

Can the public policy of coping with gender violence be poetic?

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Abstract

This article has as a space for reflection the referral center, equipment to embrace women victims of domestic and family violence that provides interdisciplinary care. The general objective of this study consisted in understanding the conditions of public policy to cope with violence provided by the Maria Bonita Women's Referral Center (Centro de Referência da Mulher Maria Bonita – CRMMB) in the biennium 2017-2018. And its 2 specific objectives were: a) verifying the scope of such public policy; and b) analyzing the effectiveness of such public policy. Institutional documents from the Department of Women's Policy of Caruaru, Pernambuco, Brazil, in the biennium 2017-2018 were surveyed. In this sphere, it was found that public policy becomes poetic when deployed in an intersectoral way, since it guarantees comprehensive user's embracement. This paradigmatic approach to public policy contributes to the affirmation of women's human rights, because its focus lies on dignity of the human being.

Key words public policy; women; domestic and family violence; intersectoral articulation.

Conhecer: debate entre o público e o privado

2019, Vol. 09, nº 22

ISSN 2238-0426

DOI 10.32335/2238-0426.2019.9.22.1038

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Submitted on Feb. 11, 2019

Published on Apr. 22, 2019

Pode ser poética a política pública de enfrentamento à violência de gênero?

Resumo

Este artigo tem como espaço de reflexão o Centro de Referência, um equipamento de acolhimento às mulheres vítimas da violência doméstica e familiar que oferece atendimento interdisciplinar. Este estudo teve por objetivo geral compreender as condições das políticas públicas de enfrentamento à violência proporcionadas pelo Centro de Referência da Mulher Maria Bonita (CRMMB) no biênio 2017-2018. E seus 2 objetivos específicos foram: a) verificar qual é o alcance dessas políticas públicas; e b) analisar a eficácia dessas políticas públicas. Realizou-se levantamento dos documentos institucionais da Secretaria de Políticas para Mulheres de Caruaru-PE no biênio 2017-2018. Nesse âmbito, constatou-se que a política pública se torna poética quando implementada de forma intersetorial, pois garante o acolhimento da usuária em sua integralidade. Essa abordagem paradigmática das políticas públicas contribui para a afirmação dos direitos humanos da mulher, pois seu foco recai sobre a dignidade da pessoa humana.

Palavras-chave políticas públicas; mulheres; violência doméstica e familiar; articulação intersetorial.

¿Puede ser poética la política pública de hacer frente a la violencia de género?

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como espacio de reflexión el centro de referencia, un equipo de acogida a las mujeres víctimas de violencia doméstica y familiar que ofrece atención interdisciplinaria. El objetivo general de este estudio fue comprender las condiciones de las políticas públicas para hacer frente a la violencia proporcionadas por el Centro de Referencia de la Mujer Maria Bonita (CRMMB) en el bienio 2017-2018. Y sus 2 objetivos específicos fueron: a) verificar cuál es el alcance de estas políticas públicas; y b) analizar la eficacia de estas políticas públicas. Se realizó levantamiento de los documentos institucionales de la Secretaría de Políticas de la Mujer de Caruaru, Pernambuco, Brasil, en el bienio 2017-2018. En este ámbito, se constató que la política pública se vuelve poética cuando se implementa de forma intersectorial, pues garantiza la acogida de la usuaria en su integralidad. Este enfoque paradigmático de las políticas públicas contribuye a la afirmación de los derechos humanos de la mujer, porque se centra en la dignidad de la persona humana.

Palabras clave políticas públicas; mujeres; violencia doméstica y familiar; articulación intersectorial.

Introduction

The motivation to conduct this research on *public policies to cope with gender violence* comes from two reasons. First: one of the authors of this article was a service user in this sphere, and she is its coordinator today, and this not only relates her to the theme, but also to the effectiveness of such public policy. Second: by bringing to the surface peculiar considerations – in the poetic sense – on the services provided by the Maria Bonita Women’s Referral Center (Centro de Referência da Mulher Maria Bonita – CRMMB), she thinks that each need brings along with it a new challenge.

Thus, this article starts from an empirical research as an experience as coordinator of the CRMMB. To do so, we contextualize the territorial and political aspects of the State of Pernambuco and, consequently, the Municipality of Caruaru, since, although the research subject is an issue already worked on in other states and municipalities as required by the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006), we see that each municipality exercises autonomy in the form of constituting its coping organisms and also in the particular mode of functioning of each of them and in networking, since it depends not necessarily on the recognition of the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006), but on engagement and political commitment to the cause – that is exactly what we highlight in this study.

The general objective of this article is understanding the conditions of public policy to cope with violence provided by the CRMMB in the biennium 2017-2018, which is divided into 2 specific objectives: a) verifying the scope of such public policy; and b) analyzing the effectiveness of such public policy.

Pernambuco has 184 municipalities, added with the state district of Fernando de Noronha, totaling a population of 9.5 million people, according to the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE, 2017), however, only 27 municipalities have Referral Centers and 10 of them can rely on the tools of the coping network. Caruaru is located in the Agreste region and it has a population of 350,000 inhabitants (IBGE, 2017) – this is the most populous municipality in the countryside of Pernambuco. Although Caruaru has a Department of Women’s Policy, the Police Station Specialized in Women’s Issues (Delegacia Especial de Atendimento à Mulher – DEAM), Court on Violence against Women, and Public Defender Office, among other organizations, which we introduce below, is the fourth most violent municipality in the state.

This scenario of gender violence is an aspect of the patriarchal culture still existing in the 21st century, despite the changes made in the legislation, such as the Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil (CF, 1988). This formally acknowledges equality between men and women, but from a material perspective, the reality consists in a social pandemic, because our country has a scenario of extreme violence: Brazil ranks 5th in the world ranking of cisgender female murders, in 4th in terms of rape of vulnerable persons, and

1st in transvestite and transsexual murders (Waiselfisz, 2016). Research on this theme emphasizes that gender-based violence transcends all society sectors, regardless of social class, race, ethnic group, culture, schooling, age, or religion (Barsted, 2004; Lima, 2013-2014; Santos & Izumino, 2005).

With the advent of the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006), gender violence has come to be defined as any action or omission based on gender that causes death, injury, physical, sexual, or psychological suffering, and moral or property damage (Fernandes, 2012). Thus, the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006):

[...] creates mechanisms to curb and prevent domestic and family violence against women, pursuant to § 8 of art. 226 of the Federal Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, and other international treaties ratified by the Federative Republic of Brazil; provides for the creation of Courts on Domestic and Family Violence against Women; and establishes measures of assistance and protection to women in situations of domestic and family violence (Fernandes, 2012, p. 198, our translation).

In accordance with the guidelines of the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006), regarding the assistance and protection measures for women in situations of domestic and family violence, the referral centers were created as spaces for embracing women in situations of domestic and family violence, regulated by the Technical Standard for Uniformization of Referral Centers (Norma Técnica de Uniformização dos Centros de Referência - NTUCR) (Secretaria Especial de Políticas para as Mulheres da Presidência da República [SPM], 2006, p. 11, our translation), therefore, they are

[...] essential structures of the program to prevent and cope with violence against women, since they aim to promote the rupture of the situation of violence and the construction of citizenship through global actions and interdisciplinary assistance (psychological, social, legal, guidance, and information) to women in situations of violence. They should play the role of articulators of governmental and non-governmental organizations participating in the network of assistance to women in situations of social vulnerability, due to gender violence.

In the Agreste region of Pernambuco, the CRMMB is now a part of the Axis to Cope with Violence of the Department of Women's Policy of Caruaru, but it worked in the years

2007 and 2008 under the responsibility of the Department of Social Assistance and in 2009 it went to the Women's Department, at the time of its deployment, but the CRMMB was acknowledged only by means of a decree in 2010, through Municipal Law No. 4,927/2010. The services provided by this referral center highlight the women's human rights declared in the Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006):

[...] every woman, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, culture, educational level, age, and religion, she enjoys the fundamental rights inherent to a human being, which guarantee opportunities and easiness to live without violence, preserve her physical and mental health, as well as her moral, intellectual, and social improvement (Fernandes, 2012, p. 199, our translation).

Faced with an episode of domestic and family violence, the first step is filing a complaint in the DEAM (when it exists in the municipality); in this case, the police report filed and, depending on the criminal classification, traumatological examination (in cases of physical violence) and/or sexological (in cases of sexual violence) in the Institute of Legal Medicine (Instituto de Medicina Legal – IML) are/is requested; if it is the case of a death threat, the *shelter service* provided for by State Law No. 13,977 (Estado de Pernambuco, 2009) – the state has 4 shelter homes; in the sequence, the case goes to the Domestic Violence and Family Bar of the Court of Justice of Pernambuco (Tribunal de Justiça de Pernambuco – TJPE).

Finally, when the victim is embraced by the CRMMB, who may or may not have gone through all these instances, most of the times women are already completely discredited about the service effectiveness as public policy and, above all, feel completely helpless. This hinders the possibility of seeing beyond socio-political vulnerabilities, women only recognize themselves as victims of violence. Faced with the issues pointed above, we list the public policies to cope with them and analyze the conditions, scope, and effectiveness of such policies – always in a dialogue from the perspective of the latter's poetic constitution as beings.

Methodology

This research is characterized as qualitative, since it dealt with explorations and explanations of social realities, focusing on various world contexts and interpretations by social players (Bauer & Aarts, 2002). It is a process that allows acquiring knowledge in the field of social reality (Deluchey, 2012). Therefore, it has a relational nature, since this involves face-to-face meetings, participation, cooperation, interaction (Esteban, 2010).

From this viewpoint, Chizzotti (1998, 79) claims as a qualitative research assumption the existence of “a dynamic relation between the real world and the subject, a living interdependence between the subject and the object, an inseparable bond between the objective world and the subject’s subjectivity.” Thus, according to Melucci (2005), qualitative practices provide a redefinition of the field of social research and contribute to overcome the dualisms subject x object, reality x interpretation, and facts x interpretation – legacies of modernity. Therefore, the perspective that language plays a central role is reached, as well as that an idea is always related to specific cultures, times, and contexts. This makes it possible to see that it is not about seeking absolute results and knowledge.

In this way, the qualitative research from the viewpoint of post-structuralist studies goes beyond the idea of looking for a single truth and adopting a universal method. This is how, in an investigation, such as this, there is no ‘reality,’ but as many as people can utter, know, think, discuss, as many historical – and linguistic – realities as people can describe (Corrazza, 2007). From this perspective, the problem of research is not discovered, but engendered. It is born of these acts of rebellion and insubmission, of small revolts with constituted and accepted things, of unrest in the face of plotted truths and where we were plotted (Corrazza, 2007).

This research worked with the CRMMB in the biennium 2017-2018. According to Lüdke and André (1986), the case study is characterized not only by emphasizing knowledge on particular things, but also by grasping the context and its relations as an organic whole and its dynamics as a process, as well as by considering there is a unity in action. Thus, it is possible to depict a singular reality in a detailed and profound way, since we work by collecting data from documents written by the institution.

A written document, according to Cellard (2010), constitutes an extremely precious source for a researcher in social sciences. Lüdke and André (1986) list a number of advantages of using documents in educational research, among them: they are a reasonably stable source, which can be referred to several times; they are prepared in a certain space and time, thus providing information about their production context; they are also a non-reactive source, allowing access to information, when time and motion constraints prevent direct interaction with informants; and they are low cost.

Results and discussions

This section presents the three public policies to cope with gender violence deployed by the CRMMB in the biennium 2017-2018: technical assistance services; the reflection group “The Marias”; and the Program Maria da Penha Goes to the School. They bring along, at the same time, the points listed in the objectives, i.e. the feasibility conditions inherent to each of them, their scope (number of activities and benefited people), and, finally, their effectiveness (in their poetic form).

The results are presented in a dialogue to theoretical support, since it is possible to answer the questions raised in the objectives, going beyond the view that public policy consists only of data, numbers; this study proposes to evidence there is qualitative efficacy beyond the quantitative one, since public policy may recognize a life in that number, in a specific information there is a person who must be recognized according to her/his specificity, her/his singularity. The end of this section contains a box summarizing the objectives.

Technical assistance services

Referral centers, according to the NTUCR (SPM, 2006), are users' embracement settings for women victims of domestic and family violence and they provide psychological and social care, advice, and legal guidance; these services are aimed at overcoming the situation of violence, thus contributing, above all, to strengthen women and resuming their citizenship. As far as care services were concerned, there was a historical record for the second consecutive year, since 725 appointments were made in 2017 and in 2018, 866.

This is due to team's structural organization and the way of working, since the timetable, from Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is divided into 2 users' embracement sessions per work shift for each technique, each taking around 1 hour to 1 hour and 40 minutes (a period that may be extended in cases of female users with mental disorder or disability – because such appointments require interpreter support). Subsequently, it is necessary to fill in the compulsory notification form and the delivery of it, fortnightly, to the Health Department, a procedure standardized by the Lei n. 10.778 (2003), and finally, there are improvement of the screening sheet and referral to the coping network, in addition to preparation of a report for the specialized social assistance referral centers (centros de referência especializada de assistência social – CREAS), since there was violation of rights. The service may be provided by using a technique or resorting to a multidisciplinary team, depending on the case.

We also carried out an active search, i.e. every week we received a list of women who filed a police report on the DEAM and call each one, making them aware of the significance of the service and, if a woman wishes to be embraced by it, we already scheduled the procedure.

During these appointments, over the 2 years, we noticed there are many users' profiles that the service embraces, so, we looked at the theoretical currents on gender to find analyses able to help us grasping that subjectivity, in order to know how to adapt each service to the users' profile and how to manage overcoming the violence cycle.

There is, first, that kind of woman who does not see herself as a victim of violence, who naturalizes patriarchy up to the point of adhering to the discourse that things are just this

way and that we cannot change destiny, we cannot do anything else because, after all, such a violence also occurred to her mother, to her aunt, to her grandmother. With this profile, we try to dialogue to the gender current, named as *male domination*, as proposed by Marilena Chaui (1985), who conceives women as devoid of any and all autonomy. According to the author, violence against women is the result of an ideology that defines men's condition as superior to women's condition and naturalizes the social differentiation between gender roles, turning differences into hierarchical inequalities in order to dominate, exploit, and oppress. In turn, such hierarchical inequalities are manifested through male discourses on women, falling specifically on the women's bodies.

According to Chaui (1985, p. 43, our translation), "this is a discourse that not only talks from the 'outside' about women, but above all that it is a speech whose feasibility condition consists in women's silence," because all that was known about women stemmed from what their fathers, husbands, and children allowed to be said, therefore, it was not up to a woman to speak of how she saw herself or how she felt. Her voice was always silenced and her feelings were denied. The female subject, in this conception, is devoid of freedom, thought, feeling, and autonomous action. Women are taken as "characters without a voice, without a name" (Chaui, 1985, p. 27, our translation), thus, what existed was "a discourse on women rather than a women's discourse" (Chaui, 1985, p. 46, our translation).

Another naturalizing way we notice is that in which a woman withstands violence because she thinks that motherhood is a virtuous element and that women were made to serve the family; this profile emerges when a woman becomes the victim of her own child, something quite usual in cases involving the elderly. According to Chaui (1985), women's condition is naturalized and expressed in motherhood – which, therefore, is regarded as instinct and destiny, in a society that plans and controls birth rates, in addition to managing human reproduction and sensitivity, in a culture that devalues feeling to the detriment of thought. Here are some curious ideological constructions where the "female nature" remains as a historicized "natural rock" (Chaui, 1985, p. 38, our translation).

This current stresses that women are culturally constituted as non-autonomous subjects, as human beings at the disposal of others. And, as such (instruments of male domination), they become 'accomplices of ideology,' reproducing this dependency relationship. This promotes the permanence of women's "naturalization-culturalization-naturalization circle," where "women practice on each other the same subjectivity pattern, i.e. they see others and expect them to see themselves as human beings at the disposal of others" (Chaui, 1985, p. 46, our translation).

And this current does not address the complexity of gender violence as a phenomenon, since it focuses its analysis exclusively on male domination, as if it was a close-ended structure, without taking into account the processes of resistance, autonomy, or struggle on the part of women.

There is a user's profile that recognizes herself as the victim of an abusive relationship, but thinking that the guilt for the violence suffered is still her own, because she left the pattern of subaltern femininity, which consists in a dual relationship between man and woman where the domination of men over women must always be evidenced. That is what Saffioti (1987) names as *dual social construction process*. This implies that there is a manifest women's inferiority in counterpart to men's superiority, where there is always a dual correlate process, since there are no rich people without the poor, there are no superior people without the inferior. In this sense:

[...] the social construction of male supremacy requires the social construction of female subordination. Docile women are the counterpart of macho men. Fragile women are the counterpart of strong macho men. Emotive women are the other half of rational men. Inferior women are the other side of the coin of superior men (Saffioti, 1987, p. 29, our translation).

There is also another profile: that in which a woman recognizes herself in a situation of violence, however, she does not want to manifestly quit the relationship, because she believes to also have power over that man, resorting to other devices, such as emotional blackmail, for instance. For this profile, we find means for interpretation in Gregori (1993), through the theoretical current named as 'relational,' in which women, putting themselves in the role of 'passive victims' of their partners, end up contributing to the very perpetuation of their role as 'non-subjects.' Gregori (1993) argues that violence against women is a form of communication, albeit perverse, between spouses, in a relational game where men and women provide their practices with meaning.

According to the author,

[...] each one, in her/his own way, exposes the perversions that mobilize individuals to act in a violent manner. [...] they take the meaning of seeking pleasure, enjoyment, they are a constituent part of family's everyday life. The perversions of each character that manifest in the retributions, provocations, and criticisms do express the fact of being entangled in an intimate universe commanded by the love-hate tension (Gregori, 1993, p. 198, our translation).

And there is also the user's profile that does not fit the profiles listed above, as they do not have fixation points, or stereotype markers, as a justification of violence. For this profile, we find means in the theory proposed by Scott (1995), pointing out that gender, besides being a means to signify power relations, is a constitutive element that provides

data to grasp the complex relationships between the multiple forms of human interaction; hence, this is a category of analysis that serves as an alternative to a broader understanding of the complex meanings implied in social relations and to the perception that gender and power are reciprocally constituted, in specific historical and cultural contexts.

The political processes that are going to determine the outcome of the person who will win – political in the sense that many players and various meanings faced each other to gain control. The nature of this process, as well as that of players and actions, may only be specifically determined if situated in space and time. We can write the history of this process only if recognizing that ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are, at the same time, empty and overflowing categories; empty because they have no definitive and transcendent meaning; overflowing because even when they seem to be fixed, they contain inner alternative definitions denied or repressed (Scott, 1995, p. 28, our translation).

The theory of Scott (1995) leads us to see that gender-based violence is a socially constructed phenomenon, going through generations and institutions, and that coping with it requires willingness and ability on the part of public policy enforcers to fight for human rights. This is contextualized in the women’s care policy, within the framework of the referral center of Caruaru in a relation that needs to be understood between the protection policy for women in situations of violence and the socio-assistance policy that should be promoted by the departments dealing with social assistance in the municipality.

Taking into account that the budget of women’s policy agencies (organismos de políticas para mulheres – OPMs) comes from the Municipal Treasury, there is virtually no federal funding for these policies, so that most municipalities face severe difficulties in articulations that require quickness in cases of extreme violence against women.

Some situations – for instance, overnight stay, when there is no transition house, intermunicipal or state’s motion, when relatives live in other localities, fast food – seem to be simple, because they are usual, but they are not, therefore, the Department of Women’s Policy has no budget for this purpose. As a rule, OPMs are faced with great dilemmas in situations like these, something which is not uncommon, and often it is necessary to knock on several doors to take the measures needed and ensure safe and quick procedures, avoiding situations of revictimization or assistance that comes closer to charity or compassion than to every woman’s right to be duly assisted by the public power.

It is in this sense that, in Caruaru, the intersectoral gaze involving women’s policy and the social assistance policy has proved to be effective; both fulfill the key role of achieving dignified user’s embracement and quick response to the needs. From this perspective, it is necessary that referral technicians in spaces aimed at the assistance policy, such as

the CREAS, immediately see, when providing service to a child or a teenager in situations of threat or violation of rights, the woman/mother as subject of gender violence. In the counter-referral work, i.e. the referrals of a situation provided with care, it is needed to evaluate the context in the policy typified by the NTUCR (SPM, 2006), people seek ways to address the need posed by the situation, supporting the referral center to give comprehensive protection.

A good example of what has happened in Caruaru in this relationship between the Department of Social Development and Human Rights and the Department of Women's Policies, by means of the CRMMB, is the concrete possibility of sheltering women in situations of emergency leave from home, when the aggressor is free, and she may either stay in the adult institutional shelter along with her children or, if needed, go to a hotel in the municipality for an overnight stay. A bus ticket is also available to more distant municipalities, where official vehicles cannot go.

The CREAS service is key to allow many of these possibilities within the reach of care, the social assistance referral center (centro de referência da assistência social – CRAS) also enters as a great partner in other situations where, even without violation of rights, conditions such as extreme poverty are observed. The crucial importance of service with occasional benefits, such as the delivery of a basic food basket, the possibility that a woman is included in a social program or even enters professional courses held by the CRAS itself – in the case of Caruaru, through the Programa Qualifica.

These situations may seem ancillary in face of the complexity of the whole apparatus of articulated actions for comprehensive protection of women in situations of domestic or family violence, but, in practice, they result in an immeasurable gain for achieving positive results in the life of a woman and her family, and it is often a crucial support that saves lives and guarantees citizenship a fraternal look at the dialogue between two interconnected policies, but not always able to dialogue as they should; in dialogue, they advance and their practices deconstruct invisible walls (George, Régnie, & Lima, 2011).

The technocratic and merely bureaucratic perspective of many department managers who enforce the social assistance policy does not lead them to see that women's policy is directly related to their department, inasmuch as in both basic and special protection, social players, most of whom are not victims of profound inequalities, but that gender inequality in a country with patrimonialist and patriarchal practices proves that the most vulnerable individuals in the protection provided by the Brazilian National Social Assistance System (Sistema Único de Assistência Social – SUAS) are women.

Thus, in the absence of a budget or when it is not enough for quick intervention in women's protection policy, the resources for assistance and the public equipment of the assistance policy must also, within their specificities and observing the principle of legality, support the OPMs, from an intersectoral perspective of public policy, but, more importantly,

in this dialogue, they must materialize the idea of fraternity as a political category in the relation between the public players who should work from the perspective of promoting the common good of the community served.

Reflection group “The Marias”

This reflection group offers a space for interaction of the CRMMB users that, according to the NTUCR (SPM, 2006), the service must “deepen the preliminary diagnosis prepared by the initial care team, in order to identify the needs and issues to be addressed in the various other types of care.” The moments promoted by the Reflection Group Program strengthen the bond with the equipment and gain the confidence of the women served, besides building spaces for user’s protagonism and empowerment, promoting, above all, the exercise of citizenship and human dignity.

The reflection group has a working proposal that involves pedagogical actions aimed at comprehensive education, in partnership with institutions that address gender violence as a theme, for instance, gender centers in Higher Education institutions (HEIs), TJPE’s Embracing Testimonial Center, social movements, etc. The objective is favoring the resignification of the role taken by women victims of violence within the power relations which they are inserted in, by deconstructing discursive practices that feed back and legitimize gender violence in its symbolic, institutional, historical, and cultural aspects, allowing us to grasp and discuss the mechanisms of power relations, whether institutional or not, which put women always in a subaltern, invisibilized, and neglected condition.

From 2017 on, the reflection group was baptized as “The Marias,” because it was understood that all women were there, regardless of their names, due to the same reason: resuming human dignity. Thus, naming the reflection group as “The Marias” would have this idea of collectivity and, as an expressive narrative space, it contributes in an ethical and political way to the work of resignifying the subjectivity of women embraced by the CRMMB, since, when discussing how the identities may be constituted, with regard to the way of living, points not only the possibility of being different, but also of being an author in this process of coping with violence.

That is the way how self-care, as an ethical-philosophical and pedagogical practice, address human education as a whole – based on the concepts of freedom, autonomy, difference, singularity, and plurality –, making it possible to create new ways of living. In 2017, we had 3 meetings, with 45 women; in 2018 we had 13 meetings, with 225 women.

A characteristic of these meetings is that both the technical team and the users participate in the activities through experience practices shared by women, since, having the dynamics of transpersonal psychology as a basis, we saw that the identity discourses move between the currents introduced, because we have both personal narratives, when

telling their life stories, which at first shows up with a given and crystallized identity, and listening to another woman's life story, which has a different and fluid identity, with new possibilities to resignify identities. Thus, identity would have to do with a complex relationship between self-awareness and the representation the other has of her/himself (Launay, Régnier, & Ribas, 2011).

Through this sharing of experiences, in the reflection group, the coordinator of CRMMB also got involved in this exchange process, since she was a service user and experienced a situation of domestic and family violence, added with institutional violence and parental alienation that resulted in a court case consisting of 10 lawsuits, loss of child custody, and 2 arrest warrants. However, even in face of such a scenario, she had to be strong and resist in order to live and, at the same time, needed to grasp the ties of oppression; since then, she began to analyze *gender and gender violence* – in this process, she became a feminist militant and, in 2007, made the decision to denounce the domestic and family violence which she was involved in.

However, she realized that this struggle was not only of her own, it was collective, it was politics, because when we make the decision to fight for the recognition of our human rights, we are also talking about the recognition of all women; so, she realized this is a one-way road and that, even in face of all retributions, it was no longer possible to go back. Thus, she turned this struggle a driving principle of her life, a concern and a theme of her academic research, everything in the coexistence of a political act, starting to militate, analyze, and work on gender violence.

This is also the story of many other women!

And there is, in this movement of experience exchange, implications in the process of discussing gender violence; what drew most of our attention seeing that these movements of discussion, commitment, and reflection are not linear, much less pleasurable, hence they consist in spaces of reconstruction, almost always permeated by the traumas and pains impregnated in women's lives, generating a reciprocal process of relational conversion, where

[...] the reciprocity of an ethical action based on self-care and on the care for the other, in which the game for constructing freedom can only be played as a collective game, with mutual interactions and relationships, where the actions of some persons imply actions of other ones. A game where some individuals become free by learning about the freedom of others; in which some become free insofar as they teach freedom to others (Gallo, 2006, p. 188).

During these meetings with moments shared between women, we notice that two movements emerge concomitantly: the first is that, by means of the life story narrative, a critical awareness of the self emerges and the consequent constitution of a new identity through Jacques Derrida's deconstruction process (Louro, 2014) – according to gender research, this method leads us to put into question not only the truth, but how power works in symbols, in institutions; and the second consists in getting out of dual thinking and the strict polarized view that falls on the binomial man/woman, male/female (Oliveira, 2016).

Women, after going through the institutional procedure, arrives completely deprived of her subjectivity and immersed in State standardization techniques (Foucault, 2013). The scope of these techniques consists in controlling, silencing, regulating, domesticating, disciplining, and measuring life. Thus, they materialize in a complex engendering of structural and symbolic violence, where public policies and legal and moral procedures, among others, as standardization tools, end up legitimizing the discourse of truth, therefore, they validate not only the truths, but also the precepts and the recipes (Foucault, 1996) corresponding to women's identity itself in situations of violence.

In turn, at the second moment, women had already been embraced by the CRMMB and participated in the reflection group, perceiving herself at the border where she is going to be able to negotiate this transition of new identities and singularities that emerge by listening to the narratives; women recognize themselves as perpetrators of their lives, by becoming aware of themselves and the others. According to Ferreira (2011), this folding movement allows us to perceive the limits and, at the same time, to overcome dualistic views, opening up the infinite possibilities of new kinds of learning, leading us to expand potentials in order to increasingly use people's ability to exercise autonomy, discretion, and responsibility towards themselves and others to achieve an understanding of being-in-the-world.

Within this approach, we present two cases in which we notice such an incorporation of new possibilities of being-in-the-world.

The first case is a woman who got pregnant in her teen years, she had two children and her father expelled her from home after discovering that the father of these children was a married man; she suffered moral, psychological, physical, and patrimonial violence, as if domestic and family violence on the part of her own father was not enough – and, concomitantly, she lost her children's custody and the right to visit them, because her father denounced his daughter to the Guardianship Council, claiming mistreatment. This young woman, doubly victimized, had nothing to believe in anymore, as no one believed her version. This put her in a self-torturer position, since she herself fed the discourse of violence.

At the time she was embraced by the CRMMB, this woman was invited to participate in the reflection group and, during the judicial battle to regain their children's custody and

reorganize her life, she managed to experience the empowerment process, as, by becoming aware of her vulnerabilities and the way how to cope with them, she saw herself an author in this struggle, without necessarily being and feeling victimized again. Thus, that was, according to Ferreira (2011), a process of understanding that had her own experience as a basis, implying reflection, looking at herself.

The second case is a mother of 4 children who goes through a post-shelter situation in Caruaru and, when embraced by the CRMMB, she was also invited to participate in the reflection group; under a condition of extreme social vulnerability, unemployed (she was left without electric power and without gas for 2 weeks), this woman embodied an attitude of extreme courage by allowing herself not to be defined by violence, much less by social vulnerability. She expressed the wish to participate in external activities held by the Department of Women's Policies and became known and renowned as an artisan; for the first time in the municipality, a woman who is a victim competed for the position of counselor and she was the second most voted in the election held on December 15, 2017 at the City Council of Caruaru.

Since then, this service user makes the articulation that proves necessary to be able to appropriate discourse no longer as a victimized person; on the contrary: now in the making of a subversive discourse, she names it beautifully using these words:

Now I have a new life!

We saw, in this protagonism and empowerment process, a position of looking at oneself, which Gelamo (2007) sees as an act of insistence to solve the problem, thus acts of resistance and autonomy emerge.

We observe in these subjectivation processes that all elements of the human constitution participate, there is an interrelation between the psychological, the corporal, and the discursive fields, where they are combined in the movement of advances, retreats, consents, revolts, and alliances. Thus, according to Sales (2014), the processes to articulate the elements of discourse operate in a field crossed by antagonistic articulatory projects, hegemonic practices in which the articulation/disarticulation of practices and social roles occurs, in view of the constitution of various social identities, which are subject to these articulatory practices, not being intrinsically or integrally acquired, but definitely constituted.

The Program Maria da Penha Goes to the School

Caruaru was the pioneering municipality in Brazil in terms of deploying a preventive and educational campaign, in accordance with the provision of section V of Article 8 of the

Maria da Penha Law (Lei n. 11.340, 2006), which regulates:

The public policy that aims to curb domestic and family violence against women is going to be made through an articulated set of actions taken by the Union, the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities and non-governmental actions, with the following guidelines: *V – the promotion and implementation of educational campaigns to prevent domestic and family violence against women, aimed at the school community and society as a whole, and the dissemination of this Law and the instruments for protecting women’s human rights* (Fernandes, 2012, p. 202, our emphasis, our translation).

Thus, the first municipality to deploy the project in Pernambuco was Caruaru, in 2009. Based on this experience and the socialization of its results, the Women’s Department of the State of Pernambuco decided to implement the project in other municipalities, like Recife and Garanhuns, which are also already working with such a public policy. Due to the recognition of the importance of the issue, there came the publication of the Decreto Estadual n. 40.317 (2014), which established the Pernambuco’s Committee to Support Gender Education (Comitê Pernambucano de Apoio à Formação em Gênero) and regulated, in its Article 2, the insertion of the subject on gender in the High School curriculum, as well as the provision of university outreach and specialization courses on themes related to women, for education, public security, and health practitioners, based on agreements established with the Federal University of Pernambuco (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – UFPE), the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – FUNDAJ), the Ministry of Health, and the University of Pernambuco (Universidade de Pernambuco – UPE).

Given the above, Caruaru, changed the status from project to program, through the Decreto Municipal n. 035 (Município de Caruaru, 2016), which instituted the Program Maria da Penha Goes to the School. Thus, after almost a decade deploying the Project Maria da Penha Goes to the School, the current program shows up in a peculiar way, because it depends on the partnership with the Department of Education so that its activities are put into practice. This scenario was the theme of the MA thesis in Contemporary Education written by Karinny Oliveira (2016), current coordinator of the CRMMB, which addressed the whole project/program’s history from 2009 to 2015, analyzing the speeches delivered by authorized players, the students’ conditions and embracement.

The results of Oliveira (2016) indicate that from the beginning, in 2009, there was no continued, linear, and consensual process – on the contrary, a permanent search for the recognition of gender public policies was observed within the school domain, even generating conflicts of competence. The results show that the public policy of coping with gender violence has a break with traditional types of social order, where a public agenda

emerges from the articulation of various political forces, in the State sphere, in organized civil society, and at the school (Oliveira, 2016).

The results also point out different views regarding the *discourse on coping with gender violence*, allowing the development of educational actions that promote gender equity in education and the construction of an inclusive school system, facing discrimination against women, above all by opposing the construction and implementation of that agenda; other political forces articulated around the discourse on 'gender ideology,' seeking, by action or omission, to make the agenda of the project at stake unviable or restricted (Oliveira, 2016).

In turn, in this article, we address the Program Maria da Penha Goes to the School in the biennium 2017-2018, when it was resumed by offering weekly activities through an intersectoral partnership with the Department of Education and HEIs. In 2017, 9 schools were covered, reaching 860 students; and in 2018, 28 schools were covered, reaching 2,507 students, with a total of 3,367 students in this biennium.

The pedagogical activities revolve around the dissemination of instruments to denounce and embrace, as well as activities that promote reflections and discussions in the patriarchal culture; therefore, they promote the process to deconstruct the stereotyped roles assigned to men and women. Louro (2014) draws attention to the fact that discussing the constitution of dichotomies means demonstrating that between men and women there are not only differences that separate them, but a unity. According to the author, "each one actually supposes and contains the other, evidencing that each pole is not one, but plural, showing that each pole is, internally, fractured and divided" (Louro, 2014, p. 35).

Understanding the effectiveness of this public policy implies observing growth in the service's demand and offer, since each activity carried out at schools informative folders are provided, which leading each activity to generate several effects based on monitoring and visits in the face of each school's needs. This public policy is also carried out in partnership with the CREAS linked to the Department of Social Development and Human Rights (Secretaria de Desenvolvimento Social e Direitos Humanos - SDSDH), as the beneficiary students are aged under 18 years.

In the biennium 2017-2018, the Program Maria da Penha Goes to the School showed a 283% increase in comparison to the year 2016, because in the latter there were only 3 activities, precisely due to the refusal of an intersectoral partnership in the Department of Education of the municipality. Therefore, effectiveness becomes the very paradigmatic change in the school's curricular culture, since the themes *gender equality, non-sexist education, instruments and organizations for women's protection, Maria da Penha Law*, etc. not only started being discussed in the classroom, but, above all, start being embodied and recognized as human rights by the students, who recognize dignity and citizenship in human rights.

According to Oliveira (2016), the discussions about women should be politicized and institutionalized up to the point of promoting education/guidance among all the players involved, inside and outside the school, so that we can really understand the complexity of violence as a phenomenon, a public policy issue.

Box 1 summarizes the public policies to cope with gender violence and their respective goals, among them: identifying the feasibility conditions of public policies, as well as the scope, the beneficiaries, and, above all, to indicating their effectiveness in the poetic context of being.

Box 1 – Public policies to cope with gender violence

| Public policies | Feasibility conditions of public policies | What is the scope and who are the people benefited | Which is the effectiveness? |
|--|---|---|---|
| Technical care services | Team's structural organization and how it works, because the service hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with 2 appointments scheduled per shift. | 2017 - 725 appointments provided; 2018 - 866 appointments provided. | Second consecutive year with record number of appointments, this means not only that the service is sought by new women, but also that the service achieved their trust and permanence. |
| Reflection group "The Marias" | Biweekly activities that involve pedagogical actions for comprehensive education, in partnership with institutions that address the theme gender violence. | 2017 - 3 meetings, 25 women beneficiaries; 2018 - 13 meetings, 225 women beneficiaries. | Permanent movement of protagonism and empowerment of women embraced by the service. |
| Maria da Penha Goes to the School | Weekly activities through an intersectoral partnership with the Department of Education and Higher Education institutions. | 2017 - 9 schools covered, 860 beneficiary students; 2018 - 28 schools covered, 2.507 beneficiary students. | 283% increase in comparison to 2016; paradigmatic change in the curricular culture. |

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Conclusions

In this research, we observed that the public policy conditions to cope with gender violence emerge in many intersectional ways and care modalities, which are always determined not only by the existence of a law that regulates them, but above all by the political context of their managers and commitment to the cause.

The results point out that it is possible to offer a poetic public policy, since the scope is not only the quantitative aspect of approach, but the qualitative aspect of public policy, since declaring women's human rights does not solve the issue of violence, much less promotes women's emancipation; nevertheless, there is a need to promote through the exercise of citizenship an intervention process in a pedagogical action that covers women's direct participation, so that protagonism leads them to a self-making process and they can not only discuss, but deconstruct the discursive practices that feed back and legitimize gender violence, identifying, even partially, the mechanisms to articulate and put into question these meanings that permeate the domestic and family violence scenario, especially the way how women see themselves implied in this process.

The results point out the growth of public policies, reaching for the second consecutive year a historical record in the number of services offered, and also show the productive diversity of users' experiences, each one in her/his time, each one in her/his protagonism and empowerment process, because to discuss her/his destiny in the present time and to bring it up to the level of contemporary challenges do constitute a mode of political resistance to the formalization of what exists and the instrumentalization of culture, presuming the assumption of an ethical attitude towards life which, concomitantly, presupposes a certain change of oneself.

This research pointed out that there is efficacy in the public policy provided when we observe that, even in situations of violence, when women participate in activities and perceive themselves in this process of new ways of life, they show, albeit shyly, a mode of resistance, although weak, contingent, and provisional, but emerging in this self-care movement, a process that we see as a manifestation of power, subverting the given order.

We have seen, herein, that the CRMMB service, as a space for embracing and strengthening women in situations of violence, contributes in an ethical and political way to work on resignifying the subjectivity of embraced women, since, when discussing the ways to constitute identities, with regard to the way of living, points not only our possibility of being different, but also of becoming authors in this process of coping with violence. This is how the practice of poetic public policy, which recognizes every woman in her specificity, shows itself as the possibility of creating new ways of life, giving rise to an indispensable tool for comprehensive human education.

Finally, this study indicates that the public policy of coping with gender violence must be built in an intersectoral way, aiming to reach women in a comprehensive manner, thus, we think there is no single agency responsible, a public policy must be regarded as a co-responsibility, otherwise it is conceived in strict and non-dialogued parts, something which would certainly decrease the State's responsibility and, worse, reproduce the rationale of personalization and depoliticization.

The idea of a public policy that is poetic, seeing that an environment with strengthening of bonds, empowerment, sonority, listening, sharing, and intervention led by the public power, through the CRMMB, breaks with the bureaucratic relationship, often devised by state institutions, and it embraces and intervenes by having collective needs as a basis, thus relying on a leading role taken both by the team within the network and by the women served.

Thus, we provide moments with a poetic sense of intervention, emancipation, resignification, and growth – during which users and the team notice improvement in the individuality of each case, in the horizontality of the paths chosen, in overcoming the verticality of public policies that, although often inclusive, are built ‘for women,’ but ‘without women.’ Even though their scope is collective, each woman is a unique being and her pain – even if similar to that of other women – is unique.

Respect for the human being, within a collective project, which is based on the unique condition of each individual, according to her uniqueness and the peculiarity of her pain, on the team’s constitution and awareness in terms of seeing itself as a part of the solution and regarding a user as the other half of it, leads us to move towards the affirmation of women’s human rights, continually linked to observing their dignity, their status as members of the community of human beings, and denying this condition implies a violation of the rights of each of us. Poetry occurs when we realize that by means of each woman who walks free and emancipated, empowered due to her gaze focused on her pain and resistance, we grow as a team, and even more as human beings also undergoing this model of society still grounded in women’s domination and submission.

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How to cite this article:

ABNT

OLIVEIRA, K. L.; JORDÃO, M. P. S. D.; BARROS, A. M.; SILVA, J. G. A. Can the public policy of coping with gender violence be poetic? *Conhecer: Debate entre o Público e o Privado*, n. 22, p. 21-43, 2019.

APA

Oliveira, K. L., Jordão, M. P. S. D., Barros, A. M., & Silva, J. G. A. (2019). Can the public policy of coping with gender violence be poetic? *Conhecer: Debate entre o Público e o Privado*, 22, 21-43.

Vancouver

Oliveira KL, Jordão MP, Barros AM, Silva JGA. Can the public policy of coping with gender violence be poetic? *Conhecer: Debate entre o Público e o Privado* [Internet]. 2019 [cited Apr 4, 2019];(22):21-43. Available from: <https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revistaconhecer/article/view/1038>