SEÇÃO: ARTIGO

Violence for women experiencing homelessness

A violência para mulheres em situação de rua
Violencia para las mujeres en situación de calle

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Abstract: There is a high likelihood that women experiencing homelessness will suffer rights violations. Therefore, this study sought to understand how women experiencing homelessness perceive violence in this space and what coping strategies they adopt. This is a qualitative study in which semi-structured interviews were conducted in the street with 17 women experiencing homelessness, over 18 years of age, in the Greater Florianópolis region. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The results showed life stories permeated by violent situations, which negatively affect the women's lives, and that they used different coping strategies. Furthermore, there were reflections from the interviewees about the differences in experiences between men and women in homeless situations. However, some women sought to deconstruct the stereotypes of fragility of women.
Keywords: violence, women, people experiencing homelessness

Resumo: A probabilidade de que mulheres em situação de rua sofram violações de direitos, é grande. Nesse sentido, esta pesquisa buscou compreender como as mulheres em situação de rua percebem a violência nesse espaço e quais estratégias de enfrentamento adotam. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo no qual foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas nas ruas, com 17 mulheres em situação de rua, maiores de 18 anos, na região da Grande Florianópolis. Os dados foram analisados por meio de análise de conteúdo. Os resultados apontaram histórias de vida permeadas por situações violentas, que repercutem negativamente em suas vidas, sendo por elas utilizadas diferentes estratégias de enfrentamentos. Ademais, houve reflexões das entrevistadas sobre as diferenças das vivências entre homens e mulheres em situação de rua. Contudo, algumas mulheres buscaram desconstruir os estereótipos de fragilidade da mulher.
Palavras-chave: violência, mulheres, pessoas em situação de rua

Resumen: La probabilidade de que las mujeres sin hogar experimenten violaciones de derechos es alta. En este sentido, esta investigación buscó comprender cómo las mujeres sin hogar perciben la violência en este espacio y qué estratégias de afrontamiento adoptan. Este es un estúdio cualitativo en el que se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas en las ruas, con 17 mujeres sin hogar, mayores de 18 años en la Gran Florianópolis. Los datos fueron analizados por análises de contenido. Los resultados mostraron historias de vida impregnadas de situaciones violentas, que impactan negativamente en sus vidas, utilizando diferentes estratégias de afrontamiento. Además, los entrevistados reflexionaron sobre las diferencias en las experiências entre hombres y mujeres em situaciones de personas sin hogar. Sin embargo, algunas mujeres buscaron deconstruir los estereótipos de fragilidad de las mujeres.
Palabras clave: violencia, mujeres, personas en situación de calle

Although in Brazil the estimated number of women experiencing homelessness is lower when compared to men (Brasil, 2008; Fundação Instituto de Ciências Econômicas, 2015), the probability of suffering violen-

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ce and violation of social rights becomes greater due to gender inequality that makes them more vulnerable in this context (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015). Violence is understood as any intentional action by an individual, group or institution directed at another that may cause impairment or harm (Minayo & Souza, 1998).

The population experiencing homelessness exists and lives daily with violence in a violent country (Giacomozzi et al., 2020; Giacomozzi et al. 2021; Vitali et al., 2022). In addition to the vulnerabilities related to the social class associated with homelessness, there are a number of social markers that intersect and produce different experiences in this context. Studies by the black lawyer and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw (2004) highlighted the need to understand oppression based on intersectionality, considering that categories such as race/ethnicity, class and gender multiply the oppressive systems. Therefore, when considering violence against people experiencing homelessness, it is necessary to take into account the fact that it happens differently for women and men and that it is aggravated by intersectional factors (Monteiro & Almeida, 2015; Rosa & Bretas, 2015).

The oppressions that fall on women in this condition range from the difficulty of maintaining basic hygiene during the menstrual period (Monteiro & Almeida, 2015), through pregnancy on the streets and the possible loss of custody of the child who has just been born (Bezerra, 2018), culminating in direct violence, whether physical or sexual, perpetrated by men from their groups, from rival groups or from the State (Rosa & Bretas, 2015). In the survey conducted by Monteiro and Almeida (2015), the participants reported using drugs continuously to avoid sleeping, as this reduced the risks of rape and aggression. In Bezerra's research (2018), there is a measure of the cases analyzed, the lack of public policies directed at women. Because they are a minority on the streets, vacancies in hostels as well as other initiatives tend to be aimed at men. In a recent survey carried out by IPEA, it can be observed that in March 2020 the street population consisted of 221,869 people (Natalino, 2020), however, the results of the survey are not analyzed based on sex / gender difference. In the national survey on the homeless population (2009), it was possible to arrive at more accurate data. That year women accounted for 18%. Considering the research region, in 2017, the Florianópolis region Community Institute - ICOM developed and disseminated the "Participatory Social Diagnosis of the Homeless Population in Florianópolis region". In this, it was found that 77.8% of respondents were men. Frizzo (2018) also found in his research the disparity in the number of homeless men and women in Florianópolis.

Biscotto et al. (2016) stated that violence is a phenomenon present in the daily lives of women experiencing homelessness that is linked to drugs or intolerant attitudes, as well as to risks due to their historical context. In this direction, Rosa and Brêtas (2015) indicated that the majority of violence experienced was practiced by intolerant groups; by people experiencing homelessness themselves due to drug debts, theft, space and marital fights; by police officers; by people hired by shop keepers or residents who wanted to clean up the place; and by men, whether homeless or not, practicing sexual violence, causing physical and psychological damage (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015). From this, it appears that women experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer all types of violence. This is due to the implication of gender issues (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015). In the present study, considering this analytical marker, a Butlerian perspective was adopted, which considers gender to be a social performance, a set of acts produced and repeated within a highly rigid social structure that crystallizes in time and assumes a position of truth and apparent fixity, as if it were naturalized and always performed in the same way (Butler, 2015). Gender performances are governed by the social norm, which is not universal, but changes with the context. Accordingly, violence against women experiencing homelessness can be highlighted as an effect of a transgression of the norm, since they no longer occupy the home sphere traditionally expected of them, but inhabit the streets, a space mostly occupied by men.

Although it is not possible to state that homes are protective spaces for women, as more than 50% of female murders occur in these spaces (Waiselfisz, 2015), homelessness multiplies gender oppressions in the necropolitical context in which these subjects are submerged. This scenario puts their very existence at risk because, in addition to failing to meet the expectation that social norms impose on them, they are considered disposable for the functioning of the capitalist society. This drives them into situations where they have to face hunger, deprivation of rights, and exposure to disease, violence and even death (Butler, 2018). From this, the present study sought to comprehend how women experiencing homelessness perceive violence in the street context and what strategies they use to deal with it.

Method

Study design

This was a field study with a qualitative approach, as the intention was to comprehend a social group (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2009). The design was cross-sectional, considering that the data collection occurred at a certain chronological time (Richardson, 2009).

Participants

The research was carried out with 17 women experiencing homelessness. Inclusion criteria defined as being women over 18 years of age and occupants of the Florianópolis region of Santa Catarina state, Brazil. All the women interviewed were cisgender and, although this was not a criterion of the study, no transgender women were interviewed.

Instruments

As the data collection instrument, a semi-structured interview script was used. A socio-demographic instrument was also applied to characterize the participants' profile based on the questions: age, length of homelessness, place of birth, where they normally sleep, whether they have companions and/or children, education, whether they work, whether they have any health issues, whether they use alcohol or illicit drugs and whether they attend any public service.

Data collection and ethical procedures

The present study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (authorization number 2.572.261) and started after receiving approval. The participants were accessed by approaching them directly in the street. The snowball sampling technique was used, where one interviewed participant indicated another and so on (Flick, 2009). The women were invited to voluntarily participate in the study. The interviews took place in the streets and during a meeting, with different duration times due to interference caused by the environment. First the objectives were explained and presented, then the participants were asked to sign a consent form.

Data analyses

The interviews were transcribed and, for the analysis, the categorical content analysis technique was used, which breaks down the general content and groups the categories according to common elements (Bardin, 2017). Content analysis refers to a thorough work, started with free-floating reading and identification of core meanings, which were coded and grouped into general categories. For this, the study was presented in categories, subcategories and elements of analysis constructed a posteriori.

Results and discussion

The study included 17 women, among whom, seven had been experiencing homelessness for less than three years, four for three to ten years and six that were experiencing periods of homelessness interspersed with periods in housing. The mean length of homelessness was 30 months. Regarding age, eight were 18 to 30 years and nine 31 to 54 years, with a mean age of 31 years and 6 months (*SD*: 9 years and 8 months). Among the

participants, 11 were from southern Brazil, three from other states, two from indigenous communities, and one from another country (Chile). In relation to education, 10 reported incomplete elementary education, two complete high school education, two incomplete higher education, one complete elementary education, one incomplete high school education and one reported having technical education.

Among the participants, 14 reported having a partner. In addition, nine claimed to have children, with none of them maintaining custody. Regarding health issues, 10 said they had no physical or mental health problems, four had physical problems and three said they had psychological issues. Considering the use of alcohol and other drugs: seven reported using marijuana, four reported not using any substance, two reported using alcohol, two using cocaine, one using everything (alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and crack), and one using crack. Among those that used alcohol and other drugs, 11 said they used them every day and two twice a week. Regarding access to the public service network, seven accessed social welfare, five access both welfare and healthcare, 4 did not use any service and one only used the healthcare service. In addition, only one of the women claimed to participate in the National Movement of People that are Homeless (*Movimento Nacional da População em Situação de Rua* - MNPR).

Among the characterization results, we highlight the high number of migrants from different regions, possibly due to the discourse of quality of life that the region can provide (Campos, 2016). A low level of education also appeared, which is often an effect of social inequality. These markers are important categories of social exclusion. According to Scott (1999), the positions occupied by men and women and the way the experience produces these bodies is the result of material and social organization and not just a product of the economic class they occupy. Therefore, as considered by Nogueira (2017), identity, rather than being a collection of traits, is a construction of institutional, political and social structures. In the case of women experiencing homelessness,

the gender analytic marker, multiplied by the migratory situation and the low levels of education, potentiates an identity that is doomed to exclusion.

In addition, a high number of women had a partner, which is considered by many to be a protective factor, despite the domestic violence perpetuated (Machado, 2016). On the other hand, Rosa and Brêtas (2015) observed that even when women seek a refuge from violence in their partners, they become hostage to conjugal violence and threats when they try to breakup. Violation of the right to motherhood was also part of their experiences. Siqueira et al. (2018) showed that many women lose legal custody of their children as a result of their homeless situation. Bezerra (2018) argues that the State operates by criminalizing motherhood on the streets, failing to fulfill its duty to protect families. In this way government policies act against the guarantee of rights, placing the responsibility for the misery on the mother and absent herself from the management of this social problem.

There is also the frequent use of psychoactive substances which, according to Monteiro and Almeida (2015), is imbricated in the homeless life. Finally, there was low association with social movements, which according to Schuck (2017) is an issue that has been discussed within the MNPR, due to the importance of its representativeness. The non-representativeness of these women positions them in what Nogueira (2017) calls intersectional invisibility. The subordinate positions they occupy in various categories of analysis, in many cases, make their experiences invisible.

For the process of organization of results and analysis, and from the content of the semi-structured interviews, four categories of analysis were constructed: 1) Perceptions of violence; 2) Causal attributes; 3) Impacts of violence; and 4) Coping strategies. Each category consists of subcategories, which are composed of thematic units, and the number of participants who verbalized each thematic unit shown in Table 1, and presented in detail below. These units portray a set of meanings based on the content of the

interviews. The compilation of larger themes into subcategories helps the comprehension of the

analysis categories and the study objectives.

Table 1 – Result of the categorical analysis of the data

Category	Subcategory	Analysis elements
Perceptions of violence	How violence occurs	Physical violence (n=16)
		Psychological violence (n=10)
		Sexual violence (n=5)
	Authors of violence	Police apparatus (n=6)
		Institutional (n=2)
		Population in general (n=2)
		Other people experiencing homelessness (n=6)
	Social contexts	Inequalities (n=3)
		Prejudices (n=4)
		Gender inequality (n=3)
Causal attributes	Use of alcohol and other drugs	Mood changes (n=3)
		Thefts and conflicts (n=6)
		Personality (n=4)
	Personal aspects of comprehension	Acting wrong (n=4)
	Interpersonal conflicts	Intrafamily violence (n=3)
		"Bad" friendships (n=3)
		Rules of street living (n=2)
		Violence generates violence (n=9)
Impacts of violence	Mental health	Psychic suffering (n=4)
	Associated feelings	Fear (n=5)
		Hopelessness (n=3)
		Distrust in others (n=6)
Coping	Social relationships	Having an intimate partner (n=2)
		Having friends on the street (n=2)
		Talking (n=7)
	Violence	Aggression toward others (n=5)
	Avoidance situations	Isolation (n=5)
		Escape (n=2)
		Delegation to religious belief (n=2)
	Use of alcohol and other drugs	Alcohol and other drug use practices (n=9)
	Problem solving	Practical actions (n=7)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Perceptions of violence

The first category, called "Perceptions of Violence", comprises everything that refers to the perceptions of violence in general, violence in the homeless situation and daily life experiences for

women that are homeless. In the present study, perceptions of violence are understood as "how violence occurs", "perpetrators of violence" and "social contexts".

The subcategory "How the violence occurs" was cited through means of "physical violence", as in the excerpt: "once three of them got me, they hit me on the head, they knocked me out" (29 years old, 8 years homeless); "symbolic/psychological violence": "to violate your feelings, saying a word" (18 years of age, 6 months homeless); and "sexual violence": "a woman is at risk of rape" (31 years old, 15 days homeless). In these units, the women experiencing homelessness reported different types of violence suffered on the street.

The types of violence experienced and perceived by the participants in the street spaces meet the findings of Nonato and Raiol (2016) and Resende (2016), who reported that the population experiencing homelessness suffers from the symbolic violence of their representation through indifference to inhuman homicides, such as burning people while they are sleeping, beatings, poisonings, sexual abuse and humiliation, among others. Judith Butler (2018) attributed the neglect of these lives to the transgression of social norms that give intelligibility for a body to be considered a life. Thus, people experiencing homelessness are no longer considered alive and their deaths and suffering are not considered worthy of mourning.

Concerning the case of women experiencing homelessness, there is even greater vulnerability (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015). The higher incidence of violence on female bodies is largely due to the gendered performances expected by men and women in our society. Sociologist Raewyn Connell highlighted that risky behaviors, dominance of the public space and violence are actions generally related to a male performance (Connell & Messerchmidt, 2013). Women experiencing homelessness, besides occupying a traditionally male space (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015), are subject to the reiteration of masculinity norms through men's violent behaviors, making them even more vulnerable in this condition.

The subcategory called "Authors of violence" was listed in the units of analysis: "Police apparatus" as in the excerpts "Violence is the police. They come with their rude way and if you take too long to answer, you get slapped" (28 years old, interspersed moments homeless and housed); "Institutional": "violence is the person who gets sick and does not have good care. I've heard it in the hospital: wait, because you're a homeless person" (38 years old, 1 week homeless); "of the general population": "we sleep on the street, you have to be careful not to annoy people" (39 years old, interspersed moments homeless and housed); and from "other street people" in: "homeless people themselves, they start beating each other, fighting" (18 years old, 6 months homeless).

Regarding police violence, the results corroborate a study by Campos (2016) which points out that the police apparatus is one of the main killers of people experiencing homelessness, reporting situations of physical and verbal violence for any situation, in order to "clean up" public places. Considering Foucault's studies (2018a, 2018b), for the state to have power over bodies it needs their docility for their forces to be used for economic production. People experiencing homelessness violate the rules and can therefore be eliminated. For this, the state uses the police apparatus as an instrument of power. Furthermore, feminist criminology emphasizes that when it comes to women, the violence is twofold: sexist, simply because they are women; and, when the woman is the subject of the offense, there is an aggravation of the forms of punishment due to her gender.

Regarding "institutional" violence, the results are in line with studies that highlight the responsibility of the public power that frequently violates human rights and elaborates insufficient and inefficient public policies. In addition, state interventions often aim to "clean up" the streets and hide inequalities, demonstrating their imposing character (Andrade et al., 2014; Kunz, 2012; Nonato & Raiol, 2016). Lemões (2017) also highlighted the naturalization of the extermination, fueled by biopolitical criminality in the ways of "making live" and "letting die", for the massacres associated with the state policies (Vitali et al., 2021).

The violence perpetrated by the "general population" was mainly perceived by the participants as discrimination. In this sense, Borges

and Almeida (2017) affirm that pejorative social representations about the population experiencing homelessness are materialized in social relations, sustaining actions that include indifference, revulsion, physical violence, and even homicides. Furthermore, Resende (2016) stated that people on the street are rarely heard, also violating them in the epistemic sense, according to Spivak (2010), since they have no voice in their own representation. This is compounded by the fact that gender performances further obscure the voices of women experiencing homelessness, as the violations of rights and oppression suffered by women are different from those suffered by men. In addition, people experiencing homelessness can also relate through violent actions, as indicated by the participants. In Butlerian terms, it can be considered that violence is used in the streets by the subjects as a way of facing aversive situations. In this sense, Huey (2016) believes that it is necessary to contextualize these relationships, since there is a tendency to ignore the structural and cultural characteristics that make violence a viable solution to confront, survive and proactively avoid victimization. The invisibility of this type of violence is an effect of what Butler (2015) calls normative violence. The Butlerian concept refers to the violence instituted in the performatization of the norm that authorizes secondary violence and naturalizes it, making it constitutive of living on the street and influencing the group relations.

The subcategory "Social contexts" expressed the units of analysis "Inequalities", with the example: "who has the most money is the least helpful, he stays closed in his square meter and looks down and not at the other who could never study" (38 years old, 1 week homeless); "Prejudices" as in: "people look at you differently, with a prejudiced look, they judge you without knowing why you are there, you are marginalized. Homeless person is a title, they do not know the history of each person" (38 years old, 1 week homeless); and, "Gender differences": "A woman has to take look after herself twice (...) because we can end up dead because the guys end up

killing the women" (31 years, 15 days homeless). Regarding the inequalities mentioned, Silva and Ramos (2019) argue that the street situation is disqualified daily, but almost never understood as a social environment constructed by capital. With this, the population experiencing homelessness is blamed for their own misery. However, this situation is not only the result of the absence of material goods, but the lack of public policies, rights and opportunities offered by the state, the market and society. With this, we can see in the statements a comprehension of the inequalities and lack of opportunities experienced by the participants throughout their lives.

The subcategory "social contexts" also reflects gender inequalities. When the participant says 'homelessness is a title' and considers the universalization of this category as if everyone suffers the same oppression, it can be noticed that the particularities of the subjects are not considered, which further hides the situation of women in this space. Beiras et al. (2012) attribute the greater vulnerability of women to the way they are socialized, which reinforces a passive performance. Coupled with this, there is a male socialization aimed at confrontation and aggressive behaviors that adds to the differences in physical force and contributes to women having the effects of violence on their bodies. The participants also shared stories of prejudice and discrimination experienced. In this sense, Nonato and Raiol (2016) stated that society has negative representations of women experiencing homelessness, causing prejudice and legitimizing discriminatory and violent practices. Therefore, gender inequalities are perceived to be of great relevance to the violence suffered by this group. Consequently, some researches present the experience of women experiencing homelessness, which is distinct from the violence suffered by men (Hsieh, 2016; Johnson et al., 2017; Rosario, 2015). According to Rosario (2015), the process of exclusion of a woman experiencing homelessness is associated with what she represents socially, in a subordinate identity, marked by a trajectory of violence.

Causal attributes

The second category, called "Causal attributes", is composed of the causes that lead to the occurrence of violence suggested by the participants. In this study, the participants emphasized that violence occurs through different influences, such as the "use of alcohol and other drugs", the "personal aspects of comprehension", and from "interpersonal conflicts".

The subcategory "Use of alcohol and other drugs" was cited through "mood swings", for example in the following excerpts: "I always see some people punching each other in the face, but they are all drunk. They drink and get out of control" (20 years old, interspersed moments homeless and housed); and "Theft and conflicts": "like rocks, you smoke one here and soon you want more and you have nowhere else to take it and you go there and rob your colleague" (28 years old, interspersed moments homeless and housed).

In this direction, Heerde and Hemphill (2014) found that the types of physically violent behavior and physical victimization experienced by youths that are homeless were generally associated with increased use of psychoactive substances. Beyond this relationship, it is perceived that a reproduction of the dominant representation is possible. According to Fiorati et al. (2015), in the social imagination psychoactive substance use is associated with violence, which strengthens stigmatization. The logic of harm reduction in this sense is essential as it comprehends the use of alcohol and other drugs through non-pathologization or moralization of the experience of use (Oliveira et al., 2015).

The subcategory "Personal aspects of comprehension" was listed by means of "Personality", as for example in the excerpts: "violence is not having pity, being bad, violent" (39 years old, homeless moments/ housed); and "Acting wrong": "Always do the right thing. We, doing the right thing, are already harassed. Imagine if you do something wrong!" (28 years old, homeless/housed). According to Porto (2015), to understand violence there is always the risk of attributing individual explanations to something that is socially produced. Personal issues should be considered, however, do not explain social phenomena. Violence should be understood as a multicausal phenomenon aggravated by intersecting analytical markers. Therefore, it must be understood from the perspective of gender, social class and race/ethnicity, which manifest themselves in a heterogeneous way, allowing or hindering access to public policies (Nogueira, 2017; Butler, 2018).

"Interpersonal conflicts" were expressed in the units as "intrafamily violence", illustrated in the statements: "it comes from the home, I believe, because a child of a violent couple is very likely to be the same way" (18 years old, 6 months homeless); "Bad 'friendships'"; "the bad friendships, because there's no one to do you a favor. But, to do evil there are many" (54 years old, 2 months homeless); "the rules of living in the street"; "they argue over anything with those who are new on the street, especially young people" (21 years old, homeless moments/ housed); and, "violence breeds violence"; "I already hit a woman that came to provoke me, but I didn't want to, I was forced to because she was harassing me" (35 years old, 8 years homeless). To problematize violence and its multicausality, it is necessary to consider the gender hierarchies involved in these processes. Gender is not only in the opposition between masculinities and femininities, but also in the opposition between masculinities and between femininities (Connell & Messerschimidt, 2013). When the participant says she had a woman that caused her trouble, she is exemplifying these hierarchies. Physical aggression motivated by the provocation of another woman is also a reflection of this. The statements are in line with the studies by Rosa and Brêtas (2015), which identify that women experiencing homelessness also cause disputes over space and power, deconstructing the stereotypes of fragility traditionally attributed to them.

The rules of coexistence on the street mentioned are associated with how relations between women experiencing homelessness occur and

their intertwining with violence. In this sense, in the streets there are rules produced from a hierarchical power according to the length of time they have been there, being necessary to assert themselves as subjects, protecting or dominating. The rules are based on independence, hardness and violence as a way to earn respect, domination and protection (Campos, 2016; Huey, 2016). In addition, according to the participants, violence generates violence. As a result, aggression and hostility are often present on the streets.

Impacts of violence

The third category of analysis, called "Impacts of Violence", is comprised of the psychosocial impacts of violence on the participants' lives. These impacts were derived from the subcategories: "mental health" and "associated feelings". The subcategory "Mental health" was cited by means of "psychological distress", for example, in the following excerpts: "I'm tired of this life, I'm tired of the street, I'm tired of everything. I can't take anymore" (32 years old, homeless moments / housed). Therefore, it can be evaluated that the violence experienced by women experiencing homelessness negatively influences their mental health. The participants' statements corroborate the studies by Huey (2016) and Kirkman et al. (2015), in which the authors indicate that this group may experience intense suffering and physical and mental exhaustion leading to feelings of sadness and hopelessness. The authors also mention that living on the street can contribute to the development of posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression.

In addition, the subcategory "Associated feelings" was listed by means of "Fear", for example in the excerpts: "We are afraid. This business of being cornered, we end up hiding in a corner, in a hole and there we stay all day, not talking to anyone" (31 years old, 15 days homeless); "Hopelessness": "it's difficult to be harder than this" (28 years old, interspersed moments homeless and housed); and, "Distrust in others": "You have to know how to look after yourself, even with those you know". (44 years old, 6 years homeless).

Feelings of fear, hopelessness and distrust are reflective of the abuses of power that afflict these women. Foucault (2018b) understands that power acts over bodies in a capillarized way, forming actions that produce ways of existing, focusing on the gestures, attitudes, discourses and behaviors of everyday life. The constant exposure to violence conditions the existence of these women to the construction of defense strategies. Considering the studies by Butler (2015), it can be stated that the precariousness of these lives emphasizes their substitutability and anonymity, which influences both the facilitated ways of dying, exemplified by the naturalization of the violence that permeates their bodies, as well as the ways found to survive on the streets.

Coping

The last category of analysis, called "Coping", is understood through the actions taken by the participants in dealing with the violence experienced. In this study, the participants highlighted that coping occurs through the "social relationships", the "violence", the "avoidance situations", the "use of alcohol and other drugs" and the "resolution of problems".

Regarding the subcategory "social relationships", having an "intimate partner" appeared among the prevention strategies: "I have my husband and he protects me" (44 years old, 6 years homeless). "To have friends on the street": "The people defend themselves" (31 years of age, 15 days homeless) and "To talk": "I try to talk" (54 years old, 2 months homeless). Seeking protection in a partner can be a risk factor. According to Hsieh (2016), many women are subjected to violence by their partner, which puts them doubly at risk. Having friends on the street also proves to be a dubious strategy that can be perceived in some statements. While one participant who had been homeless for 15 days believed this to be the solution to violence, another who had been homeless for three months believed that it was better to stay alone, presented in the analysis element "Isolation". Violence is a multicausal phenomenon, therefore, none of the above strategies

guarantee non-aggression.

Rita Segato (2014), when discussing public femicide, stated that violence is a message of power. Therefore, when this message needs to be conveyed in some way, it will be done both in isolation and in the company of friends, and in many cases it is done as a means of revenge on the partner of the woman or on the group to which she belongs. This is due to the fact of the social reiteration of female guardianship to men. If the woman belongs to him, if he is her caregiver, raping her or killing her is a message to him. It is the female body being used as an instrument of war between groups. Experiencing homelessness is to be at constant risk and this was understood by the participants. When they indicated dialogue as a strategy, they forgot that it is mediated by power relations. On the streets, men are the dominant group and as such use power strategies to preserve their supremacy.

The unit of analysis "aggression against others" appears in the subcategory "violence", as illustrated by: "You have to confront it, I confront it. What will I do, run? You have nowhere to run" (29 years old, 8 years homeless). The aggression highlighted by the participants as coping is mediated by a fatalistic feeling. Therefore, it can be inferred that aggressiveness on the part of these women transcends the field of choice and is established in the lack of alternatives. The limited possibilities for coping with violence reflect the social abandonment relegated to the population that is homeless in general. This is what Butler (2018) highlighted as unmournable lives. For society, it does not matter whether a woman experiencing homelessness is subject to violence or death. The commotion is regulated from the understanding that some subjects are more worthy of protection and mourning than others.

For the subcategory "Avoidance situations", statements appear related to "Isolation": "I try not to get involved, I stay alone more" (32 years old, 5 months homeless); "Escape": "I don't get involved. I don't care. You have to get used to it" (20 years old, 2 weeks that interspersed moments homeless and housed); and, "Delegation to religious belief":

"I ask Him for strength from above every day. I know He listens to me, He answers me" (27 years old, two months homeless). This subcategory and its analytical elements, as mentioned above, contradicts the idea that being in a group or having a partner is an effective protection strategy. Therefore, there was no agreement between the participants about which social positions would bring them more or less security. According to Biscotto (2015), violence is experienced by this group through territorial disputes, sexual practices and coexistence with drugs. Misganaw and Worku (2013) reported that body objectification makes cases of sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy frequent, as well as causing psychic consequences. Machado (2016) highlighted the gender issue associated with drug use and prostitution as risk factors. These situations of violence are democratic because they affect women who organize themselves in groups and women who choose isolation. Furthermore, according to Pargament (1997), coping based on religiosity can be positive or negative, depending on how it is perceived. In the statements, faith is based on the delegation of the resolution of problems to God and may constitute a risk factor.

The subcategory "use of alcohol and other drugs" can be illustrated by: "we end up violating ourselves with drug use" (32 years old, 3 months homeless). This confrontation corroborates Monteiro and Almeida (2015), who reported that the use of alcohol and other drugs is often intertwined in the lives of these people to maintain life on the street, attenuating their condition and supporting certain behaviors, such as how to stay up at night and how to deal with the everyday difficulties.

The subcategory "practical actions" also appeared here: "I go to a busy place like here in the square, here nothing ever happened, there's never any fighting" (31 years old, 15 days homeless). In this sense, practical actions aim to solve problems based on protective behaviors. Accordingly, Noble et al. (2018) presented different forms of resistance operated in reinventions of ways of life, of daily life and of ways of being in the world. Therefore, there is an (over) experience from the creativity

of the margins in a space where new experiences are constructed, seeking, among the gaps, their "self-management". The lack of state protection in the street context means that the violence suffered by women is mostly unreported. There is no quantitative dimension of how this problem affects women's lives. It should be highlighted that studies by Machado (2016) and Rosa and Brêtas (2015) identified that domestic violence committed by their partner and/or family is among the factors that lead women to live in the streets. Fear of constant death threats makes life on the street a refuge from conjugal violence. Thus, even in environments supposedly protected by legislation, the inefficiency of the state in ensuring the safety of these women can be observed.

Final considerations

This study aimed to understand the phenomenon of violence from the perspective of women experiencing homelessness. The content analysis demonstrated stories permeated by violence, aspects related to beliefs, values and ideologies, as well as different ways of dealing with violent relationships. The study comprehended the phenomenon in a multidimensional way, which is surrounded by a historical, cultural, social and relational plot. Furthermore, the comprehension of street violence shuns the fragile stereotypes traditionally associated with femininity performances, showing the women as sometimes active and perpetrating violence and sometimes seeking invisibility due to a life ruled by fear.

It is considered that the use of strategies should be contextualized, as they are often the only possible options in this context permeated by social risks. With this, and from previous readings, it was realized that violence is constitutive of the street. However, it was found that these practices, in the long-term, can contribute negatively to the person's mental health, in view of reports of suffering, hopelessness and physical and psychological exhaustion. Accordingly, professional interventions are considered necessary in order to (co) construct new possibilities to reduce the damage associated with violence and rights violations. In this sense, this study contributed to the expansion

of knowledge, through the instrumentalization of professionals who directly assist this public, as well as considering public policies that perform protective actions for these women and that can give visibility to their specificities.

In this study, some limitations are highlighted. The fact that data collection took place on the streets influenced the time of the interviews. There was also difficulty in assessing the status of the interviewees, whether they were under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs or not. Therefore, the results should be relativized and considered in conjunction with other studies. The scarcity of studies on the subject observed by the researchers was also considered a limitation for the discussion of the results, highlighting the need for the development of new studies in order to provide greater empirical support to the research.

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