



Original article

The woman in social vulnerability and family violence

A mulher em vulnerabilidade social e a relação com a violência familiar

La mujer en vulnerabilidad social y violencia familiar

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ABSTRACT | OBJECTIVE: Female vulnerability and violence against women are recurring and inexhaustible themes that permeate humanity, which permeates humanity, that is conceptualized as patriarchal since the beginning. Based on this, this article aims to reflect on the condition of women in social vulnerability and their relation to the phenomenon of family violence. **METHOD:** The methodological approach adopted is an exploratory study of the descriptive observational type. For the data collection, a non-probabilistic, intentional sample of 100 workers from a multinational company in the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Sul was selected. These spontaneously responded to a questionnaire. Afterwards, a group interview was conducted (focus group in 10 meetings), with six workers agreeing to participate. **CONCLUSION:** From this study, it was concluded that working women in situations of social vulnerability have common characteristics, such as low education, low financial conditions, unstructured families, in addition to a lack of understanding of the context of family violence itself and its confrontation.

KEYWORDS: Vulnerability. Violence against women. Family relationships.

RESUMO | OBJETIVO: A vulnerabilidade feminina e a violência contra a mulher são temas recorrentes e inesgotáveis, que permeiam a humanidade, que se conceitua como patriarcal desde seus primórdios. Partindo disso, o presente artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre a condição de mulheres em situação de vulnerabilidade social e sua relação com o fenômeno da violência familiar. **MÉTODO:** O percurso metodológico adotado se caracteriza a partir de um estudo exploratório do tipo observacional descritivo. Para a coleta de dados selecionou-se uma amostra não probabilística, intencional de 100 trabalhadoras de uma empresa multinacional do interior do estado do Rio Grande do Sul. Essas responderam espontaneamente a um questionário. Em seguida, foi realizada uma entrevista grupal (grupo focal em 10 encontros), com seis trabalhadoras que aceitaram participar. **CONCLUSÃO:** A partir desse estudo, verificou-se que as mulheres trabalhadoras em situação de vulnerabilidade social possuem algumas características comuns, entre elas: baixa escolaridade, poucas condições financeiras, construção familiar desestruturada, além de pouca compreensão sobre o contexto da violência familiar e seu enfrentamento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Vulnerabilidade. Violência Contra Mulher. Relações Familiares.

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RESUMEN | OBJETIVO: La vulnerabilidad femenina y la violencia contra la mujer son temas recurrentes e inagotables que impregnan a la humanidad, que por su vez, ha sido conceptualizada como patriarcal desde el comienzo. Delante de eso, este artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre la condición de la mujer en situación de vulnerabilidad social y su relación con el fenómeno de la violencia familiar. **MÉTODO:** El abordaje metodológico adoptado se caracteriza a partir de un estudio exploratorio, observacional y descriptivo. Para la recolección de datos, se seleccionó una muestra no probabilística intencional de 100 trabajadoras de una empresa multinacional del interior de Rio Grande do Sul. Esas respondieron espontáneamente a un cuestionario. Posteriormente se hizo una entrevista grupal (*focus group* en 10 encuentros), con seis trabajadoras que aceptaron participar. **CONCLUSIÓN:** A partir de este estudio, se constató que las mujeres trabajadoras en situación de vulnerabilidad social tienen algunas características comunes, entre ellas: baja escolaridad, pocas condiciones financieras, construcción familiar desestructurada, además de poca comprensión del contexto de violencia familiar y de como enfrentarlo.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Vulnerabilidad. Violencia contra las mujeres. Relaciones familiares.

Introduction

Women's vulnerability is a tireless, timeless topic, which pervades humanity since its earliest days. Although it has been gaining room in scientific production and in the discourse of those who work with social services and healthcare, there is still little discussion about what truly does lead women to such a condition. Related to this topic of vulnerability, there is the persistence of violence against women - which reflects upon their physical and mental health, turning into a public health problem to be faced. This violence that occurs both in public and in private spaces is related to gender issues, and is seen as a human rights violation (Arboit et al., 2018). The authors assert that it is a problem founded by power relations, between men and women, and in the inequalities between these two groups, that were constructed through history, wherein aggressivity was instated under a chauvinistic rule, leaving women at the mercy of an assortment of abuses in current times.

As such, it becomes evident how complex these cases of violence are, seeing that their many forms are at times tolerated, and at times denounced, depending on their given context. The many forms of violence against women that can be physical, sexual, psychological, patrimonial and moral, constitute an issue of public health and a human rights violation, as was previously referred to (Ferreira et al, 2020). Global estimates published by WHO indicate that approximately one in every three women (35%) in all the world have suffered from physical and/or sexual violence from their partner or from another, throughout their life. (Organização Pan-Americana da Saúde, 2019).

Though the female population has sought means to resist their daily oppressions throughout history, they suffer from different forms of violence, and are, as well, exposed to circumstances of social vulnerability. Because of this, the United Nations (UN) have, in the year of 2010, created a segment called UN Women aiming to promote equality between genders, the empowerment of women, and the safeguard of human rights. This segment has adopted as its strategies leadership and political participation, empowerment, the combat against violence towards women, humanitarian emergencies, governance, planning and norms both global and regional, as well as peace and security. However, women's rights, which were only tardily recognized, were not enough to avoid them becoming susceptible to risks and circumstances of fragility. As such, it is understood that the results of this pattern of male domination create barriers for personal autonomy and end up stirring up inequalities between both genders. (Durand, et al., 2021).

Still on the topic of gender inequality, this is the main cause of violence against women, in particular a relationship of power incompatibility, in which certain behaviors and choices are limited to the female figure. Furthermore, in many cases, women stand by the aggressor's side, due to lack of financial resources, embarrassment, fear, as well as for the safety of their children, and there may even be a case of femicide (Andrade & Souza, 2021). The authors assert that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was even an accelerated increase in domestic violence, with society having trouble facing these circumstances.

[Saffioti](#) (1999), asserts that gender-based violence is a wider concept, regarding as victims not just women, but also children and teenagers of both sexes. In the exercise of the patriarchal function, men hold the power to determine the conduct of the aforementioned social categories, receiving authorization, or, at least, tolerance from society to punish what they perceive as a deviation. Even if there's no attempt, by the potential victims' part, to thread paths diverging from social norms, the execution of the project of domination-exploration of the social category of men, demands that their ruling capacity be aided by violence. As such, a society that does not act against the aggressor, ends up reinforcing the submissive position of women.

Moreover, poverty and violence are defined as processes of susceptibility or conditions inherent to individual volition, leaving individuals exposed to exploration and coercion. Health policies, especially for the promotion of health, are important tools to face these vulnerabilities. Therefore, this study has at its base the Instituto Maria da Penha (Maria da Penha Institute), which on the fifth article of the Lei Maria da Penha (Maria da Penha Law) defines domestic and familial violence against women as "any action or omission based on gender that causes death, injury, physical, sexual or psychological suffering and damage both moral or patrimonial" (Lei n. [11.340](#), 2006, p. 01). Based on these premises, this article aims to reflect on the condition of women in social vulnerability and its correlation with the phenomenon of familial violence.

In this scenario, it is worth mentioning that, in Brazil, the Ministério da Educação (Ministry of Education) instituted the Programa Mulheres Mil (Thousand Women Program), in a partnership with the Canadian government, between 2007 and 2011, so as to attend to women in circumstances of social vulnerability, promoting education both professional and technological, providing an improvement in life quality of all involved in the process of empowering the attended women. It is an important initiative to sensitize the community on this topic, however, by itself it is not sufficient. There's an eminent necessity to include debates around this topic in the matter of public policies, in search of an egalitarian, non-patriarchal, educational process, which discusses gender patterns, thusly expanding the room for discussion with rights to speech to the public in question, such that they feel safe and empowered ([Durand](#) et al., 2021).

As such, when thinking about the larger context wherein violence occurs, it is necessary to understand the concept of social vulnerability. Thus, we can comprehend it through the writings of [Carmo](#) and [Guizardi](#) (2018), who understood it as a blend of factors that can affect the level of well-being of people, families or communities, and which results in greater exposure to risk. Under this perspective, this article is composed of four sections, besides this introduction. The first section presents the theoretical discussion on domestic violence and vulnerabilities, asserting that they are interlinked contexts; the second section discusses the methodological strategies used in this research, the third section discusses the main results, and the fourth section presents a brief conclusion of the study.

Domestic violence and vulnerabilities: interlinked contexts

According to [Bandeira](#) (2014), feminist studies on gender-based violence consider patriarchy, in particular, as one of the pillars in this context, and, relatedly, the position of masculine symbolic domination. However, they acknowledge that there are other elements that compose this dynamic.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that these violent acts normally come from significant others, which makes the situation even more complex and broad. Moreover, it is a social phenomenon, present in a variety of places and social classes, and represents a great public health issue, seeing as it significantly impacts life in society. With regards to how the vulnerability is conceived, the authors denote the multidetermination of its genesis not strictly conditioned to absent or precarious income, but linked also to the fragility of the affective-relational bonds and inequality of access to goods and public services. Notwithstanding, the critiques around its conceptual indefiniteness associated with the notion of risk, the adoption of this category, at the same time that it sought to define the specific objective of social assistance, opposing the theoretical-methodological loss of its deliveries, approached a terminological solution typical of neoliberal branches and orientations of international organizations ([Chagas](#) et al., 2022).

It's also important to assert that vulnerability is linked to the fragility that certain populations find themselves in and, as such, this concept involves

integrated approaches and may be considered as opposed to the concept of health. In the field of public health, this concept embodies social, economic, and cultural elements, with a presence in bioethics, in mental, ambient health, and in epidemiology, seeing as a vulnerable context is the result of a set of individual, collective and contextual aspects (Bauermann & Lutinski, 2022).

Additionally, there is the matter of vulnerability in the families, which is related to their circumstances of financial vulnerability, exploration and abuse, and psychosocial and cultural aspects. Misery can express itself in many forms, and it exposes individuals to life conditions often below human dignity, interfering in the complex dynamics of familial life. Particularly since, generally, the very dependence between women and their domestic environment and its members, be it financial or even emotional, cements this vulnerability which, in turn, affects their life conditions (IPEA, 2019).

It's worth noting that the context of vulnerability predisposes violence, as such, the patriarchy sustains and maintains power relations and domination of men (more socially valued) over women, having even graver consequences over black and poor women (Aguiar, 2015). Under this view, the abuse against women is one of the phenomena with the greatest impact in regard to general public health and familial psychotherapy (Falcke et al., 2009). This is because, besides the victim's physical damages, there are also psychological damages, seeing as domestic violence is not episodic, on the contrary, it is constant, socially tolerated and hidden by the victim for the sake of the sanctity of the familial institution. Unfortunately, this inhumane and worrying manifestation that develops itself in the microsocial plane gains, with every day, more adherence. As previously mentioned, this sort of violence has been built through our history and it is rooted in the asymmetrical relations between men and women, unequal power relations between the genders.

Studies indicate that some women, victims of domestic violence, have difficulty in leaving abusive relationships, "the experience in life of insecurity with regards to gender is related to social vulnerability being related as a non-linear concept" (Durand, et al., 2021, p.2). Before a patriarchal, misogynist culture which preserves the idea that women ought to be

protected by men, who take this as a natural process, ending up normalizing violence, and reinforcing this historical situation of submission (Zirbel, 2020). As such, it is necessary to turn to psychological subsidies and articulated actions for the promotion and prevention of health (Adames et al., 2018).

The author Heleieth Saffioti (2015), in her work *Gênero, patriarcado e violência* [*Gender, Patriarchy and Violence*] punctuates that familial violence is derived from a social organization of gender that privileges the male sex. In other words, the woman, beyond the suffering generated by the family's diminishing health, is penalized by an unequal and discriminatory reality, which imposes to the female figure the idea of submission and contempt.

Gender inequalities negatively impact interpersonal and affective relationships, social cycles, access to rights and the processes of social reproduction translated in women's ways of life and work. Under this view, the violence generated by this inequality, once carried out or tolerated by the state, configures one of the greatest challenges for ensuring women's human rights and liberties. It's important to note that these social inequalities can lead to situations of abuse through different mechanisms. That is to say, there is a difference in how these situations are experienced by men and women; while the majority of men are victims in the public sphere, the oppressive relationship that women suffer occurs more frequently in the domestic environment, under severe and repetitive conditions. As such, they become insecure and, in light of that, occupy less space in the social sphere, and are stricken by kinds of emotional suffering that prevent them from growing and advancing both professionally as well as personally (IPEA, 2019).

It is important to assert that the term "gender violence", in the sense of men against women, and in its amplitude, can occur both between women, as well as between men (Saffioti, 1999). However, as the author emphasizes in her writings, the most commonly perpetrated violence is the one from men against women, being utilized as a synonym for violence against women. Still on this topic, the author punctuates that this especially refers to the men-women relationships, which does not mean that a relationship between two women or two men can't fit into this category, however, she

notes that “gender violence is a wide concept, covering women, children and teenager victims of both sexes” (Saffioti, 1999, p. 115). The author conceptualizes violence as a rupture of any kind of integrity of someone, in other words, violence can be physical, psychic, moral or sexual.

Saffioti defends the utilization of the term “patriarchy” to refer to the system that oppresses women, as a political system of domination; in her words: “to put the name of male domination - patriarchy - in shadow means to operate under the “patriarchal ideology” (Saffioti, 2015, p. 59). The author focuses her analysis on the social category of gender, male and female, and avoids reductionism and individualistic analyses.

As such, it can be seen that gender violence, domestic violence and the historic-social context are interlinked, and end up causing vulnerabilities and risk situations that are pointed out by Saffioti (2015) in her work.

Methodological strategies

This article is a branch from a master’s project titled *Mulheres Trabalhadoras em Situação de Vulnerabilidade Social* (Working-class Women Under Social Vulnerability), which had the objective of understanding the factors that motivate family violence in the day to day lives of women from the outskirts of Santa Cruz do Sul/RS, living under social vulnerability. The methodological approach used is characterized as an exploratory study of the observational descriptive type. To collect data, a purposive, non-probabilistic sampling was chosen, consisting of 100 female workers in a multinational company in rural RS. The research had the following inclusion criteria: 1 - To live in stable union, 2 - to work at the company for at least two consecutive harvests and as such be denominated in this organizational context as “returning”, 3 - to be in an active contract in February 2021. As such, all the workers that fit these criteria were invited to participate in the study. All ethical requisites were taken care of, with the project being duly approved and after being approved and accepted by the partner institution, the investigative process began. The women’s names were changed to rose names so as to not identify them. The company provided physical space and access to the workers so that the researched could explain the purposes of the research and present the TCLE

(“Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido” or “Free and Informed Consent Term”), inviting them to their free participation. The data collection occurred at the company itself, during the period between April and July 2021, the first step was the application of a closed, self-applied questionnaire available in physical copies, to the 100 workers. After the invitation and explanations, 85 women accepted to participate in the study and filled the questionnaire, which contained questions pertaining to: 1) age range, 2) educational level, 3) family income, 4) marital status, 5) quantity of children, 6) number of people in household, 7) family member involved with drugs and 8) arrested family member. After the questionnaire was filled in, 10 women were randomly selected to participate in the interviewing process, the Focus Group was the technique used, 10 encounters with a 30 minute duration occurred in the company facilities. All agreed to participate, however, only six actually came to the groups, which were made in the company after the work shift, with previously agreed upon dates, in a room with proper conditions for acoustics and secrecy. The focus group technique as a collective activity seeks, as one of its objectives, comprehensions of the social construction of perceptions, attitudes and representations of a group before a topic (Pataro & Calsa, 2020), in this case violence and the workers’ vulnerability. The quantitative data served to understand the context in which these women live and their socio-demographic conditions and it was organized and tabulated through the Microsoft Excel program. The Focus Groups generated qualitative data with the objective of deepening the discussion on women’s vulnerability and their daily lives, relating it with the possible domestic violence experienced and points from scholars that work with gender issues.

Results and discussion

The first result to be presented will be the profile of the female workers, a group composed by some common characteristics: with regards to marital status 53% of the women were single and 16% had a stable union; the sample was constituted by a low educational level, 79% of the women had not finished elementary school, and only 8% had finished high school. Moreover, the ages ranged mostly from 40 to 59 years (55%) of the referred sample.

With regards to this profile, it is interesting to consider the results found in this sample of female workers with low educational level, women in advanced age, with low income and primarily single; could these characteristics contribute to a condition of greater vulnerability?

Discussing the vulnerability of the women in the study: socioeconomic characteristics of the female workers

With regards to the factors analyzed, the results show that, concerning family income, 50% of the interviewed women can claim up to one minimum wage salary for their own sustenance and their family's. Regarding the quantity of children, according to the results acquired, 67% of them possess from one and four children, and with regards to the number of people in the household, it was made clear that most of the interviewed (53%) lived with more than three people. The patriarchal family model was instituted in Brazil since its colonization and, afterward, only got adapted and readjusted according to the country's social conditions. This is to say, the position of women as a member of the family shows, since the very beginning, the existing gender discrimination. As such, it's important to note that it falls to them the responsibility for the children's education and for domestic work, and so, this double, or triple, burden creates an accumulation and overload of duties and attributions (Corrêa et al., 2021).

Moreover, it's highlighted that the permanence of all the members of the familial core inside of small homes contributes, undoubtedly, with regard to the interpersonal conflicts inside the family. In this context, it's evident that the situations of stress, depression and angst are worsened, increasing, consequently, the tension due to unemployment, a fact that considerably contributes to the increase in intrafamilial violence.

Even should a woman not have her own children, she is seen as naturally caring (capable of "mothering"), she not only can but should utilize this "gift" in the care of others, such as parents, siblings, nephews, sickly family members, etc. Moreover, this care is also characterized by domestic care, with the housework also falling, in the majority of cases, to the female figure. This naturalization puts women in a situation of intense overload and shrouds the

work and energy-time-strength expenditure implied in domestic work (Zanello, 2018).

As such, working from the data found in the research, it was possible to infer that the overload of roles taken on by women before social and economic difficulties can contribute to greater exposure to familial violence. It's worth remembering that women often are determined by the roles of mother, head of family and sole responsible for the children. In the Focus Group, made in 2021, when the subject discussed was the role of mother and the relationship with children, Rose related:

"I have a daughter, you know, that doesn't live with me since I'm divorced, she already has her own house and her own life, and how's my relationship with her? It's a very good relationship, we're not mother and daughter, we're great friends, nowadays she's my confidant, I talk with her about my personal problems as a woman, you know, so to me she's my confidant, my psychologist, I went through issues with her father in the marriage so to me my daughter really listened a lot to me and in my separation, right, in my 20 years of marriage it was my daughter that encourage me to leave that, you know, that marriage that oppressed me, it was my daughter so my daughter to me is everything the relationship I have with her is something else, I'll always protect her too".

Similarly, this was externalized by Violet: "my children means everything to me, they're my companions, they go through fight and suffering with me, but are always on my side". Carnation relates something similar: "I have two sons, one is two years old and the other is ten, I do everything for them, we're really bound together and it's very hard to separate from them, I protect them a lot". As for Daisy, she claims that: "my daughter doesn't live with me and we don't get along much because she brings me lotsa trouble, that's all". On the same vein, another interviewee, Bromelia, answered: "I have 5 children, we get along well, it's just that there's some that are a little, you know, a little different, you know".

It's noticed that the role of head of family is delegated to these women, which leads, in the majority of the time, to excessive attributions that, consequently, result in cases of low self-esteem, anxiety, fears and frustrations. It's possible to see, in this context, that being charged as such generates a considerable increase to the exposure to situations of social vulnerability. To Durand (2021), this situation is not always perceived by the person under vulnerability,

and it is necessary to consider the fragilization of affective bonds, as well as discrimination according to age, ethnic and gender in this context. With this in mind, during the analysis of these women's statements, it was possible to understand that these declarations express, a sense of responsibility, excessive protection and attachment, both physical and emotional, with their children

Next, a conflictual situation between mother and children appears, perceived through the difficulty in verbalizing this condition of overloading, seeing as it was possible to notice their discomfort before this situation, particularly due to the difficulty in externalizing their feelings. [Lemos](#) and Kind (2017) point out that contemporaneity delimitates the role of the female figure. This is because certain incumbencies are attributed to women, which makes society visualize them as a multifaceted subject.

The problems are even further aggravated by the discrimination in the social relationships - work, family, etc. - and by the overload of responsibilities coming from housework and caring for the children. The authors also claim that other variables such as race, ethnic and poverty highlight these inequalities even further. It's noted that women are, often enough, put in the background, most of all due to the countless duties that are designated to them, making it so that they, in times of constant social change, be forced to assume a role of protagonism in their own lives and in the social and familial spectrum in which they are inserted, and, as such, the role of mother is an example of this.

Moreover, due to the social vulnerability, the women end up having a central role, since, often enough, due to circumstances of reality itself, they assume alone the position of head of the family. In general, they remain in precarious and vulnerable jobs, besides receiving the worst wages and long working hours, a result of the accumulation of paid work with service inside of the home ([IPEA](#), 2019).

As well, women have always accumulated multiple activities and are demanded a sense of responsibility and care, moreover, they are taught, still as children, that this is their role, that she must take care of what is hers and what is of the others. In our current society, the capacity to gestate has been associated with the capacity to care for, which naturalized in

women the role of taking care of housework, of children and other family members. Data from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) ([IBGE](#), 2020) depict a landscape that corroborates with this idea: women dedicate an average of 20,9 hours/weekly on domestic activities, while men dos 10,8 hours/weekly.

Also from the Focus Group discussions, it became clear that the participants normalized the fact that women's role is to provide and care for the family, as they assert as such when questioned about "What does it mean to be a woman to you?": Rose answered: *"so, to me being a woman is being strong, being everything, is being the pillar of the house it's to take care of everything, taking care of ourselves too, so to me, that's what being a woman is"*; Daisy asserts: *"to me, it's taking caring of the children, of the house, of the husband, it's everything..."*; Bromelia says: *"to be a woman to me I think it's everything, it's family..."*; Violet presents in her speech the dimension of what it means to be a warrior, a fighter, which can also be related to managing to take care of the daily difficulties: *"to be a woman to me is to be a strong warrior and fighter..."*.

The study made for the doctoral thesis "Idosos em situação de dependência: quem cuida? Elementos para o debate" (Elderly under dependency: who takes care? Points for discussion) ([Montenegro](#), 2017) ponders over the difference in male and female roles and the overcharge of work that befalls upon women and is normalized or naturalized by society. It affirms that when speaking on care, women continue being identified by the social imaginary as responsible for all duties and over all the housework, which ends naturally connected to the "female attributes".

With regards to the data collection performed in the first step of the research with the usage of questionnaires, questions about drug use and other social-related topics were added, which brings us back to the discussion on social vulnerability and its association with familial violence. As such, when analyzing the results, it was verified that out of the women who participated in the research, 14% claimed to have a family member involved with drugs, and 13% claimed to have had a family member who was arrested. However, the percentage of women who did not answer the questions related to drug use

and criminality amongst family members reached 38%, a number that may point out to the possibility of negation and/or omission, due to them not feeling comfortable breaching the subject. Perhaps because the research was performed in a workplace environment, which could have raised some distrust over how these facts would be used by the researcher.

Another aspect deserving of consideration and that, in fact, has already been pointed out in the article is the matter of family violence, be it physical, psychological or emotional, it is present in most vulnerable families. As well, it can be inferred that family violence, in some way, becomes naturalized by women whose fragility and vulnerability does not allow them to be freed from their situation (Zirbel, 2020). Evidencing this, when questioned, over "What is your relationship with your partner?" it became clear that some suffer or have suffered from abusive relationships, as seen in the following statements:

"Well, nowadays I don't have a partner anymore, because as I said before right to you it was 20 years of a pretty complicated marriage, really complicated and I went through a lot of work even just to get out of this situation, so nowadays, me nowadays I have a person whom I get out with I have fun, we kind of date and stuff, and nowadays I have a pretty good relation with this person but I don't have like a husband, a companion that lives with me right because no, thank God I managed right to get out of that situation" (Rose)

"My first husband we... I went through a lot of work with him, he was a bad person, bad to me and my children, so I separated from him, spent some time alone with my children, later found another person who was really good to me and my children, but he ended up dying, since then I haven't found anyone else, then I didn't want to find anyone else" (Bromelia).

Finally, Violet refers in her speech: *"I don't have a partner [male] and 'my partner [female]' was really bad for me and my son, I don't plan on having another partner."*

It is important to mention in this reflection on the interviewees' words, that they mirror the discussion that Saffioti (2015) brings on the patriarchy, on the exploration of women and their subjection to, as well as non-identification of violence. The power relation that subjugates women is also established so as to maintain this pact (Zirbel, 2020). When questioned over whether they "have already

suffered some kind of violence?" Rose and Bromelia present similar assertions:

"I've never suffered physical violence, my husband never raised his hand, but ahh..., I suffered another sort of violence with him that was that thing of ohh, you don't do anything right, oh you're so fat, you don't take care of yourself, you know, like ah I don't stay home since it's painful, right, so this sort of violence, but physical violence I never did suffer through, since he wasn't crazy enough for that... but anyways, we have, I I suffered but later I ended up discovering this was a violence" (Rose)

"I've suffered a lot of violence with my first husband, not from getting hit, but he always put me down telling me these things that I ended up believing that I really was all of that, that, then I entered a depression since I had a lot of bah, I went through... I thought I was the worst woman in the world, the ugliest woman, the weirdest because he kicked me down so much said awful things to me later I separated from him stayed a long while without dating, without anything because I thought what he had told me was true so later I found someone else who showed me I wasn't what he had said" (Bromélia)

When speaking, Daisy confirms she had already suffered from physical violence, *"I've suffered through violence, once he even broke my nose, I've suffered a long time that he drank, got hit in the streets, I've suffered a lot in his hands, but now thank God he stopped".* As does Violet: *"I've had violence, my husband hit me and I thanked God that he left home and vanished".*

Through these accounts, it becomes clear that the physical and psychological suffering experienced by the participants in their conjugal relationships, which puts them before society placed in a totally subjugated and inferiorized position. This only corroborates the concept that violence is a recurrent phenomenon in humanity's history and is produced in the middle of social arrangements. Still in the thread of discussion on women's vulnerability, in the Rose's statement on "what does she understand by family violence?"

"So, I understand that it's all of this..., family violence is not just when they assault, but is when they leave us as women in an inferior level to them, right, so I'm the man in the house I order and you obey, I can leave and party but my wife needs to stay, so, I understand violence like that too you know"

The physical and psychological violence reported by these female workers deepens the importance of the discussion on public policies to combat domestic violence and gender-based violence. [Martins e Costa \(2022\)](#) refers to how the policies themselves don't have the power to realize the changes they intend to bring, as it's necessary to observe how the beliefs of the practices are constructed and how these fit in institutions' day to day. As such, it's important to highlight the importance of a more profound qualitative analysis, to understand if the women under vulnerability, allied to the instability of everyday life, to the social context in which they live, would have their life stories influenced by family dysfunctions and, amongst them, violence.

So it is necessary to reflect on the fact that violence against women is a matter of national and international concern, however it has not always been as such. From a historical perspective, the process of domestication and normatization of the female body, can be seen as a mechanism of social control, which reinforces the ideological concept linked to the women's role in society. This concept might be a factor that contributes to causing countless forms of violence since women are seen as private property, with no right to their own will, a fact that evidently corroborates with the normalization of violence.

Moreover, as explained by [Saffioti \(2015\)](#), the magnitude of trauma needs not be proportional to the abuse endured. Wounds of the body can be successfully treated in a great number of cases. Wounds of the soul, as well, can be treated. However the odds of managing to do so are greatly reduced and, in many cases, this is not achieved.

This recent perception and conscience that part of society achieved nowadays was the fruit of tireless and articulate labor from many groups, with women's movements being primarily responsible for taking away the secrecy of pain and fear from generations of women, granting to them a voice. In this sense, through the development of means of identification of possible circumstances that characterize violence, physical or emotional, the "legitimate defense of masculine honor", which was for a long time both legal and socially acceptable, ceased to be as such and became a crime, with a criminal code and sentence, being described in the Lei Maria da Penha (Lei n. [11.340](#), 2006).

When sociologist [Saffioti \(2015\)](#) publishes "A mulher brasileira nos espaços público e privado" ("The Brazilian women in the public and private spaces"), research on violence against women in Brazil, with data from the Fundação Perseu Abramo ("Perseu Abramo Foundation") between the years of 1988 and 1992, she already points out that the interviews performed in short-stay homes for victims of violence, demonstrate the gravity of sexual abuse suffered by young girls.

As such, it is understood that the theme of this article, though it may not be original, remains relevant, as there is much yet to be done so that violence can be barred, so that we can have gender equality and a more fair, more supportive society. Due to this, it is noted that in spite of the topic being a continued object of study, widely discussed not only from feminist movements, but also in the media, that some women still have great difficulty in denouncing the violence they suffer. Women often remain silent victims of domestic violence, keeping in mind the difficulty in denouncing someone so close, who is part of the family context. However, it is understood that only by facing these situations can they overcome their negative experiences and, in the end, find the strength to rebuild the trajectories of their lives.

Closing remarks

This article sought to reflect on the condition of women under social vulnerability and its relation with the phenomenon of family violence. Through this study, it was verified that female workers in a situation of social vulnerability have, for the most part, several common characteristics, such as low educational level, low socioeconomic condition, destabilized family structures, as well as possibly the naturalization of violence, which is aggravated by the lack of the necessary understanding of the context of family violence. However, it should be highlighted that the number of female workers studied is too small to make any inferences and it is necessary for studies with larger samples to be made.

It is also worth noting that confronting violence is not an easy task, and nor does it belong to a specific sector of the government, there is a necessity of public policies coadunated between various sectors such

as health, social assistance and human rights, never forgetting the importance of education and culture, so that gender inequalities may be faced on our country.

In the experience of this research, most women are head of their families, live in the outskirts of a city and without professionalization, they live out of temporary work, as an alternative of subsistence and suffer or have suffered from some form of family violence.

As such, to conclude this reflection, it's worth highlighting the importance of strengthening the public policies for against violence and for its prevention, which were always so few and so fragile (with little governmental investments) and evaluate and give visibility to the existing measures that are capable of protecting women who manage to denounce and leave (break), the cycle of violence.

Authors' contributions

Avila, J. S. realized her work for the conclusion of her Mestrado Profissional em Psicologia (Professional Master's Degree in Psychology), which served as the base for this article. She participated in the research's planning, the on-field data collection, as well as in establishing the methods and in the data analysis. As well as the redaction of this article. Areosa, S. V. C. provided support in the study's planning, oriented the on-field data collection and the analyses, and, as well, participated in the data analysis and the redaction in the revision of this article's. The authors reviewed and approved the final version and approved its publication.

Conflict of interests

No financial, legal or political conflict of interest involving third parties (government, companies and private foundations, etc.) was declared for any aspect of the submitted work (including, but not limited to subsidies and financing, participation in a consultative council, study drawing, preparation of manuscript, statistical analysis etc.).

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