

When flowers face the square sun: curriculum, exclusion, and trans resistance behind bars

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This article presents findings from a qualitative study focused on the educational experiences of transgender women deprived of liberty in the state of Pará, Brazil. The research analyzed their narratives regarding the school curriculum, revealing the barriers they face both prior to and during incarceration. Structured interviews based on Thematic Oral History were conducted with ten students at the Santa Izabel VI Custody and Reintegration Unit. The accounts highlighted ongoing experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and the lack of public policies that acknowledge gender diversity. The analysis underscores the urgent need for curricular reform and continuous teacher training to ensure the right to education through an intersectional lens that recognizes and values trans identities within the prison system.

Keywords: Gender Identity. School Exclusion. Prison Education.

Quando as flores encaram o sol quadrado: currículo, exclusão e resistência trans no cárcere

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta resultados de uma investigação qualitativa voltada à compreensão das experiências educacionais de mulheres transexuais privadas de liberdade no Estado do Pará. A pesquisa analisou suas narrativas sobre o currículo escolar, evidenciando os obstáculos enfrentados tanto antes quanto durante o encarceramento. Por meio de entrevistas estruturadas, fundamentadas na História Oral Temática, com dez alunas da Unidade de Custódia e Reinserção Santa Izabel VI, emergiram relatos marcados por exclusões, discriminações e pela ausência de políticas públicas que considerem a diversidade de gênero. As análises destacam a urgência de reformulações curriculares e de ações formativas contínuas para educadores, de modo a garantir o direito à educação a partir de uma perspectiva interseccional, que reconheça e valorize as existências trans no contexto prisional.

Palavras-chave: Identidade de Gênero. Exclusão Escolar. Educação Prisional.

1 Introduction

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Access to education is a fundamental right and an essential pillar for promoting equality and social inclusion, as established by the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (Brasil, 1988). Article 6 of the Constitution guarantees the right to education as a fundamental social right, and Article 205 states that education should be offered to all, with the aim of promoting the full development of the person. However, for transgender students, especially those in situations of restriction and deprivation of liberty, this right faces significant barriers that compromise its realization, as Xavier and Viana (2023, p. 2) point out:

The results of this reflection reveal a right that has historically been denied to certain groups, processes that exclude students who defy gender norms when it comes to the right to education or even life. However, the existence of trans* people in the school environment has also shown us ways of fighting for a less exclusionary school.

The combination of discrimination based on gender identity, social exclusion and the lack of sufficiently inclusive educational policies poses challenges that go beyond the school context, reverberating in various spheres of transgender students' lives. This scenario reveals how oppressions based on gender, social class and deprivation of liberty are intertwined, intensifying the vulnerabilities faced by these students.

A central aspect of this exclusion is the structure of the school curriculum, which often adopts a cis-heteronormative model, marginalizing dissident gender identities. The curriculum, as a pedagogical practice, often ignores the experiences and realities of transgender people, resulting in exclusionary and hostile educational environments. As Mendes (2021) highlights, the curriculum cannot just be seen as a set of subjects, as it reflects social, political and economic disputes. In this sense, it is a space of power, where some identities are legitimized, while others are silenced. The absence of content that addresses gender diversity and the lack of inclusive pedagogical policies make it difficult to involve these students, both in regular schools and in prison units.

The school, with its routines, rules and practices, ends up reinforcing processes of normalization and marginalization of subjects who dissent from the heterosexual matrix. Heterosexism and homophobia are manifested in explicit or veiled ways in the various school spaces. Students who deviate from gender and sexuality norms become the preferred targets of a pedagogy of sexuality based on insults, ridicule, nicknames, jokes, insinuations and aggression – as Junqueira shows (2009; 2013).

In this context, Bento (2011) draws attention to the multiple forms of violence experienced by transgender people, which are also expressed in the school environment. By refusing the socially imposed gender, these people face symbolic and institutional exclusions, including the denial of the right to education. The author problematizes the use of the term “dropout” when referring to these trajectories, arguing that these students do not leave school of their own choice, but are expelled from hostile educational environments that do not recognize their identities (Bento, 2011, p. 555).

As Mendes (2021) states, the educational reforms promoted in Brazil have generated a climate of fear and uncertainty, as they propose a return to traditional and technicist models. This trend could represent a step backwards in terms of the educational achievements that have already been consolidated, ignoring the need for a more democratic and fair school. The author also notes that education is organized in a fragmented way, prioritizing memorization and the application of standardized solutions, which are ineffective in the face of contemporary demands. There is an urgent need to review teaching practices so that they take into account the historical and cultural specificities of students, contributing to a more meaningful and inclusive education.

From a legal point of view, Article 3 of the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB) – Law No. 9,394/1996 – establishes that it is the state’s duty to guarantee equal conditions for access to and permanence in school. However, the reality of transgender students, especially in prison contexts, reveals challenges such as discrimination, non-recognition of their identities and the lack of adequate public policies.

Despite advances in the National Education Plan (PNE), established by Law No. 13,005/2014 (Brasil, 2014), which sets targets for inclusive education, there is still a

significant gap in studies on the educational trajectories of transgender people, especially in prison contexts. CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2/2017, which establishes guidelines for the education of people deprived of their liberty, recognizes the right to education of people with diverse gender identities, but the policies still lack greater effectiveness.

Education in the prison system is an essential right and a fundamental tool for the social reintegration of people deprived of their liberty. The Penal Execution Law No. 7,210/1984 (Brasil, 1984) establishes that education must be offered in elementary and high school, in the form of Youth and Adult Education. However, this right faces specific challenges, such as structural precariousness, overcrowding and barriers related to the gender identities of transgender women, who continue to be marginalized in this context.

The aim was to analyze the main challenges faced by transgender women deprived of their liberty, discussing the structural, institutional and pedagogical barriers that impact this population from before they enter the institution.

2 What was not taught, but was marked: concepts for seeing the invisible

When discussing the experience of transgender students in the educational environment, it is essential to understand some important concepts that permeate gender relations and social exclusion. Terms such as “heteronormativity”, “gender identity” and “transsexuality” not only help us to identify the barriers faced by these people, but also reveal the power dynamics present in educational institutions, including prisons.

Reflecting on these concepts is crucial to understanding how school spaces can reinforce processes of marginalization or, on the contrary, promote an inclusive environment. The way in which these issues are dealt with in the curriculum, in pedagogical practices and in everyday interactions directly influences the permanence and academic development of these students. Thus, uncomplicating these concepts expands the possibilities for an education that recognizes and respects diverse gender identities.

According to Moreira and Silva (2002) and Akkari and Santiago (2015), the school curriculum reflects the political and ideological intentions of the dominant classes and is shaped by norms that often minimize cultural diversity and privilege monoculture, gender binarism and heterosexism. These elements underpin what we call heteronormativity, a system of social norms that places heterosexuality as the only legitimate form of relationship and sexual identity. This model imposes a rigid structure on gender and sexuality, linking gender identity to the sex assigned at birth and considering heterosexual relationships to be the universal and natural norm.

In the educational context, this perspective is directly reflected in curricula, teaching practices and school organization, making other forms of existence and identity invisible or delegitimized. This reinforces social inequalities, fueling prejudice and discrimination against students who don't conform to these norms. The school therefore not only reinforces but also updates the parameters of heteronormativity, establishing a regime of control over sexual conduct and expressions of gender identity. This process perpetuates these norms over time, transmitting and reinforcing dominant values, such as heterosexism, through curricular, pedagogical and organizational practices.

Despite living in the 21st century, in a context marked by cultural diversity, the school continues to be a space permeated by conflicts, prejudices and discrimination between different social classes and their respective cultures. The school tends to assign behaviors and values that are reinforced by its own practices and norms.

Bourdieu (1975) discusses how schools reinforce inequalities through cultural reproduction, favoring those who possess the dominant cultural capital. Apple (1989) argues that education is intrinsically linked to power relations and ideological reproduction. Giroux (2003), on the other hand, proposes a critical pedagogy that challenges the oppressive structures of the school. Thus, these theorists help us understand that school is not just a place for transmitting knowledge, but also an environment that often perpetuates social, cultural and economic inequalities. The school's attempt to standardize the characteristics of certain groups often results in the

exclusion of those who don't fit the dominant models, denying them the right to diversity and inclusion.

Therefore, prejudiced attitudes and violence stemming from heteronormativity, which affect non-heterosexual people or those outside the normative standards, are becoming increasingly evident, especially in the educational environment, according to Rogério Junqueira.

In this way, instead of fostering the full formation of students and preparing them for social life and the job market, in accordance with the legal guidelines for education, schools end up reproducing a model that does not take into account the diversity of identities. It should be an environment that celebrates and values different cultures and social realities, helping to strengthen identities and develop more inclusive relationships. This would help to reduce prejudice and discrimination, which are still present in many students' experiences. However, for those who don't conform to traditional gender norms, such as transgender people, the vision of an inclusive education still seems distant.

This process of discrimination and marginalization of identities outside of gender norms reveals a strong mechanism of control and exclusion within the school. Homophobia, the standardization of gender identities and the model of compulsory heterosexuality impose a regime of surveillance, making it difficult to build a more open and diverse environment, as Butler (2003) points out in her reflection on the relationship between education and gender:

The school is an obstinate space for (re)producing and updating the parameters of heteronormativity, which is at the heart of the curricular conceptions of a school committed to guaranteeing the success of the processes of compulsory heterosexualization and the incorporation of gender norms. Homophobia acts by establishing a regime of control and surveillance of sexual conduct and gender expressions and identities. An intense process of heteroregulatory normalization and marginalization of dissident subjects, knowledge and practices (Butler, 2003 *apud* Junqueira, 2010, p. 2).

The school, as a fundamental space for the integral formation of students, should not only prepare them for life in society, but also train them for the job market, according to the legal guidelines for education. In addition, it should be an environment that values diverse cultures and social realities, which would contribute to strengthening new identities and building more inclusive relationships. This process would help to reduce the prejudice and discrimination that are unfortunately still part of the school routine. However, for many people, especially those who don't fit traditional gender norms, such as transgender people, this vision of education still seems far from reality.

This scenario reinforces the words of Sartori (2021, p. 2-3), who states:

We firmly believe that everyone has the right to fulfill their potential and to have the opportunity to live without poverty in a safe and fairer world. Sexuality and gender identity are positive aspects, a central part of being human and experiencing well-being and fulfillment. And yet, when diversity of sexuality and gender identity becomes invisible, or becomes the basis of discrimination, rights, decisions about bodies, sexualities, identities and intimate consensual relationships of one's own choosing are violated.

Sartori's reflection illustrates the importance of ensuring that diverse gender identities and sexual orientations are respected and made visible, rather than marginalized or made invisible. Discrimination based on sexuality and gender identity not only violates fundamental human rights, but also prevents the construction of a fairer and more equal society.

It is therefore essential to clarify these conceptual differences, especially regarding gender identity, so that we can better understand the experiences of transgender students and ultimately promote a more inclusive education. Understanding gender identity helps to deconstruct stigmas and paves the way for the creation of a more respectful educational space where all people, regardless of their gender identity, can feel valued and recognized.

Therefore, a deeper understanding of gender issues requires the support of studies by various authors, whose research broadens our understanding of the construction and manifestations of gender identity. To do this, we will return mainly to the

studies of Jesus (2012) on transsexuals, transvestites and other transgender people, in order to demystify and clarify the complex dimensions of “being” and its “surface”, exploring the internal essence and its external manifestations.

In view of this, it is essential that we start by looking at the definition of gender. According to Jesus (2012, p. 12), gender refers to ways of identifying oneself and being identified as a man or a woman. Goellner, Guimarães and Macedo (2011, p. 20) understand gender as the social condition that allows us to identify as male or female. However, it is important to highlight the distinction between gender and sex, sex being a biological concept used to identify the characteristics that differentiate men from women or vice versa.

Understanding the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation is fundamental to deconstructing stigmas and building more inclusive educational practices. According to Jesus (2012), gender identity refers to how a person identifies themselves (male, female, non-binary, among others), while sexual orientation refers to affective-sexual attraction to people of one or more genders. These two dimensions are independent and do not determine each other. Thus, both transgender and cisgender people can have different sexual orientations. This distinction is essential to break with the heteronormative view, which assumes heterosexuality as the norm, and contributes to the recognition of the multiple possibilities of living and existing. Jesus (2012, p. 24) defines it as follows:

Gender Identity – The gender with which a person identifies, which may or may not agree with the gender they were assigned at birth. Different from a person's sexuality. Gender identity and sexual orientation are different dimensions and are not to be confused. Transgender people can be heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual, just like cisgender people.

It is therefore essential to clarify these conceptual differences, especially gender issues, which often generate misunderstandings among cisgender people. In addition, it is necessary to reinforce that identity diversity is a natural human characteristic and that people do not need to fit into the heteronormative norm in order to be respected. In this

way, we will continue to analyze and demystify the concepts, with a particular focus on gender identity, in order to advance our understanding and achieve our objectives.

From this context, in order to understand the people referred to as transvestites, transsexuals and transgender, it is essential to understand the concept of gender, cisgender and transgender. Gender imposes social roles from birth, directing behaviors and attitudes that distinguish between men and women, as exemplified by phrases such as “that’s not a man’s thing” or “girls don’t sit like that”. Cisgender individuals identify with the gender assigned at birth, while transgender people do not identify with their assigned gender, as Jesus (2012, p. 25) and Xavier (2019, p. 82) state: “a trans person is understood as someone whose gender identity differs from the biological sex assigned at birth.”

Therefore, according to these authors’ studies, trans people are those who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. However, because they do not follow the established social standards of “normality”, they are often excluded from recognition as citizens with rights. Bento (2011, p. 554) points out that human rights are inaccessible to those who do not conform to these norms, which favor a small group of heterosexual, white, male and elite people. As a result, human rights become a distant ideal for those who don’t conform to social gender expectations.

The invisibility of trans people in the school environment is manifested above all by the absence of representations in the curriculum and the institutional refusal to recognize dissident identities. As Junqueira (2010; 2013) argues, this violence is not always explicit, but acts systematically through silencing, the delegitimization of cultures and ways of life, and pedagogical practices that reinforce the heterosexual norm. Trans students become the targets of a pedagogy marked by insults, insinuations, exclusions and aggression, reproducing a hostile daily routine that compromises their academic and emotional development.

The contribution of the school, with its routines, rules, practices and values, to this process of normalization and heteroregulatory adjustment and the marginalization of subjects, knowledge and practices that disagree with the

heterosexual matrix is crucial. There, heterosexism and homophobia can act in a sneaky or overt way, in all its spaces (Junqueira, 2013, p. 484).

The process of devaluing the gender diversity and sexual identities of students who do not conform to cis/heteronormative norms contributes to school failure. The right to education, therefore, is not effectively guaranteed for everyone, which affects the role of schools in shaping citizens and, consequently, society. Many trans people end up staying away from school and not completing their studies because they are neither recognized nor respected. However, as Bento (2011) points out, this phenomenon should not just be seen as a “dropout”, as these people do not leave school due to lack of interest, but are often forced to leave due to discrimination and exclusion.

When reflecting on the school curriculum, we must recognize that it is intrinsically linked to the conflicts and cultural and identity tensions of the groups that make it up. The curriculum must be planned in such a way as to take into account the different cultural meanings, ensuring that everyone feels respected and valued. According to Veiga (1991, p. 83), “curriculum planning implies making educational decisions, understanding existing curricular conceptions, which involve a vision of society, education and the individual that is intended to be formed”.

In this way, the curriculum is not only a pedagogical construction, but also a reflection of the ideologies and values of dominant groups, perpetuating inequalities of gender, race, culture and others. The discussion on the cis/heteronormative curriculum is becoming increasingly relevant in the educational environment, as these cultural conflicts are not only recurrent in everyday school life, but are intensified in this space. How schools deal with cultural and identity diversity is a question that raises deep concerns and challenges.

The inclusion of trans people in schools requires an approach that goes beyond simply adapting physical spaces or curricula. Educational institutions need to understand and integrate the diversity of gender identities into their pedagogical and political practices. Only in this way will it be possible to create welcoming and respectful environments for everyone, regardless of their gender identity. Inclusive education must

be understood as an ongoing process that not only values diverse gender identities, but also implements pedagogical strategies that respect these differences. This contributes to the promotion of dignity and equal opportunities, enabling all students, including those deprived of their liberty, to access the right to education in a full and respectful way.

3 Methodology

The research is part of a broader qualitative study focusing on the perceptions of transgender students in situations of restriction and deprivation of liberty at the Santa Izabel VI Custody and Reintegration Unit, specifically on the school curriculum. The methodology followed three main stages: description of the approach, contextualization of the scenario and the participants, and data analysis.

The qualitative approach adopted followed the principles of Minayo (2014), who emphasizes the importance of understanding the meanings and perceptions of the participants. According to Martinelli (2012), this type of research seeks to understand the subjects' view of the phenomenon studied, giving voice to their experiences and interpretations. The methodology chosen for this study was Thematic Oral History, according to Meihy and Holanda (2013), which allows narratives on specific themes to be explored and provides a richer understanding of the experiences of transgender students deprived of their liberty.

The field research was carried out at the Santa Izabel VI Custody and Reintegration Unit, located in the Complexo de Americano in Santa Izabel-PA. This unit adopts an institutional policy aimed at the LGBTQIAPN+ population, offering a specific space for transvestites, transsexual women, gays and their partners. In addition, the unit has become a reference in the execution of sentences for LGBTQIAPN+ people and carries out screenings of individuals from other units, with periods that can vary from days to months, according to the participants' reports. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) under opinion No. 6,107,789, issued on June 8, 2023, and obtained authorization from the School of Penitentiary Administration (EAP) of

SEAP-PA. The ethical guidelines of Resolution No. 466/2012 (Brasil, 2012) and Resolution No. 510/2016 (Brasil, 2016) were followed, guaranteeing the anonymity of the participants and the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Ten transgender students deprived of their liberty took part in the field research, which was carried out at UCR Santa Izabel VI. The interviews were carried out over three days, with the schedule adjusted to the penal unit's routine. The collection instrument consisted of a semi-structured interview, divided into two parts: one on sociodemographic profiles and the other on educational trajectories, based on Oral History. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed in full, resulting in 23 pages. To guarantee the anonymity of the collaborators, the testimonies were coded with flower names. Data collection faced challenges, such as the lack of an adequate structure for the interviews, noise problems and a lack of privacy, as well as institutional resistance, which made it difficult to schedule interviews, recurring characteristics in research carried out in spaces of restriction and deprivation of liberty.

The data was analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA), according to Braun and Clarke (2006). During the analysis, the interview transcripts were carefully read and re-read to identify the codes present. The codes were systematized, and the following stand out: implications for schooling, lack of encouragement, routines within the penal unit, stigma, opportunities within the prison, different pedagogical practices, respect for diversity, freedom of choice and encouragement. These codes were grouped into themes, such as school inside and outside prison, work, family, social practices, health and safety. Finally, the themes were organized into two main categories, one of which focused on Obstacles and Challenges to Access to Education.

4 Results and Discussion

This analysis focuses on the educational and social challenges experienced by transgender women in prison, taking into account variables such as age, schooling and

length of imprisonment. The following characterization of the participants aims to provide a more in-depth understanding of the aspects discussed in the following subsections.

To preserve the anonymity of the collaborators, we chose to give them codenames inspired by flowers. This choice, which goes beyond a purely aesthetic dimension, is intended to evoke the complexity and uniqueness of their careers. Like flowers, which resist and flourish even in the face of bad weather, each participant carries with them a narrative marked by struggle, resilience and reinvention in the face of the adversities imposed by society and the prison institution.

The profile of the collaborators is made up of transgender women aged between 23 and 60, with different lengths of time in custody and educational experiences. The diversity in the life trajectories of these women, which includes variations in ethnicity, levels of education and periods of incarceration, makes it possible to gain a broader understanding of the challenges they face, both inside and outside the prison context. This information is detailed in Box 1.

Box 1 – Profile of the Transsexual Collaborators Interviewed

Flower	Age	Race/Color	Grade	Custody Time	Prison Education Time
Jasmine	23	Black	2nd grade	3 years	2 years
Camellia	48	Brown-skinned	9th grade	7 years	2 years
Orchid	26	White	2nd grade	8 years	2 years
Dahlia	44	Brown-skinned	3rd grade	20 years	3 years
Lily	37	White	2nd grade	4 years and 5 months	2 years
Iris	27	Brown-skinned	9th grade	2 years and 9 months	2 years
Sunflower	35	White	1st grade	4 years and 3 months	2 years
Daisy	24	White	1st grade	3 years	1 year
Lotus	33	Brown-skinned	3rd grade	4 years	1 year and 6 months
Lis	60	Brown-skinned	3rd grade	2 years and 6 months	2 years

Source: box produced by the author (2024).

This information indicates that most of the collaborators have between elementary and high school education, reflecting educational inequalities prior to

incarceration. The diversity of educational levels reflects the educational disparities that these women face within the prison system. In addition, the participants' time in custody varies considerably, which also has a direct impact on their engagement with the educational process. Women with long periods of incarceration, like Dahlia, face specific challenges related to adapting to the educational environment, while others, like Jasmine, with less time in prison, can exploit the educational opportunities available to them to a greater extent.

The participants' narratives reveal not only the socio-economic and educational obstacles that marked their trajectories, but also the limitations imposed by the lack of an inclusive school curriculum and the scarcity of public policies aimed at their needs. Several collaborators reported continuous processes of exclusion from school since childhood, aggravated by institutional resistance to their gender identity. This combination of factors deeply compromises access to an education that recognizes and respects their singularities, as Jasmine states:

"Here, where we live, we are often mistreated, whether we like it or not, by many criminal police officers, who treat us disrespectfully, even though many people don't believe that we are treated like this."

Lily reinforces this difficulty by saying: *"Often, the teachers ask the students to leave for class, but the criminal police officer himself doesn't leave because of the changes to the block, and this ends up disrupting our studies. Everything here is very difficult and complicated."*

Orchid adds: *"Sometimes there is a lot of difficulty here in jail for the police to take us to class and, because of this, we end up missing some lessons."*

The length of custody also emerges as a determining factor in the students' engagement with the educational process. Women who experience long periods of incarceration, like Dahlia and other participants, face added challenges in adapting to the rigid security protocols imposed by prisons – aspects that often have a negative impact on their educational development. Jasmine, when reflecting on the prison routine, highlights the limitations imposed by the dynamics of the prison, stating that:

[...] there are some factors that hinder our studies, such as in the school outside prison, where we have access to other materials, such as books, pointers, pens and backpacks, which can help us do research and develop our studies better; in the school here inside prison, we don't have access to anything.

Jasmine adds, emphasizing the rigidity of the procedures:

[...] here, unlike outside, we have to do what the police tell us. We enter the classroom and stay only in the classroom and in the bathroom, which is inside the classroom. We can't look back or anything, only forward, paying attention only to the teacher who is trying to teach us.

Lily emphasizes that:

Unlike outside, where people have countless opportunities, here we can't talk freely; if we speak loudly, the officers will remove us from the classroom. Here, we can't know or do anything, we're locked up.

Lastly, Dahlia reports on the humiliation of being relocated:

[...] at the school here in the prison, we are relocated by police officers. We have to obey the procedure created by SEAP, which forces us to leave with our heads down, almost touching the ground. It's all very frustrating. While outside, I put my backpack on my back, got on my bike and rode to school, waiting for the bell to ring to get in.

Her speech highlights the difficulties of adapting to the educational environment in the prison context, especially among those who face prolonged periods of imprisonment. In these situations, the disconnect between pedagogical approaches and the students' experiences becomes even more evident.

In addition to the inadequacy of the curriculum, many participants reported that the teaching materials available do not relate to their life trajectories, making it difficult to construct meaningful learning. The lack of inclusive teaching strategies exacerbates this scenario, making it impossible to offer teaching that is both effective and relevant to this population.

The resistance of educational systems to recognizing and accepting gender specificities contributes directly to the perpetuation of school exclusion. This exclusion

manifests itself in the difficulty for transgender women to fully integrate into the educational process within prison units.

Among the main obstacles identified, the stigma surrounding the gender identity of transgender students stands out as one of the most striking. Institutional prejudice – from educators, prison guards and even other people deprived of their liberty – directly interferes with the educational achievement of these women. This stigma is often reinforced by an educational system that is unprepared to deal with gender issues in a sensitive and inclusive way. The lack of specific educational policies ends up intensifying the processes of marginalization, making education in prison a space that, instead of emancipating, reproduces historical exclusions.

The scenario described, marked by institutional resistance and processes of exclusion, makes it clear that there is an urgent need to reform educational policies and pedagogical practices aimed at transgender women deprived of their liberty. Education in the prison system cannot be treated as a mere bureaucratic formality or as a privilege granted, but rather as a fundamental right that must be guaranteed in an equitable manner, respecting the diversity and singularities of each subject, regardless of their gender identity.

The absence of educational programs that take into account the specific needs of transgender women highlights the historical neglect with which this population has been treated within penal institutions. It is therefore imperative to review the educational guidelines for the prison system, taking into account the experiences, demands and trajectories of these students.

Sartori (2021, p. 11) observes that Brazilian education is still structured on homogenizing bases, supported by an elitist and conservative paradigm. This curriculum often ignores – or even denies – differences, reproducing dominant ideologies that exclude subjects considered to be dissidents. This model directly impacts transgender women, who encounter additional barriers to accessing an education that recognizes and values their identities.

The resistance of educational systems to recognizing gender specificities, coupled with insufficient teacher training to deal with issues related to gender identity, deepens the process of school exclusion. Reformulating pedagogical practices and teacher training curricula is therefore an essential step towards building a more inclusive prison education that is sensitive to gender issues and committed to the principles of social justice.

5 Conclusions

The participants' narratives reveal trajectories marked by exclusion and marginalization, both in formal education and in the prison context. The diversity of the contributors' ages, levels of schooling and length of incarceration gives uniqueness to their educational experiences, highlighting the need to consider these variables in the formulation of inclusive pedagogical policies and practices aimed at transgender students in deprivation of liberty.

The data analyzed shows that they experience a double exclusion: because they are transgender and because they are deprived of their liberty. This intersection of vulnerabilities generates a scenario of continuous marginalization, which compromises access to, permanence in and use of educational opportunities. Overcoming this reality requires public policies that not only guarantee the right to education, but also promote structural changes in mentalities and institutional practices.

Recognizing and respecting gender identities is a fundamental step towards building an equitable and emancipatory education. This requires offering pedagogical practices that are sensitive to gender issues, as well as reformulating school curricula that value diversity and combat stigmas historically reproduced by institutions.

The transformation of this panorama depends above all on the implementation of intersectional and inclusive public policies, aimed at both prison education and basic and higher education. It is imperative to rethink curricula and invest in continuing training

for educators, enabling them to deal critically and respectfully with the multiple expressions of gender identity present in the educational space.

Education, as an inalienable human right, must be guaranteed to all people, without any distinction of gender identity or condition of imprisonment. This requires an effective commitment from educational institutions and prison systems to build environments that promote respect, social justice and inclusion. Only with political and institutional commitment will it be possible to face up to inequalities and guarantee transgender students the full exercise of their right to education.

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