and formative development for teachers. It can be said that a teacher's initial training has its beginnings in that teacher's own early school life, by means of the diffuse appropriation of knowledge and notions about teaching. In other words, a teacher's initial training can be seen as an element of a long process of professional socialization, in which there is interaction of values, knowledges and notions of various socializing agencies (MARCELO GARCIA, 1999; ZEICHNER; GORE, 1990; DUBAR, 1997).

The aforementioned research examined students enrolled in the pedagogy course of a federal institution in the south of Brazil in 2012. The data were initially collected by means of a multiple-choice questionnaire designed in order to characterize the social, economic and cultural profile of the students, as well as an open-answer questionnaire to establish their reasons for choosing the pedagogy course<sup>4</sup>. Concerning their profile, it is possible to state that it is fairly similar to those of other institutions: it is mainly composed of young (70% are 21 years old or younger) women (93.8% identified themselves as women) who studied in public schools (58% declared to have the whole of their school life in public schools) and whose families have little formal education (only 17.53% of the fathers

**4-** Both questionnaires were conducted in 2012 with new students and were applied in their classroom with them present, with their professor's authorization. The first questionnaire was answered by a hundred students and the second one by eighty.

and 20.77% of the mothers completed college or university) (KNOBLAUCH; MONDARDO; PEREIRA, 2013; KNOBLAUCH, 2015).

However, one piece of information was particularly interesting: the high rate of students who declared to be religious. From the one hundred questionnaires, eighty-one students said that they followed a religion. This fact motivated further research on the role of religions during teacher training, which will be presented in this article. We aim to better understand the relations established between religious dispositions and supposedly secular dispositions from the pedagogy course. By religious dispositions, we mean those related to their religious values and experiences, while by secular dispositions, we mean those that are a result of their learning process during the pedagogy course.

We point out that this research combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches: the information collected through the first questionnaires were combined with new information of the religious experience of the students, by means of a third questionnaire<sup>5</sup>, which merged both open and closed questions. Those questions aimed at identifying the religion followed, religious transit, activities developed and frequency to religious rites, among others.

Longer interviews were also performed with five self-declared religious students and one with no religious attachments.<sup>6</sup> The interviews happened after they signed an informed consent. All of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed, in a total of over eleven hours of interviews. The questions were designed to offer insight on meaning of the pedagogy course to the students and the interfaces they make between learned contents and religious contents.

**5-** The third questionnaire was applied in 2014, when they were in their third year. Considering the current dropout rate, only 77 students answered it.

**6-** The choice for these students followed the coupling of the criteria: the student was willing to take part of the interview; the student had answered the previous questionnaire; keeping a variety of religions/religiosity. The difference between the number of religious students (five) and non-religious students (one) was due to the nature of the analyzed group.

The premise that guided our analysis is that religion, family, school and the media are institutions that compose the basis of culture, i.e. they produce a symbolic system organized by prescriptions capable of producing moral and identity values, as pointed by Setton (2008, p. 16):

All these agencies are able to forge, in tense and intense relations, a *habitus*, a thinking *modus operandi*, as well as a system of dispositions that guides conducts – a matter of importance to educators of our time, who find themselves in a reality of multiple lifestyle references.

In addition, considering the concepts of configuration coined by Norbert Elias, the author considers that socialization in our times derives from interdependent relations between various socializing instances and agents. However, she argues that these agents and instances may or may not be complementary to each other, homogeneous or not necessarily coherent with each other, considering the diversity of agencies that concur in our society. It is possible then to identify a constitution of hybrid dispositions derived from new social configurations. That is to say, considering the current transitoriness of knowledge and social relations, as well as a certain institutional crisis, each individual receives more freedom, giving his/her different experiences a sense of unity (SETTON, 2002a).

It is possible to think each individual as the *bearer of an experience which predisposes him/her to build his/her own identity*, to make his/her own choices without solely or blindly following an incorporated, unconscious memory. That is, it is an incorporated experience, but also a continuous construction by means of a *habitus that enables each individual to build him/herself procedurally and relationally*, based on practical logics of action – sometimes consciously, sometimes not.

Because there is not a single structuring axis (family, school and/or mass culture) and because of the lack of circularity of references, the contemporary individual nurtures new relations with the exterior world (SETTON, 2002a, p. 68, my emphasis).

Thus, what lies on the basis of the author's thought is an actualization of Pierre Bourdieu's theory on *habitus* and field. As the matrix of perception, appreciation and action, structured and structuring, the *habitus* is a result of the historic process of building and rebuilding of dispositions, based on trajectories and standpoints of the agent in the different fields he/she acts on (BOURDIEU, 2003). In present days, what leads to an even sharper differentiation of the dispositions is the multiplicity of agencies that dispute space in the symbolic field, especially the media and the new configurations of religious spaces, especially for the youth (SETTON, 2002b e 2008).

By applying the third questionnaire, it was possible to notice that 50.64% of the students say they are Catholic, 40.25% Evangelicals, 5.19% Spiritists<sup>7\*</sup> and 1.29% Umbandistas<sup>8\*\*</sup>, while on 3.89% stated they followed no religion.

70.12% of them stated that they followed their religion since their childhood, which means that about 30% have changed religions. This religious migration is more common from Catholic to Evangelicals or Spiritists, but the opposite also happened, though in a far smaller rate. In addition, 17.64% of them said they attend to more than a single denomination at the same time.<sup>9</sup>

Concerning attendance, most of them (36.36%) say they attend to the activities offered by their religion more than once a

**7-** Spiritism is a popular religion in Brazil. It can be considered a spiritualistic philosophy and it was codified in the 19th century by Allan Kardec (the codename of a French educator named Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail) (translator's note).

**8-** Practitioners of Umbanda, an Afro-Brazilian religion that brings together African traditions, Roman Catholicism and American Indigenous beliefs through syncretism (translator's note).

**9-** The data concerning religion migration and double religiosity follow what was found by Negrão (2008): 38% and 11% respectively.

week, while 85.71% attend to religious rites (masses, services, etc.); 28.57% attend to youth groups; 23.37% work with children at their church; and 25.97% do volunteer work (social work, visits to hospitals, play music or sing in church, among others). Such data indicate that these students participate rather actively in their religious communities.

In order to establish interfaces between different socializing instances, the focus of this article falls on issues concerning gender production, orientation and sexual identity, i.e., controversial topics to conservative Christians. We develop our argument by initially presenting some topics related to religion and then follow by analyzing our data and finally making our conclusions.

### **Religion: between secularization and de-secularization**

Religion is understood here, on the one hand, as a cultural construction that produces meaning and is altered and updated over time, because it is the result of a dialect relation of objective and subjective conditions (BERGER, 2012). On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that religion still acts as an institution with close relations with political power, by contributing to the maintenance of symbolic order through the absolutization of what is relative and the legitimization of what is arbitrary (BOURDIEU, 2004a).

That said, even though this is not the central point of this article, it is not possible to ignore the discussion that religion sociology has been building around the polemics over the so-called secularization and de-secularization (or counter-secularization). Based on weberian analysis, the hegemonic argument in the sixties and seventies indicated that Modernity, in a close and dialect relation with the Protestant reform and the consolidation of capitalism, contributed to the secularization of the State, leading to a religious pluralism, as well as private and psychologicalized religious

experiences (BERGER, 2012). Nevertheless, the recent advance of religious fundamentalism and of the proximity between religion and politics on certain sectors of society lead some analysts to question this conception of secularization and to point to a process of new relations between the sacred and the profane, the public and the private (BERGER, 2000). In this regard, we point out that the latter perspective has been heavily criticized, since the process of secularization is neither continuous nor regular. New religious movements could be understood as the consequence of the same religious pluralism, ultimately a result of the process of secularization (PIERUCCI, 1997).

Even though such debate is not thoroughly presented here due to space constraints, it is important to highlight the role that religion currently plays in people's lives. In Brazil, recent surveys indicate that Catholicism is still prevalent, but the number of followers are in constant and sharp fall – a similar situation to other denominations considered traditional, such as Lutheranism and Umbanda. On the other hand, the number of Evangelicals continues to rise, especially neo-Pentecostal denominations, as well as the number of non-religious people. Beyond such differences, the space where religious practices take place has also changed: while they used to take place in specific, dedicated temples, nowadays they may happen in public squares and stadiums, through television or radio, as well as the Internet (PIERUCCI, 2004,2006; CUNHA, 2013). In such scenery, it is worth asking in which measure religion interferes in people's everyday lives, in particular of pedagogy students, the focus of this study.

We point out that religions in Brazil, from the early colonial Catholicism, have always been marked by syncretism. We also stress the importance of Negrão's (2005) indications to the analysis we intend to conduct here. The author reminds us that in Brazil both syncretism and the way modernity was introduced in the economic sphere – not followed by the rationalization of mentalities – led to a process of "semi-

enchantment and relative secularization” (NEGRÃO, 2005, p.35) which, according to the author, follows us until today.

Sanchis (2008) considers that such process is related to contemporary culture, more multicultural and less territorialized, which in turn enables a “multiplicity of possible religious identities” (SANCHIS, 2008, p. 78) as well as an autonomous and respectful coexistence with other areas of society, more open to secularization.

This dynamics leads then to the existence of a new experience of religion, more based on the personal experience, on the psychologicalization, on the spontaneity, but that still holds, in Brazil, the support of institutions and the centrality of Christianity, among other elements. In Sanchis’ (2008) view, they are antagonisms that do not nullify each other, but that qualify and interfere in the constitution of the individual. How does such experience and the dispositions that result from it act as a filter for pedagogy students when learning contents of their teacher-training course? This is the analysis we propose here.

## The interviewed students

The data presented here were collected from semi-structured interviews with five students considered religious, i.e., with attendance to church higher than once a week, beside the attendance to weekly religious rites (Bruna and Melissa are Mennonites<sup>10</sup>, Marina attends to the Assembly of God<sup>11</sup> and Elisa and Bianca are Catholic). A single non-religious student (Sofia)<sup>12</sup> was available for us to contrast with the other interviewees.

**10-** According to Maske (1999), the Mennonite Church originated in a Swiss Anabaptist movement that was strong in Russia. It arrived in Brazil when fleeing the Russian Revolution of 1917.

**11-** According to Mariano (2012), the Assembly of God (Assembleia de Deus, in Portuguese) was founded in 1911 in Brazil and constituted, along with the Christian Congregation in Brazil (Congregação Cristã no Brasil, in Portuguese), the so called *Classic Pentecostalism*. It is the largest Pentecostal church in number of members, but over the years had some of its initial precepts contested and transformed, which originated numerous dissidences.

**12-** The names used here are fictitious, in order to preserve the anonymity of the students.

The six students are between 20 and 30 years old and they attend to the third year of the pedagogy course; Marina and Sofia study in the same class in the mornings while the others study in a different class, also in the mornings. All of them work during the afternoon, except for Bianca. Bruna, Melissa, Elisa and Bianca have studied in private religious schools (Bruna and Melissa in the same Mennonite school, and Elisa and Bianca in Catholic schools – Bianca’s school being regarded of higher social standing than Elisa’s); Marina studied in public schools up to high-school, when she was granted a scholarship for a non-religious private school. Sofia always studied in public schools. She started a course of marketing and advertising in the same institution, but she abandoned it when she realized she did not want to become a professional in that area. When choosing a new course, she considered both social sciences and pedagogy, but opted for the latter because of the more readily available work opportunities. All of them are from families whose parents have more study than their grandparents do, as shown in the table below.

Bruna’s, Melissa’s and Elisa’s parents graduated from college in private institutions of this city. Their occupation are in the service sector and it enabled their family to have a considerably comfortable financial life. Despite such differences, it was possible to notice that all of them shared very similar cultural habits: they do not frequently go to theaters or museums, the rarely go to the cinema, they have very varied music tastes (except for Bianca, who only listens to Catholic artists) and they read novels in their free time.

We highlight the fact that two of the parents are pastors. Melissa’s father, long after having finished college, graduated in a second major – theology – in order to take over as pastor in a Mennonite community of a small town in the center of the state. Marina’s father founded his own variation of the Assembly of God and prepares for the function through books and leaflets he receives by mail.

**Table –** Education and profession of parents and grandparents of the students

	Father	Mother	Maternal grandmother	Maternal grandfather	Paternal grandmother	Paternal grandfather
Bruna	Higher education: Business major	Higher education: Business major	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Insurance broker	Housewife (used to perform administrative work)	Administrative work	Realtor	Milkmaid and seamstress	Milkman and trucker
Melissa	Higher education: Business major and Theology major	Higher education: Executive secretariat major	Middle school	Middle school	High school (teacher training)	High school
	Mennonite Pastor (used to be a businessman)	Craftsperson (used to be a secretary in a multinational company)	Housewife	Trucker	Teacher	Businessman in a transportation company
Elisa	Higher education: Business major	Higher education: Social services major	Unfinished middle school	Unfinished middle school	Middle school	Middle school
	Owner of a pasta restaurant	Housewife	Shopkeeper	Not informed	Not informed	Shopkeeper
Bianca	Not informed	High school (teacher training)	Unknown	Unknown	Unfinished middle school	Unknown
	Not informed (deceased)	Teacher	Not informed	Woodworker	Housewife	Farmer
Marina	High school	High school	Unfinished middle school	Unfinished middle school	Unfinished middle school	Unfinished middle school
	Tinsmith and Pastor of the Assembly of God	Gas delivery (used to be a housewife)	Housemaid	Mason	Seamstress	Mason
Sofia	Unfinished middle school	Unfinished middle school	No schooling	No schooling	No schooling	No schooling
	Mason (used to work in a warehouse)	Seamstress	Housewife	Farmer	Housewife	Blacksmith

Source: Survey data.

The religious students have a very active life in the church they attend to: they go to the weekly rites (mass/service), they work with children, in the youth group, with adolescents, etc. Melissa and Marina are also part of the praise ministry in their communities. Both Catholic students, Bianca and Elisa, state they have the gift of celibacy, which does interfere in how they experience their religiosity: Elisa is part of the Opus Dei<sup>13</sup> and lives a house financed by the organization. Bianca is part of

the Shalom Catholic community<sup>14</sup> and yearns to be a “life missionary” in her community, to which end she deems celibacy required.

All of them attend to the same religious institutions as their family – grandparents, uncles, parents and siblings. Bianca is the sole exception, whose mother also goes to a Catholic church, but a Charismatic one close to her house. During the interview, Bianca stated that

**13-** According to Sofiati (2013), Opus Dei may be characterized as belonging to a traditionalist branch inside Brazilian Catholicism. It is a small group with very reactionary ideas.

**14-** It is linked to what the Catholic Church calls New Communities. In Brazil, it started in 1982, in the city of Fortaleza, and it has as its main goal the evangelization of young people, following precepts of the Charismatic Catholic Renovation movement.



her mother did not understand her choice for celibacy or the Shalom community.

They stated to have beliefs expected for their religions. When asked about a series of spiritual elements (saints, angels, orishas, spirits, the horoscope, etc.) they said to believe only in those in accordance to their religion, which leads us to believe the group is fairly faithful to their religious precepts.

Sofia, the non-religious student, said that she attended to catechesis as a child, but that she grew apart from the church as she realized contradictions between what was preached and the conditions of life of her neighbors, which went through various hardships:

It was very common for them to say stuff like, what was it, 'it is easier for a poor to enter the kingdom...' and I disagreed with that, not consciously, because I saw other people who went there, I went dressed very well, because my mom bought fabric and made clothes herself, which was cheaper. When I say well dressed, I mean, if it was cold, I had shoes, was warm and all. And there were people in t-shirts and flip-flops. They were cold! It shocked me because they always said sentences like "it shall be rewarded..." These people didn't need heavenly help, they were just cold! (Sofia).

She said she stopped attending to the church by the age of 16, that she hardly remembers any biblical content and that she questions the existence of God, but that she thinks that there is no afterlife: "you close your eyes and die. Over!" She said she does not believe in angels, miracles, demons, entities or fortune telling. She also states her parents were always a little more "leftist", i.e., they always voted for candidates of parties said to belong to Brazilian left wing, although they never actually took part in any political party activity. She said that influenced her to take part in various NGOs since her teenage days (school supplemental classes, community gardens, etc.).

## **Interfaces between religion and teacher training**

Considering that initial teacher training is a moment of strong professional socialization towards teaching, understanding the reason that led students to choose the course, coupled with social, economic and cultural factors, may be an interesting clue to raise indicators of the matrix that will act as a filter when learning new contents. According Bruna, Melissa, Elisa and Bianca, their choice for the course happened because "they liked children"; Marina stated that her choice was motivated by her "desire to improve the public school system"; and Sofia stressed the work she developed involving volunteer education in her old course was the motivation for her new choice. When asked about the characteristics of a good teacher, the first students mentioned particularities such as patience, dedication and love for the profession. Marina, on the other hand, said it was important "to possess content and know it, the ability to explain things clearly, to have critical thinking, not to carry prejudices and commitment with what you do." Sofia said it was "the taste for study as basis for social transformation."

At first, it was possible to establish some relation between Sofia, non-religious, and Marina, who attends to the Assembly of God. She says that despite agreeing with the Pentecostal basis of her religion (except for the most severe rules of behavior also abandoned by her father as well as other divisions of the denomination, such as the obligatory use of skirts and the prohibition for women of having their hair cut), she frequently feels like "a fish out of water" in the Evangelical context:

Sometimes I wonder about a bunch of stuff, if it's for real or what, because there are some things I get really mad about, for example, from the moment I went to that house<sup>15</sup>... It's like this, you learn you

**15-** Marina refers to a visit she, her father and other young church members made to a very poor family of their community, who struggled

must love your neighbor, but then you do nothing!?! Come on! I get so mad! I see very large churches, for example, I give my tithe and I believe a lot of people give their tithes there, I don't know, because they believe and all, and then the church does nothing with that tithe to help other people, you know? I get so angry!

Considering that information circulate in religious groups also diffusely, it is possible to find, in what Marina says, indication of the so-called Theology of Integral Mission, which corresponds to the Theology of Liberation<sup>16</sup> of the Evangelical religions. She is concerned with matters of social justice and the survival of the most needed in conjunction with evangelization. It is worth pointing out that Marina and Sofia study in the same group and are friends. Marina displays deep admiration for Sofia, because even though she disagrees with her beliefs, she always does so respectfully – which is different from their other colleagues. During the interview, she frequently mentioned talks she had with Sofia about religion, gay marriage, politics and also about their classes. Regarding the subjects they took together, they held similar standpoints: they praised theoretical subjects that, according to them, made them develop knowledge, while criticizing more practical subjects that, also according to them, did not incentive theoretical learning.

It is worth highlighting that both of them justified the choice for the course for considerably similar reasons, differently from the other interviewed students. In some ways, both of them seem to possess more critical standpoints when compared to the other interviewees. Our hypothesis lies on the importance of their proximity as friends, which is an element in the process of professional

to eat and to live properly. After the visit they decided to donate basic food items, gas and help in the medical assistance of one of the visited people.

**16-** The Theology of Integral Mission and the Theology of Liberation are different theological perspectives, but which can be likened when they emphasize that the church seek the promotion of justice and dignity through its actions, side by side with evangelizing work (SCHELIGA, 2010).

socialization, and propitiates learning towards education (or towards matters related to it). In other words, friendships are built from a matrix that brings us together, or from a set of dispositions that are in the origin of practices and choices, differentiated but also a differentiator:

One of the functions of the notion of habitus is to explain the unity of style that binds the practices and contents of a single agent or class of agents [...]. The habitus is the generative and unifying principle that translates both the inner and the relational characteristics of a position in an unmistakable lifestyle, that is, in an unmistakable set of people choices, of contents, of practices [...]. Distinct and distinguished, they also operate distinctions: they put into practice different differentiation principles, or use the common differentiating principles in a differentiated way. (BOURDIEU, 2004b, p. 21-22, my emphasis).

Nevertheless, issues related to gender and to sexual orientation and identity make Marina and Sofia distinctions clear, especially because of the religious orientation that Marina has towards the topic, in such a way she actually comes close to their other religious colleagues.

The information that will be discussed here comes from the answers given to the following questions of the interview: a) the reason why there are far more women than men in the pedagogy course<sup>17</sup>; b) differences between men and women as perceived in society and in the church; c) what to do in a hypothetical situation where a boy student wants to use a female costume only; d) opinions on a picture of a textbook that shows a traditional family where domestic work is under the responsibility of the woman; e) opinions on a news article on a program that intended to work with

**17-** About this, see also: Carvalho, 1999 and Souza, 1998.

gender identity in French schools but that was boycotted by extreme right-wing parent groups<sup>18</sup>; and f) opinions on gay marriage.

Their opinions regarding these questions go from the naturalization of gender differences to a mixture between the recognition of social impositions, but generally heavily skewed towards biological factors, up to one position that understands gender as a social construct.

The main representative of the naturalization of gender relations standpoint is Bianca, who belongs to the Shalom Catholic Community. When asked about the majority of female students in the pedagogy course, she justified it by relating women identity with the profession: “women like to talk, like to read, like to teach, it’s natural for women, naturally feminine, right! It’s women’s nature.” While men would “relate more to objective things, like calculus of handyman stuff, like...”. For her homosexuality is a departure from nature (a follow-up of her previous opinion), so she states that she would correct a boy in the hypothetical presented situation: “absolutely! Because the more you reinforce it, the more you naturalize it, right, and it’s not something natural. Boys wearing dresses is not natural.” After reading the news article, which seems to have deeply upset her, she stated that she consider it unnecessary to teach gender equality in schools because “they surely just want to fuse equality (sic) between men and women, gender equality... I’m against gender equality.” When talking about the textbook picture, she described it without problematizing it. According to her, her standpoints were built throughout her life but reinforced by her faith.

Although Bruna was not as emphatic as Bianca, she also shows signs of the naturalization of gender relations in her speech. She tried to explain the majority of women in the course by saying that women are more capable, because they care for their children and then tried to weave a historical explanation for it: “I think it

must have begun, I don’t know, when women started working, and then they left their children in each other’s house.” She considers that it is not necessary to be a mother to be a teacher, but “when it comes to experience, to knowing what to do in a certain situation, emergency, I think it can help, especially with younger kids. But later on, I think it doesn’t make much of a difference.” About the hypothetical situation presented, she said she would let it happen, considering it would be just for fun, but that she would also offer other costumes. Regarding the textbook picture, she also did not problematize it. She described the role division of the house and when asked about it, she said each family has its own organization.

Bruna notices differences between men and women in society, such as lower wages for women, realizing they suffer discrimination in certain situations, but does not acknowledge it inside the church: “there’s plenty opportunity for both.”

After reading the news article, she recognized that the conservative people were mistaken. But when asked about a hypothetical program that would work with gender identity (which can be different from sexual identity), she replied quietly: “Oh, I don’t think there’s such a thing as choosing, I think you’re born a man or a woman.” But when asked about homosexuality, she was in doubt: “I don’t know [...] I’ve heard homosexuals are born that way, but I don’t know.” She says she respects homosexual people, that she sees no problems in gay marriage, but “it’s not God’s plan, it’s not what’s right.” She said her church has taken in homosexual individuals, but never homosexual couples.

Melissa and Elisa gave explanations that sometimes recognize gender relations as social impositions, but that also consider biological factors, heavily skewed towards the latter.

Regarding the majority of women in the course, Melissa believes it is “mainly a view of society, in the end there are functions attributed to men and other ones to women, and being a teacher was something usually attributed

**18**-[http://www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/noticias/2014/01/140129\\_franca\\_escolas\\_igualdade\\_genero\\_df\\_cc](http://www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/noticias/2014/01/140129_franca_escolas_igualdade_genero_df_cc)

to women.” Elisa, on the other hand, couples biological elements to the issue:

I think there’s a bit of this, of this whole idea... this relation with being a mother, I don’t know, all this historical conception in Brazil, that women had to take care, all this social impositions (makes air quotes) would weigh a bit, but I think there’s also a lot of women having this... this knack, this bond... which maternity brings, so I guess yes, it helps in the teaching process that women have more contact with children. But I think it’s an imposition like, from society to say it’s the role of women to take care and the role of men to, I don’t know.” (Elisa)

When asked about the hypothetical situation, both said they would let the kid play, but that they would also offer other costumes. Melissa stated categorically that she would try to demotivate it, “because I have it very clear in my head that a man is a man and a woman is a woman (laughter), there’s men stuff and... it’s part of my education and also because of the Christian issue, the part of homosexuality<sup>19</sup> gets to me a bit.” Elisa, on the other hand, said she would accept the situation, but highlighted that “I would let him express himself, but I’d try to make him understand why, you know? Because sometimes the parents want to let them choose, but it’s an induced freedom, I don’t know if you understand me, like saying ‘hey you should try the feminine world.’ Anyhow, I’d tell the family they should ‘love their kid all the same.’”

As for the textbook picture, both considered it wrong, a different standpoint when compared to Bianca or Bruna. Melissa stated the picture expresses a view that does not happen anymore and, to defend her argument,

she mentioned examples in her family, in which men and women share domestic work. Elisa said it would be prejudicial if all the pictures in the book were like that, because children with different family arrangements would feel not represented. But again she made a restriction: “but there are many families that are like that, the dad works in a job, the mom for various reasons works at home, and this child also must identify somehow, right!” Both perceive inequality between men and women, both in society and in their churches. Melissa agrees that this situation may be different; Elisa did not know how to explain the reason of these differences, but accepts the determinations of the Holy Faith (the Vatican State).

Regarding the polemics that happened in France, Melissa agrees that children should be able to choose their occupations freely, but not without embarrassment, she admitted: “but in my head (laughter) I kind of agree with the extremists!” Elisa displayed a similar opinion: “But this thing of letting the kid choose [referring to gender identity], easy, there’s biology, there’s the whole structure, so I guess this means, am I to contradict all nature? I don’t know, I think it’s too much to say it’s only imposition.”

It is worth highlighting that Elisa worked in a school related to Opus Dei, in which classes for boys and girls were separate. The school’s justification for this is that, because of biological conditions, boys and girls learn differently. Many of her arguments are the result of her experience in this institution, even though she studied the opposite in the pedagogy classes.

Marina seems to tend toward an understanding about gender as a social construct. She explained the majority of women in the course: “Because in our society, it is women that take care of children and not men, so I think it’s related to this thing of taking care being left to women and not to men.” She identified the stereotype of the traditional family in the textbook picture and said she would not use it. She said she would not interfere in the case of the boy wanting to

**19-** Institutions that fight for LGBT rights choose to use the term “homosexuality” instead of “homosexuality”, arguing that the “-ism” suffix leads to the idea of ideologies (“communism”, “capitalism”) or diseases (“alcoholism”).

dress girl's costumes only. She identified the fear of extremists in the news article coming from them understanding gender equality as "teaching homosexuality," which she very strongly disagreed with. But when it came to the issue of homosexuality, her religious view became very clear, which seems to contradict her previously constructed understanding. Even though she says she accepts homosexual people as they are, that she has homosexual friends, that they would be well received in her church, Marina also says the Bible abominates them and explains:

We believe it like this, for example, homosexuals like everyone else that doesn't know Christ yet, for example, and then does a lot of stuff that doesn't please God, not only the homosexual sexual act, but lying, robbing, selling overpriced stuff for profit, all this stuff, we believe that from the moment you meet Christ, then you're not meant to do those things anymore, for example, they are sins, right? [...] Then the person, when they accept Christ, they repent from their sins and when they make their decision, for example, of baptizing, this symbolizes the fact that you leave your past acts behind, all these things of living a worldly life and you're born again spiritually and you go live a life for Christ, then that's why you can't go on practicing what the Bible shows as a sin [...]. We believe that homosexuality doesn't come from God, because we believe that He created man and woman, so they can't go on being as they are." (Marina)

This constitutes a clear example of how religious content guides and interferes or coexists with the learning of future teachers. It is worth noting that the explanation given by Marina is very frequent in religious groups, which states they accept homosexual people: they accept the person, but not the sexual act with people of

the same sex; they accept the sinner but not the sin. We are not saying here that all religious people have this view on gender relations and homosexuality, but the interviewed students stated that their standpoints are based on the religious formation they had.

Nevertheless, it was Sofia, the non-religious student, who brought elements that made her colleagues' religious influence even more clear. Not only did she use historical information to try to explain the majority of women in the course, in many moments during the interview Sofia tried to use what she learned in the pedagogy classes to build her answers. About the social gender construction, she explained:

We studied Guacira Lopes and Judith Butler a lot, where we start to discuss the role of women in society, Guacira talks about women in education and Judith Butler talks about deconstructing binarism, right, gender's I mean, so I think it's a bit deeper, maybe, than a discussion about equality, about equalitarian gender relation." (Sofia)

It is important to note here that all students had classes with the same professors and that this content was discussed with all of them, but only Sofia brought it up. She spoke of a situation that happened in a class that is even more revealing about how this interface between university and religious education happens with students of the course. She relayed how a seminar in sociology of education happened:

A classmate and I presented on LGBT movements. We had about fifteen people in the class and half of the students, we talked for like four hours, and we knew we had to tackle not only the history of the movements, but say what prejudice looks like, right, with homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals. And a whole lot of the students spend the four hours with their heads low, not a single person opened their

mouths to say a word, no one argued but they weren't there either." (Sofia)

So the examples depicted here can bring light on the process of professional socialization during initial teacher training. When various non-complementary socializing agents meet (as was the case here), the norms of behavior and conduct expressed by different religions weigh heavily and define what may be and what may not be incorporated during their education in the pedagogy course. In some situations there was room to build a more critical thinking, such as the need of equality between men and women, but this 'more critical thinking' is still limited by what is already conventionally accepted. Regarding more controversial issues, the learning is limited to what their beliefs allow, building then a *habitus* with hybrid dispositions, sometimes secular, sometimes religious.

Another point to be highlighted is that the trajectory previous to the course also weighs in this process and may potentialize diffuse information received in different subjects, as was Sofia's case, or on the other hand, filter the contents deemed inadequate, as was the other students' case.

This is to say, as stated by Bourdieu (2007), that gender socialization is the product of a work of symbolic construction resulting from a long and slow process of diffuse socialization, so as to differentiate male *habitus* and female *habitus*, inside the same class fraction. Male and female corporal *hexis* result from this process, which naturalizes relations of domination, as far as such relations are recognized as legitimate. Setton and Vianna (2014) state about this subject that the learning process of gender dispositions occurs since the primary socialization, still in the family, in a clearly perceptible manner but also frequently in non-formal, non-intentional situations. They include school, religion and the media as other sources of learning and legitimacy of such dispositions. According to Bourdieu (2007), this process has the family, the church

and the school as the main institutions of reproduction of models of male dominance. It is inside the family, for example, that the model of work based on the opposition strong/weak is first legitimized. As a complementary effort, the church in turn propagates a "family moral clearly dominated by patriarchal values and by the dogma of female innate inferiority" (BOURDIEU, 2007, p. 103) with its discourse of female decency. Finally, the school would take part of this process by transmitting in its academic culture or in its own hierarchic structure the basis of patriarchal representations. Female and male *habitus* are built and act then as schemes of action and appreciation, they support the judgment of what is appropriate or inappropriate for each of them, filtering new learning processes. It is possible to suppose that the construction of the notion of monogamous heterosexuality as legitimate also finds its roots in this process of social construction.

### **Final remarks**

This reflection had the objective of answering two questions based on gender issues: which relations are established between religious and supposedly secular dispositions learned in the pedagogy course? In what measure religious dispositions interfere in the learning and in the practices of future teachers?

Though the topic is not exhausted, we believe the data presented here shed light on aspects of the process of professional socialization for teaching during initial training, by means of an analyses of the discourse of students of the pedagogy course in a federal university in the south of Brazil. We observed that the trajectory previous to the course weighs heavily, as does the relations of friendship built throughout the course. They are able to restructure their *habitus*, distinguishing what is similar and acting as elements of distinction. In addition, the religious content is strong and selects what is considered appropriate or not to learn, which enables the

constitution of a set of hybrid dispositions of *habitus* – in this case, sometimes secular, sometimes religious. This will guide future teachers in their classrooms when conducting their work with their students.

Considering that the first step to overcome an undesirable situation is to recognize it, we believe that that was made here. There is no denying the advances fundamentalism is making in our society, just as much as there is no denying we live in a process of relative secularization. Considering the teacher training

and human rights historically denied for a minority, as shown here in the issues of gender, we strongly recommend that this discussion makes part of initial and continuing teacher training courses in a more consistent way. Nevertheless, we must recognize that students arrive in these courses with a trajectory that filters what is learned, discarding or validating contents. In this sense, it is urgent to have more research developed towards finding clues to an education/training more efficient and capable of actually transforming students.

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