

The primary teacher model in Maria Salete van der Poel's teaching career



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Abstract

This article is a study on the process of feminization of primary education in Brazil, which incorporated into the teacher training from the Normal School to teaching as a characteristic and attribution of the female gender. Thus, this investigation sought to analyze the model of teacher idealized by the Escola Normal in the 1940s and 1950s through the teaching trajectory of teacher Maria Salete van der Poel, who worked in Primary Education in the 1950s. Methodologically, it is a documental research that analyzed and interpreted the educational, biographical, and (auto)biographical legislation of the teacher in the light of the theoretical framework of this study. It was concluded that Maria Salete van der Poel had in her teaching trajectory in Primary Education marks of the teacher model idealized in the 1950s by the Normal School since the teacher was a woman, single, and worked with the methods of the “Escola Nova”.

Keywords

gender; primary teacher; teaching career; Maria Salete van der Poel.

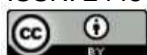
O modelo de professora primária na trajetória docente de Maria Salete van der Poel

Resumo

Este artigo trata de um estudo sobre o processo de feminização do magistério primário no Brasil, que incorporou na formação docente oriunda da Escola Normal a docência como característica e atribuição do gênero feminino. Dessa forma, esta investigação buscou analisar o modelo de professora idealizado pela Escola Normal nas décadas de 1940 e 1950 por meio da trajetória docente da professora Maria Salete van der Poel, que atuou no Ensino Primário na década de 1950. Metodologicamente, é uma pesquisa documental realizada a partir da legislação educacional e de produções biográficas e (auto)biográficas da professora que foram analisadas e interpretadas à luz do referencial teórico deste estudo. O estudo constatou que Maria Salete van der Poel tinha em sua trajetória docente no Ensino Primário marcas do modelo de docente idealizado na década de 1950 pela Escola Normal, visto que a professora era mulher, solteira e atuava com os métodos da Escola Nova.

Palavras-chave

gênero; professora primária; trajetória docente; Maria Salete van der Poel.



El modelo de maestra de primaria en la trayectoria docente de Maria Salete van der Poel

Resumen

Este artículo es un estudio sobre el proceso de feminización de la Educación Primaria en Brasil, que incorporó en la formación docente de la Escuela Normal la enseñanza como característica y atribución del género femenino. Así, esta investigación buscó analizar el modelo de docente idealizado por la Escola Normal en las décadas de 1940 y 1950 a través de la trayectoria docente de la maestra Maria Salete van der Poel, quien se desempeñó en la Educación Primaria en la década de 1950. Metodológicamente se trata de una investigación documental realizada desde la legislación educativa y de la biografía y (auto)biografía de la docente que fueron analizadas e interpretadas a la luz del marco teórico de esta investigación. El estudio encontró que Maria Salete van der Poel tenía en su trayectoria docente en la Educación Primaria marcas del modelo docente idealizado en la década de 1950 por la Escuela Normal, ya que la profesora era mujer, soltera y trabajaba con los métodos de la “Escola Nova”.

Palabras clave

género; profesora de primaria; carrera docente; Maria Salete van der Poel.

1 Introduction

In the first decades of the republic, teacher training was influenced by the conservative Catholic-Christian thinking in which women were considered sinners and should be “domesticated” and guarded by the men responsible for them. Therefore, women, especially those from the upper classes, had two preestablished destinies: wedding or religious life, determined by their father or eldest brother.

This view of gender¹ was in accordance with the Victorian mores which attributed to the single woman without a husband the adjectives “sinner”, “prostitute” and “vulgar” and attributed to the married woman with a husband the adjectives “wife”, “mother” and “kind”. This configuration of feminine behavior will contribute to the entry of women into teaching since this professional field will become a third destination for elite and middle-class girls.

This process will also be influenced by the creation of school groups and the consolidation of the Escola Nova (Normal School) as a model of teacher training for Primary Education, because, during the 1930s and 1940s, men were a minority in primary teaching. Thus, they left the primary teaching profession for a more lucrative

¹ Gender is being used here following the concept by Louro (2014) and Scott (1995).

minority in primary teaching. professional positions, considering that the country was starting the industrialization process at that period (ALMEIDA, 2004).

Thus, we question whether, in the 1940s and 1950s, there was still a model of teacher training idealized by the Normal Schools for women, since, in those years, the Organic Laws of Education (Capanema Reform) and the discussion around the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDBEN), which was promulgated in 1961, were instituted. Thus, we ask: what is the model of a primary teacher idealized by the Escola Normal in Paraíba? Does this model present itself in the teaching career of Maria Salete van der Poel?

We choose this teacher after having contact with the documental sources and readings about her and her autobiographical writings, in which a triangulation emerged: inquietude, problematization, and change of mentality, within a given time-space in which Maria Salete van der Poel moves from the representation place of the woman-teacher-tia to the woman-teacher-teacher, critic as protagonist, historical subject, who sought another representation of herself and of her gender perspective in the teaching profession. Thus, this article aims to analyze the model of the primary teacher idealized by the Escola Normal in Paraíba, considering the feminization of teaching and the teaching trajectory of the teacher Maria Salete van der Poel², who was a teacher in Primary Education between 1955 and 1959.

The referred teacher was born in Campina Grande, Paraíba, in the mid-1930s. She was part of the rural aristocracy and did her primary and secondary school education – Classical Course – in the same city she was born. Along with her sister, Eneida Agra, who had graduated from the Escola Normal, she founded a private school³ in the family's house in order to earn money for survival, after their father's death. It is worth mentioning that the teacher Maria Salete Agra had no pedagogical training, however, she taught with the knowledge acquired in the Classical Course.

This study, therefore, focuses on the primary teacher model idealized by the Escola Normal in Paraíba, bringing Maria Salete's biographical elements to reflect on the insertion of women in the Normal Schools and their roles as mother, wife, and teacher.

² The teacher's name after she married because her maiden name was Maria Salete Ramos Agra.

³ The Modern Institute Nossa Senhora da Salete ran from 1956 to 1972 in Campina Grande, teaching literacy to middle- and upper-class children of that city with the foundations of the New School.

Thus, this article focuses on the process of feminization of teaching through the creation of the Escola Normal, seeking to rebuild Maria Salete van der Poel's teaching career, considering both her experiences at this stage and the history of the Escola Normal in Paraíba. It concludes with considerations about the model of the primary teacher idealized by the Escola Normal present in the teacher's trajectory.

2 Methodology

This study follows the theoretical orientations of the New History, which, according to Burke (1992), it is written in deliberate reaction against the traditional paradigm because, after this, what was considered immutable is seen as a cultural construction subject to variations, both in time and space. Therefore, historians started producing a New History focused on Culture - Cultural History - and sought to work from new objects and new approaches used by other disciplines, also expanding the concept of documents and historical sources.

In this perspective, the article is inserted in the History of Education Studies, especially in the History of the Profession and Teacher Training in Brazil, approaching the relationship between Education and Gender in the teaching field, establishing as its initial timeframe the year 1946, when the Organic Law for Primary and Normal Education was instituted, until 1961, when the government approved and promulgated the Law no. 4.024 (LDBEN).

Following a bibliographic and documental survey, we considered as a source the official documents, such as national decree-laws, laws, and regulations of the state of Paraíba and organic teaching laws (Capanema Reform), and autobiographical accounts contained in the book written by Maria Salete van der Poel: *Trajetória de uma militância educacional*, published in 2007 by the university publishing house of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), which is available in the Sector Library of the Education Center at UFPB.

To analyze those materials, we used a critical approach and organized and cataloged the available sources. We also made a critical reading of the sources and bibliographic materials found through annotations and established categories or themes

aiming to interpret the data about the Escola Normal in Paraíba, the teacher's teaching career, and the educational context of this state in the 1950s.

3 Trajectories and paths of teaching in Primary Education in Brazil

3.1 *The Escola Normal and the feminization of the teaching profession: a teacher training model to teach and instruct the nation*

The teaching in Brazil began in the colonial period with the Jesuit priests, who organized ways to instruct and catechize the population living in this period. After their expulsion, the role was given to the royal teachers who came from Portugal. According to Villela (2016, p. 97), “[...] the centuries of the modern era are marked, in the West, by a long process of production of a new 'school form' in detriment of the old ways of learning”. From this, occur the laicization of instruction and the transition of educational models, since, before this change, the teaching process was done by cultural impregnation; with modernity, this process is done through a state education system⁴.

Such changes were a result of the formation of National States and the purpose of homogenizing, controlling, and regulating the education of the population of nations. Thus, some measures began to be implemented in education, especially primary education, such as the adoption of a specific teaching method, the definition of teaching content, authorization or prohibition of books, and the establishment of bureaucratic rules to be followed by the institutions. These changes happened in Portugal⁵ first, because, in Brazil, the organization of elementary education was a slow process, due to the fact that this activity was almost restricted to the private sphere, that is, under the responsibility of families.

It was at the beginning of the 19th century that the State began to control formal education and the first initiatives to organize public education in Brazil. This took shape after the General Teaching Law of 1827 was granted, and with it, the activity of instructing would also be organized, however, always under the tutelage of the Church, which defined the set of knowledge, norms, and values of the teaching activity, which were

⁴ It is Worth highlighting that this process happened in Europe after the French Revolution (1789-1799).

⁵ In Portugal, the change in instruction happened through the Pombaline Reform.

juxtaposed to a new body of teachers, recruited, and supervised by the instances of state power (VILLELA, 2016).

According to Saviani (2019, p. 126):

This first education law of independent Brazil was in tune with the spirit of the time. It was about spreading the lights, guaranteeing, in all the villages, access to the rudiments of knowledge that modernity considered indispensable to keep ignorance at bay. The modest legal document [...] contemplated the elements that came to be consecrated as the fundamental curricular content of elementary school [...]. Given the peculiarity of the new nation, which still admitted the Catholic Church as the official religion and was engaged in reconciling new ideas with tradition, the addition of the principles of Christian morality and the doctrine of the Catholic religion in the curriculum is understandable.

In agreement with the author, the Law of General Education was in accordance with the thought of the modern era - reason as the source of knowledge - and with the ideas of the Catholic Church - principles of morality and religion -, that is, the law expressed the specificities of the Brazilian nation. They were also present in the training of teachers, especially with the Additional Act of 1834, which transferred the responsibility for Primary and Secondary Education to the provinces, as well as the training of their teaching staff for these stages of education. As a result of this Additional Act, there was the creation of Normal Schools to train the elementary school teachers, because it was necessary to have graduated and qualified teachers in the mutual method and following the Catholic Christian precepts to work in the elementary school of the provinces created by the law of 1827.

In the Northern Parahyba province case, since April 1835 the Legislative Assembly began to discuss and debate the provincial legislation regarding public education since such discussions were aligned with the modern ideals that propagated the rationalist illuminist thought, in which education would be the remedy to remove the uncivilized nations from darkness, of ignorance through instruction, which was intended to civilize all social classes through an elementary instruction in order to acquire notions, practices, and general feelings, that is, an instruction common to all that would help create a national identity, as Villela (2016) states.

Thus, the legislation in this period was the materiality of the pedagogical thought of the time, in which the Escola Normal had an important role to train the teachers who would propagate and teach the intellectual and moral habits that constituted the unity and the nationality because this institution was considered an authorized place for the

diffusion of a type of knowledge that was standardized and characterized the new primary teacher. In other terms, the Escola Normal established and standardized some contents that constituted the body of knowledge of the formation and of the teaching profession.

In this context, in which education became an instrument of civility, the formation of teachers found a favorable conjuncture to develop experiences of institutionalization of the teaching activity, such as the creation of the first Escola Normal do Brazil in Niterói and, later, in several provinces of the nation; the definition of a curriculum for the formation of teachers with an emphasis on the monitorial system (also known as Lancaster system); the creation of schools for/to girls - for the teaching of domestic chores, religious practices, and rudimentary reading.

According to Villela (2016), the conception of a differentiated curriculum was related to the role that was assigned to women - white and from the middle and upper class - in this society of patriarchal customs and the idea that women had little intellectual capacity.

According to Louro (2014, p. 29):

[...] the different social institutions and practices are constituted by (and also constitute) genders; this means that these institutions and practices not only 'manufacture' subjects but are themselves produced (or engendered) by representations of gender [...].

This conception/representation of gender - feminine - was based on Victorian customs, which placed the woman in two levels of the social frontier, the private and religious - mother, daughter, and wife - and the public - crazy, prostitute, and single, without husband and family. In this way, the insertion of single women in the Escola Normal and in the teaching profession, little by little, contributed to the deconstruction of the image of the single, seductive, and sinful woman and to the construction of an image of a holy, religious, and kind woman that could replace the image of the mother in the classroom.

When reflecting on the trajectories of female teachers, Costa, Mota, and Santana (2022, p. 11) focus on studies that intersect women, history, and teacher training and problematize that the teaching condition and the multiple meanings of the professional identity of female education teachers, specifically of the initial years (Primary Education),

reproduce the gender model produced for women, in which the teaching activity is “[...] allied to the need for other paid activities to supply the care of the home and children”.

In this sense, the school became a feminine space and, primarily, a place of female performance because they began to occupy and organize the space, considering that school activities are characterized by care, surveillance, and education, tasks assigned to the female gender (LOURO, 2014).

For this reason, a special course⁶ was created at the Escola Normal for women/girls in which men/boys could attend on alternative days that the female students attended. This happened due to the creation of schools for girls in the middle of the 19th century, but, both in the school for girls and in the Escola Normal, the curriculum was differentiated, as already mentioned. For example, in the Escola Normal, they attended all the subjects of the curriculum for boys. Excepting algebra and advanced geometry, only elementary geometry was allowed. Thus, we realize that the school reproduced gender representations, as Louro (2014, p. 93) states: “[...] the school is crossed by the genders, it is impossible to think about the institution without resorting to reflections on the social and cultural constructions of masculine and feminine”. The school, therefore, acts internally to distinguish bodies and genders from each other.

The gender distinction in the curriculum and educational practices was also presented in the educational reforms of the First Republic, especially with the advent of the school groups, because, at the end of the 19th century, discussions and debates in defense of public schooling and the expansion of schooling were held by the “enlightened elite”.

According to Saviani (2019), it is during this period that people start thinking about the idea of a national education system as a form of practical organization, constituting a broad network of schools that would cover the entire national territory and articulate among themselves and the whole system, which should follow common rules and objectives. However, this was only consolidated, partially, in the second half of the 20th century.

⁶ This type of Normal Course only started in 1862, since the 1850s and 1860s were marked by the lack of definition of the need to train teachers in an institution appropriate for this purpose, which only occurred in 1870, with the revaluation of the Escola Normal.

3.2 Teacher training and the teaching profession: teaching in Paraíba through the Elementary School teacher Maria Salete van der Poel's trajectory

The experiences with the Escola Normal and the newest pedagogical ideas brought a new concept of an educational environment, new pedagogical materials, and a new organizational form of the school, especially at the Primary level. At the end of the 19th century, the Escola Normal took on a more defined form as teacher-training institutions. As an example, we can mention the case of the Escola Normal of the Northern Parahyba province, created in 1883 and officially implemented only in 1885, with the purpose of modernizing the educational practice in Primary Schools, which, in turn, would contribute to the progress of the Parahyba province (ARAÚJO, 2012).

The Escola Normal in Paraíba had a characteristic in relation to the others, the 1st degree of the Normal Course was destined for the female sex, created by Law no. 761/1883⁷. Although the course was created in 1883, there was already a Pedagogy course at the Provincial High School, which conferred the qualification to teach in the 1st grade. Thus, the Normal Course was attended mostly by women/girls, as stated by Kulesza (2008).

The referred institution was part of the political-educational project of the time, which aimed to prepare the future primary teacher to instruct the girls in the roles of mother and wife, in other words, schools designed for the female gender from the Paraíba upper class, since the Escola Normal in Paraíba, after the Souza Bandeira Reform of 1889, became the Externato Normal Feminino, in which maintained the Normal Course with emphasis on domestic activities, within the Victorian mores⁸. Thus, the training and the teaching profession kept the religious marks and the missionary character, but with new discourses and new symbols, even at the beginning of the First Republic (1889-1930) (LOURO, 2014).

In this sense, teacher education and elementary and secondary education, in the aforementioned period, were shaped by reformulations implemented through educational

⁷ Extinction of the Provincial High School and implantation of the Normal School, which was divided in two grades: teacher training teachers (1st degree) and continuation of the Provincial High School (2nd degree).

⁸ Term used for the cultural characteristics of the Victorian Era (Queen Victoria's reign in the United Kingdom).

reforms⁹, which changed the curriculum, training time, prerequisites, and the creation of practical subjects. Thus, Escolas-Modelo (Model Schools) of Primary Education were created in Brazil and Paraíba, attached to the Escola Normal.

According to Saviani (2019), the Model School was created as a methodological demonstration body, composed of two classes, one female and one male. In Paraíba, for example, there is no record of the creation of model schools for the training of teachers. However, school groups were created, such as Dr. Thomas Mindello (inaugurated in 1916 in the capital of Paraíba state) and the Grupo Escolar Solon de Lucena (inaugurated in 1923 in the city of Campina Grande).

The school groups were “[...] created to gather in a single building from four to ten schools, comprised in the radius of compulsory education” (SAVIANI, 2019, p. 171). This, due to the process of urbanization in cities and by the instruction had become a requirement for work in urban areas, with the growth of economic, commercial, and industrial activities in them. Therefore, this school model became a reference and lasted until the 1st and 2nd-grade educational reform of 1971, as stated by Souza (2019).

In this sense, the school network in the Brazilian states expanded through school groups, which were aligned with the republican discourse: instructing the nation to achieve civility. As a result, women are the majority in the teaching field, especially in Primary Education, since the teaching profession became, increasingly, a profession that served the low-income population and to be devalued in the capitalist view, making the teaching profession to be discredited, with low pay, which led men to abandon the career of primary teaching in search of other professions better paid (ALMEIDA, 2004). Therefore, until the 1930s, Brazil continued full steam ahead, because “[...] the more urban a country becomes, the more the service sectors grow, [...] then, the more the middle sectors or the aspiring ones demand education and schools” (GHIRALDELLI JUNIOR, 2015, p. 48).

Meanwhile, beginning in 1930, the social, economic, and educational fields underwent significant changes due to the implementation of several measures in these fields, such as the creation of the Ministry of Instruction and Public Health¹⁰, justified by

⁹ Benjamin Constant Reform (1890); Epitácio Pessoa Reform/Epitácio Pessoa Code (1901); Rivadavia Correia (1911); Carlos Maximiliano (1915); and Rocha Vaz (1925).

¹⁰ Ministry that aimed to spread public education, mainly technical-vocational education, besides establishing a system of stimulus and direct collaboration with the country's states.

the country's educational demand. Besides this, there was the Francisco Campos Reform¹¹, the intensification of the activities of the Brazilian Education Association (ABE), the publication of the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education (1932), whose ideas were incorporated into the 1934 Constitution, and the elaboration of pedagogical proposals divided into four ideologies: liberal, Catholic, integralist, and communist, which would materialize in the two constitutions granted during the Vargas government, the one mentioned above and, specifically, the 1937 Constitution¹² (1930-1945).

This was the context in which teacher Maria Salete van der Poel was born and lived her first school and social experiences. She was born in Campina Grande, a city in Paraíba, in 1936, into a wealthy family of the high rural aristocracy of the Borborema region, the Agra family. It is worth noting that the teacher's parents were from different social classes, according to her autobiographical accounts: "Our father, on the contrary, belonged to a middle-class family [...] son of the merchant Neco Hortêncio, considered serious, honest and respected in the city" (VAN DER POEL, M.; VAN DER POEL, C., 2007, p. 23). Thus, the mother belonged to the aristocracy and the father to the middle class, because he was the son of an important merchant in the Campina Grande region.

The teacher Maria Salete studied in private schools in Campina Grande, as stated by M. van der Poel and C. van der Poel (2007, p. 23): "We studied, since childhood, in the best private schools in Campina Grande". Her mother was always strict with her children's studies, as reported by M. van der Poel and C. van der Poel (2007, p. 23):

Because of our father's absences, our mother took over our education. She always took great care that all her children studied. She always said: 'In this house, first, education; second, education; and third, also education. The care with the grades was rigorous. [...] Strict control. [...] She was our best and most demanding teacher.

It is possible to notice that the role of educating and teaching her children was in charge of Maria Salete's mother, who, according to the report, was a methodical and disciplinarian teacher with the education of her children. We can see, therefore, that in

¹¹ The reform was inspired by John Dewey's theory and enacted six measures in Secondary and Higher Education.

¹² This Constitution consolidated the Vargas dictatorship (Estado Novo) and restricted the debate on pedagogy and educational policy.

this relationship between the teacher's father and mother there is a gender issue¹³, in which the woman is responsible for the attributions considered as feminine (house care and children's education) and the men for the attributions considered as masculine (provider of material conditions).

Thus, in private schools, teacher Salete attended Primary School¹⁴ (1942-1945) and the 1st cycle, known as Gymnasium¹⁵ (1946-1949). And the 2nd cycle, the Classical High School Course¹⁶ (1950-1952), at Escola Pública Estadual da Prata, because the High School, after the Organic Law (Decree-Law no. 4.244), promulgated on April 9th, 1942, was structured in two cycles: Ginásial Course (four years) and High School Course divided in two parallel courses: Classical and Scientific (three years). According to this law, in its 4th article: "In the classic course, the intellectual formation will contribute, besides a greater knowledge of philosophy, an accentuated study of ancient letters; in the scientific course, this formation will be marked by a greater study of sciences" (BRASIL, 1942).

Thus, the Secondary School was structured to meet its main purpose, which was to build a solid general culture and raise the patriotic and humanistic consciousness in adolescents. Because the curriculum of these courses emphasized humanistic knowledge and letters, even in the Scientific Course, as Romanelli (2014) states. Thus, the two cycles complemented each other, and an encyclopedic concern stood out in them, which will become evident in the 2nd cycle - Collegiate -, through the absence of curricular distinction between the two courses of this cycle, being practically the same subjects in all grades of the courses.

According to Romanelli (2014), the Organic Law of Secondary Education reflected the Brazilian political moment in which the country was going through, but it did not reflect the economic moment, because it was not adequate for the evolution of the profile of the social demand for education. According to this author, there was pressure

¹³ Understood in this article as a social construction related to the distinction and hierarchization of masculine/feminine within social relations that are constituted by meanings about the differences between masculine and feminine (SCOTT, 1995).

¹⁴ "Graded school model that had an administrative-pedagogical organization centered on modern pedagogy and active didactics (intuitive method/lesson of things)" (BENCOSTTA, 2011, p. 69).

¹⁵ Ginásial Curriculum: Portuguese, Latin, French, English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, General and Brazilian History, General and Brazilian Geography, Manual Work, Drawing, Choral Singing.

¹⁶ Classical-Collegiate Curriculum: Portuguese, Latin, Greek, French, English, Spanish, Mathematics, General and Brazilian History, General and Brazilian Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Philosophy.

from the emerging middle class and parts of the popular classes for the educational system to provide them with secondary education, which came to be seen as a form of social ascension or a way to add prestige to their status in the 1940s.

It was at this time that the Organic Laws of Primary Education¹⁷ and Normal Education¹⁸, which directly attended the Primary level in the 1940s, were also promulgated. With these two juridical norms, the educational field, especially the primary level, began to acquire a more defined school form in relation to purpose, curricular structure, and adequate teacher training. These legislations, therefore, established the guidelines and bases for Primary and Normal Education, in addition to the types of courses and establishments in which such courses could operate.

Thus, the Decree-Law (No. 8.530) instituted the courses: Training of Primary School Principals (1st cycle - four years); Training of Primary School Teachers (2nd cycle - three years); those specializing in Pre-Primary Education, Drawing and Arts, Music; and the School Administration course. It is worth mentioning that all courses could be offered at the Education Institutes, which also included the Primary School and the Kindergarten. The first course, 1st cycle of Normal Education, could be offered at Regional Normal Schools; and the second course, 2nd cycle of Normal Education, at the Escola Normal.

In Paraíba, the Normal Education had new guidelines starting from 1946, since it was disciplined both by the Organic Law and by the Law no. 850, of December 6, 1952, which organized the Normal Education in the state of Paraíba, which had, until this date, Normal Schools, Institute of Education and Regional Normal Courses. It is worth mentioning that the Regional Normal Courses, located in the countryside cities of Paraíba, worked in private educational establishments, almost all of them confessional, that is, belonging to religious orders (PINHEIRO, 2020).

As of Law No. 850/1952, however, Normal Education in Paraíba extended the time of the course from four to five years. It was in this period that the teacher Maria

¹⁷ Decree-Law no. 8,529 - organized Primary Education into Elementary Primary and Supplementary Primary Education (article 2), the former being subdivided into two successive courses: elementary and supplementary, as determined in article 3 of the aforementioned decree-law.

¹⁸ Decree no. 8,530 - organized the Normal Education aimed at training the teaching staff needed for Primary Schools, besides qualifying school administrators and developing knowledge and techniques related to the education of children (article 1).

Salete started her teaching career, as mentioned by M. van der Poel and C. van der Poel (2007, p. 23):

When we finished the classical, we lost our father and could not continue our studies. We had to fight for survival. In this sense, we founded, in the old house, the 'Salete School', which, the following year, 1956, together with our sister Eneida, we moved to the 'Our Lady of Salete Modern Institute', which remained open until 1972.

By checking the report, we can see that the teacher started teaching after her father's death, a fact that demonstrates teaching as an alternative for young women to ensure their livelihood, because teaching had become a permitted and indicated activity for women, as Carvalho (2020) states, which associated women with domestic duties (teaching, care, services) and the place of subordination, since they could not have authority over men. Thus, from the process of redefinition of the teaching activity in the 1950s, teaching started to be represented in a new way as it became feminized and constituted the true career of women (LOURO, 2014).

The context of the death of the teacher's father was marked by the end of the Classic High School Course, that is, she taught without pedagogical training, a common fact at that time, since in Paraíba there was a high demand for Primary Education but also a lack of trained teachers to meet this demand.

According to Romanelli (2014), most of the personnel employed in primary teaching at that time were unqualified for the function and belonged to an age group that exceeded the limit set by the legislation, so those who were already exercising the teaching profession were prevented by the law to perform the qualification for such function. This fact also happened in Paraíba, as we can see in the trajectory of the teacher Maria Salete, who worked as an elementary school teacher in Campina Grande/PB even without having pedagogical training, that is, the Normal Course.

According to M. van der Poel and C. van der Poel (2007, p. 33):

This is the year 1956, the year the 'Modern Institute of Our Lady of Salete' was founded. It was there that we began our practice as literacy teachers with 12 children. We were teenagers and understood nothing of pedagogical methods. For this reason, we started the reading and writing lessons using the same method that we had learned, that is, the 'ABC Method'.

In the above account, we notice that the teacher Maria Salete had no adequate training to develop her teaching activity since she used the literacy methods by which she

had been taught to read and write, that is, the intuitive method/lesson of things by means of booklets and other pedagogical materials.

[...] we taught the letters of the alphabet, generally associated with sound and figure. [...] Gradually, the letters came together to form syllables and, finally, words. [...] Little by little, we acquired new knowledge about active and globalizing methods, which led us to definitively abandon synthetic methods and adopt the analytic-synthetic method, starting with the word, which we broke down into its phonemic families (analysis), and then recomposed to form new words (synthesis). (VAN DER POEL, M.; VAN DER POEL, C., 2007, p. 33).

According to the teacher's report, we observe that the theoretical-methodological conception that was present in her teaching was the New or Modern Pedagogy¹⁹, which was propagated by the Normal Schools even before the Organic Law of 1946. This theoretical-methodological conception of the New Pedagogy, which was aligned to a technical conception emptied of theory and critical reflection, was reaffirmed in Law no. 8.530/1946, in article 14, item A, "Adoption of active pedagogical processes", and in article 16, "School work shall consist of lessons, exercises and exams", as well as in Law no. 8. 529/1946, in article 10, which establishes that Fundamental Primary Education must pay attention to the natural interests of childhood, the activities of the "disciples" themselves, the reality of the "disciples" environment; develop the spirit of cooperation and the feeling of social solidarity, tendencies and aptitudes of the students, as well as human fellowship. Salete's practice, therefore, was anchored in this pedagogical conception, which placed the student at the center of the learning process, by conceiving the child as an "innocent" individual who develops spontaneously through experience, without considering the social, and cultural aspects.

In later contexts, teacher Salete will modify her theoretical and methodological bases, as well as her thinking about the educational process, strongly influenced by her insertion in the popular education social movements of the 1960s and by Paulo Freire's²⁰ thinking.

¹⁹ The "*escolanovism*" shifts the intellect to feel, from the logical to the psychological, from cognition to pedagogical processes, from the effort to interest, from discipline to spontaneity, and from quantity to quality. The important thing is not to learn, but "to learn how to learn" (SAVIANI, 2018).

²⁰ In our master's thesis (SILVA, 2022), we contemplated the analysis of the teaching trajectory of that teacher in Popular Education (1960-1969).

5 Closing remarks

This study aimed to answer what was the primary teacher model idealized by the Escola Normal in Paraíba and if it is included in Maria Salete van der Poel's teaching career. It was possible to conclude that, throughout the years, women have suffered countless interdictions in their discourse, in their professional performance, and in their own history. However, starting in the middle of the 19th century, women began to appear in the public space through the colleges for women's education and then they started to attend the Normal Schools, taking the course for the training of elementary school teachers, which enabled women to become professionals and to guarantee their social and political rights as subjects of rights.

The Escola Normal had in its guidelines the Victorian discourses, which gave status to women to enter the teaching profession since one of the foundations that had supported such entry of women in the teaching profession was the fact of belonging to the female gender and having characteristics related to care and motherhood, representing the figure of the boys' second mother. In the Republican period, however, the model for training elementary school teachers in the Escola Normal was reformulated, mainly by the pedagogical ideals of Modern Pedagogy or New School, which, in Brazil, mixed with the conservative Catholic ideology, forming a Normal School that reinforced both the teaching as a vocation, mission, and destiny as the modern pedagogical knowledge for teaching in Primary Education. This model of teacher training established by such institution had, therefore, an important contribution to the process of feminization of teaching, since the Escola Normal propagated and spread the Victorian discourse that women had the attributes and skills necessary to be teachers, being teaching their mission by vocation.

Therefore, we concluded that Maria Salete van der Poel's teaching career in Primary School was permeated by the aforementioned fundamentals, since, when they ran out of material conditions, the teacher and her sister had the option to earn money by becoming teachers and founding a school, a fact that points to teaching as an alternative for women to have a profession and insert themselves in public life, leaving the private sphere and the home.

It was possible to conclude that teacher Maria Salete presented the model of primary teacher propagated in the 1940s and 1950s, by using in her classes primers and active methods aimed at children. Although she did not have pedagogical training in the Escola Normal, her practice reveals that she was in accordance with the model established by the Escola Normal; therefore, she taught children with the knowledge of the Escola Nova.

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