
THE INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY HOMELESS WOMEN

Clarissa De Antoni¹

Aline Assmann Ruas Munhós

Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre, UFCSPA, Brazil.

ABSTRACT. Homeless women population is a growing reality in Brazil and there are few studies on this phenomenon, especially those that show the risk factors faced by them. This study aimed to investigate the homeless women perception in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, regarding the violence they experienced in their ecological systems through the Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development. This is a qualitative and exploratory study, in which six women were interviewed. After content analysis, two categories regarding violence emerged: the Institutional Violence and the Structural Violence, that are present in all ecological contexts (micro, meso, exo and macrosystem). In Institutional, the violence mainly evidenced is that perpetrated by professionals linked to public institutions; and structural, related to different forms of maintenance of social, cultural, gender, age and ethnic inequalities, producing misery, hunger, and various forms of submission and exploitation of some people by others. In conclusion, the existence of multiple forms of violence leads to vulnerabilities that further aggravate the misery situation/scenario which they are exposed to and also the quality of life of these residents. Moreover, such violence oppresses their individuality, their wishes and needs.

Keywords: Homeless; violence; woman.

AS VIOLÊNCIAS INSTITUCIONAL E ESTRUTURAL VIVENCIADAS POR MORADORAS DE RUA

RESUMO. A presença de mulheres moradoras de rua é uma realidade crescente no Brasil e há escassos estudos sobre esse fenômeno, principalmente os que evidenciam os fatores de risco enfrentados pelas mesmas. Este estudo investigou a percepção de moradoras de rua da cidade Porto Alegre, Brasil, sobre a violência que vivenciaram em seus sistemas ecológicos, por meio da Teoria Bioecológica do Desenvolvimento Humano. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo de cunho exploratório, no qual seis participantes foram entrevistadas. Os dados foram submetidos à análise de conteúdo, e emergiram duas categorias: violência institucional e a violência estrutural. Essas violências estão presentes em todos os contextos ecológicos (micro-, meso-, exo- e macrosistema). Na institucional, evidenciou-se principalmente aquela perpetrada por profissionais vinculados a instituições públicas; e na estrutural, relacionada às diferentes formas de manutenção das desigualdades sociais, culturais, de gênero, etárias e étnicas que produzem a miséria, a fome e as várias formas de submissão e exploração de umas pessoas pelas outras. Conclui-se que a existência de múltiplas formas de violência leva a situações de vulnerabilidade que agravam ainda mais o quadro de miserabilidade a que estão expostas e a qualidade de vida dessas moradoras. Além disso essas violências oprimem sua individualidade, seus desejos e necessidades.

Palavras-chave: Sem-teto; violência; mulheres.

LA VIOLENCIA INSTITUCIONAL Y ESTRUCTURAL EXPERIMENTADO POR MUJERES SIN VIVENDA

RESUMEN. La presencia de las mujeres sin vivienda es una realidad que crece en Brasil y hay pocos estudios sobre este fenómeno, especialmente aquellos que muestran los factores de riesgo que enfrentan las mujeres. Este estudio investigó la percepción de los residentes de la calle de la ciudad de Porto Alegre, Brasil, en la violencia que se vive en sus sistemas ecológicos a través de la Teoría Bioecológica de Desarrollo Humano. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo de carácter exploratorio, en el que se entrevistó a seis participantes. Los datos fueron sometidos a análisis de contenido, y

¹ E-mail: clarissadeantoni@yahoo.com.br

emergieron dos categorías: violencia institucional y estructural. Este tipo de violencia está presente en todos los contextos ecológicos (micro, meso, exo y macrosistema). En institucional, principalmente evidenciado perpetrado por profesionales vinculados a las instituciones públicas; y estructural, relacionada con diferentes formas de mantenimiento de las desigualdades sociales, culturales, de género, la edad y la miseria que produce étnica, el hambre, y diversas formas de presentación y explotación de algunas personas por otros. De ello se desprende que la existencia de múltiples formas de violencia conduce a vulnerabilidades que agravan aún más el marco dentro del cual la miseria están expuestas y la calidad de vida. Por otra parte, este tipo de violencia oprime a su individualidad, sus deseos y necesidades.

Palabras-clave: Sin vivienda; violencia; mujeres.

Introduction

"Violence for me is not having a decent life". Elisabeth, 55 years old, homeless woman.

The Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation (MSD), through the Decree No. 7053 of December 23, 2009, instituted the National Policy for Street Population, characterizing it as a heterogeneous population group that has in common extreme poverty, fragile or broken family ties and the lack of regular conventional housing. This population is also characterized by the use of public places, degraded areas (abandoned buildings, ruins, carcasses of vehicles) as housing and livelihood space, temporarily or permanently, as well as reception services units for temporary overnight or provisional housing.

Therefore, according to Schuch and Gehlen (2012), "street population" is defined by poverty, by the interruption of the family ties and the lack of regular conventional housing. It consists of only non-possessed attributes, besides being characterized by the dependence on agents and institutions for the use of temporary or provisional reception or housing services. One of the difficulties of studying this population, according to Lovisi (2000), is the methodological limitations that exist, such as the difficulty of a standardized conceptualization of this population that is shared by most researchers.

To Rosa (2005), the street manifests itself as a place of shelter for those who sleep in this space or those who seek the street to constitute their way of life. Being in a street situation corresponds to the condition of extreme misery, in which it is denied the fundamental rights of a citizen, representing a chronic process of social exclusion (Botti & cols., 2010). Rosa (2005) also establishes three possible classifications to identify the different situations in relation to the street, being them "staying in the street", "being on the street" and "belong to the street". "Staying in the street" is a circumstantial situation, that is, transitory and unexpected, and these people are still afraid of sleeping and staying on the street. The "being on the street" implies those who seek the street for an overnight stay, but there is no longer any fear of it since there are the first signs of the establishment of relationships with those who are also on the street. Besides the situation of "being of the street" for those who make this their practically definitive dwelling.

Living in the street is a challenge. According to Dantas (2007), the street population is vulnerable, in several aspects, as in the family and community relationships. There are continuous experiences of situations of discrimination by the society, exposure to violence, unpredictability, psychological and physical illness and deprivation of basic needs. Besides the exhausting daily struggle for survival that can cause feelings of helplessness, anguish, abandonment, despair, loss of self-esteem and identity, sadness and indifference to homeless people. Therefore, street people are exposed to all types of violence.

It is observed that this population grows considerably in Brazil every year. In the National Survey of Street Population conducted by the MDS, between August 2007 and March 2008, 31,922 people were identified in a street situation in the 71 municipalities surveyed, being excluded from this range, the municipalities that recently carried out a similar survey (Belo Horizonte - MG, São Paulo-SP, Recife-PE and Porto Alegre-RS), therefore, in reality the number of individuals is higher. However, there are few studies in Brazil about people living in the street. In this study, it was possible to obtain a diversity of data related to the profile (socioeconomic characteristics and school education); street trajectory (reasons of going to live in the streets, displacements, among others); history of admission in institutions; overnight stay, family ties and work; access to food, services and citizenship; discrimination suffered; participation

in social movements. Besides showing a prevalent characteristic, of which 82% of the dwellers surveyed were men (MDS, 2008).

However, the number of women is increasing, and when they are in a situation of homelessness, the vulnerability to which they are subjected is even greater because of their gender condition. According to a study carried out in Porto Alegre/RS with street dwellers, the women in this situation confirmed the devaluation that they suffer, especially in relation to work, relationships and banalization of the violence they suffer (Prates, Abreu, & Cezimbra, 2004).

According to Frangela (2004), the street space is composed of discourses, practices and pertinences related to an eminently masculine universe. The figure of the homeless is represented by the figure of the man, unemployed provider who circulates to look for work and without other options ends up staying in the street. The woman was gradually entering this universe of the street, displacing the limits of the space to which it is circumscribed in the practices and representations, that is, the house.

From the point of view of gender, girls and women who remain on the streets continually face the male character of the street world. The discourses of masculinity and the imaginary of the woman idealized as feminine, clean, who lives in houses, are projected onto the feminine universe of the streets. They often find themselves compelled to choose a partner who watches over them and helps them to survive on the streets. On the other hand, men and women share in practice the same activities, the same spaces, and behaviors, such as the use of drugs, including alcohol.

According to the review of the literature, the reasons for being in a street situation that appear are: abuse of alcohol and other drugs that lead to family conflicts and rupture of these relationships and unemployment. In addition to these, egresses of psychiatric hospitals and people with mild or severe and persistent mental disorders may be among this population. Among the factors of homelessness are the structural, the biographical and mass and/or natural disasters (Botti & cols., 2010; Carloto & Garcia, 2009).

In a systematic review, conducted by the researchers, of articles annexed to databases published in the last 15 years about women living in the street/homeless, it is observed that there are still few studies on this population. The databases were: SCIELO, CAPES journal, Virtual Health Library, LILACS and PePSIC. In this study, the researchers opted to search for Brazilian articles due to the contextual analysis of the phenomenon in Brazil. The only study published found was conducted by Rosa and Bretãs (2015), which also exposes the lack of recent articles published about street dwellers and violence.

Violence permeates the lives of these street dwellers. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines as violence the intentional use of physical force, real power or in the form of a threat against himself, against another person, group or community, resulting in or likely to result in injury, death, psychological damage, developmental disabilities or deprivation of liberty (WHO, 2002). Violence that, according to Foucault (2012), acts directly on a body, using force, submission, coercion and even destruction as forms of action. Unlike power, violence nullifies the possibilities of action and, for this reason, cannot be taken as fundamental principle or basis for it. This because, an important condition for the exercise of power is the freedom of the person who suffers its action. Arendt (1994) complements the concept of violence, stating that this would be a means and an instrument for the conquest of power. He emphasizes that there is violence only when there is inability of argumentation and persuasion towards others.

For the Bioecological Theory of Human Development (BTHD) of Urie Bronfenbrenner (2011), human development consists of a process of reciprocal interaction between the person and his environment. This is composed of four interrelated dimensions: Process, Person, Context and Time (PPCT). In this theory, the psychological processes become properties of systems, in which the person is only one of the elements, being the main focus, the processes and the interactions. According to Bronfenbrenner, ecological systems are formed by contexts and comprise the interaction of four environmental levels, termed: Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem that interact with each other to form the ecological environment. The microsystem is defined as a more immediate context, where the person makes exchanges, performs social activities and roles, establishes interpersonal relationships and experiences his development process. The street, for instance, is the microsystem of these women, as well as the place where the institutional reception takes place, when they use this service. The term experienced is used in order to emphasize the way in which the person perceives and gives meaning to

what the person experiences in the environment, going beyond the objective characteristics of the environment.

The mesosystem comprises the set of microsystems and the relationships established between them, such as the street, the health service, the institutional reception, among others. The processes that operate in different environments attended by the person are interdependent, influencing each other. The exosystem involves the environments that the person does not actively participate in, but that have an indirect influence on his development, such as the application of the policies of the Unified System of Social Assistance (SUAS), decisions regarding security policies, environment, health and application of human rights. The macrosystem is composed of the set of ideologies, values, beliefs, religions, form of government, as well as the economic, social, historical, cultural and subcultural aspects present in the daily lives of people (Bronfenbrenner, 2011).

Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate how women, street dwellers of Porto Alegre perceive the violence they experienced and/or witnessed in their ecological systems. It is understood that violence occurs in different ways in the different contexts.

Method

This is a qualitative and exploratory study. Six women, street dwellers, in Porto Alegre-RS, participated in this study. Those who not only obtain their livelihood from the street, but also had the street as their home, even if they chose to sleep eventually in shelters for wanderers and homeless people, were regarded as street dwellers. As a criterion for the composition of the number of participants, it was opted for the criterion of data saturation. The factors of inclusion in the research were women over 21 years old, who were on the street for at least six months, and who were not apparently under effect of psychoactive substances such as alcohol and other drugs. As for the exclusion criteria, they were for women with evidence of severe and persistent mental disorders.

The samples were for convenience, that is, those that were available to participate in the research, conducted in the physical space of the CENTROPOP, Special Social Protection Service of Medium Complexity, a place of social reception for this population. Eventually, homeless people go during the day in search of food, hygiene and leisure activities. This service performs specialized monitoring with activities aimed at the development of sociability and strengthening or construction of new interpersonal and/or family ties, as well as being able to participate in group activities, socio-educational workshops, occupational therapy, culture, assemblies, video workshop, debate, among others. A preventive work in education and health care and referrals to the health network of the municipality are also conducted.

A semi-structured interview was carried out by the researchers. The interview covered questions related to the perceptions about violence experienced and/or witnessed. From the answers provided, the situations of violence experienced, the perceptions and the feelings about this fact were investigated more deeply. The data were submitted to the Content Analysis, which allowed the emergence of categories of sense a posteriori in the speech of the participants (Bardin, 2011).

The interviews were conducted at the CENTROPOP, with the authorization of the coordinator of the service. This study follows the ethical precepts with human beings, being approved by the Committee on Ethics in Research of the Federal University of the Health Sciences of Porto Alegre – UFCSPA under the protocol No. 512,240. The interviews were carried out after the agreement and signing of the Informed Consent Form by the participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed later.

Analysis and discussion of results

The first result of the research was to outline the biopsychosocial profile of the participants. The age range of the participants varied between 25 and 55 years, the self-reported ethnicities were three black, two white, and one brown. Five were single and one widow. All with children, ranging from one to five

children. The length of time on the street was from 10 to 36 years. It was observed that the reasons for going to live on the street varied, but all reported belonging to families in situations of social vulnerability and having experienced death of relatives, abandonment of parents, family conflicts and conjugal violence. In order to safeguard the identity of the participants, fictitious names were created for them.

From the analyzes, categories related to physical, psychological, sexual, institutional and structural violence were found. In this article, the categories specifically addressed were: 1) Institutional Violence and 2) Structural Violence. Next, these categories will be presented and discussed.

Violence in the ecological systems (context)

This is about the violence existing in the different contexts in which the street dwellers transit (microsystems) and these are influenced by culture, subculture, ideologies and ways of life (macrosystem). These violences mark their lives significantly. In the Institutional, it was evidenced mainly that perpetrated by institutions and their agents, and in the Structural, that related to the socioeconomic and political structure that reinforces the maintenance of social, cultural, gender, age and ethnic inequalities.

1) Institutional Violence

The concept of institutional violence adopted in this study is in line with that developed by Minayo (2007), which shows to be that existing within the institutions, mainly through their rules, operating rules and bureaucratic and political relationships, reproducing the unfair social structures. An example is the speech of Luciane, when she was admitted to an institution for reception of teenagers, at the age of 14:

They tied us in the small room when we were fighting among each other. They came with medicine to sleep, but we did not want to take medicine, so they gave us injections to sleep. We slept until one o'clock in the morning, without eating, without anything, and they still tied us to the mattress with nothing, only tied with the sheet curled.

The form of treatment adopted by the institution indicates that it has "informal rules" and operating norms that violate the human rights, of both Luciane and the other people who were in that institution of reception. The institution reproduced the logic of punishment as a method for correction of behavior, without taking into account the suffering caused by this form of functioning. Negative feelings expressed by the street dwellers regarding the institutional violence, were also found in the study of Tiradentes (2007), in which they reported being mistreated by the staff, and they feel flouted or humiliated by the situation. The same study addresses the feelings reflected, because 60% felt discriminated, alone and displeased, 47.5% also cited lack of safety and 30% cited fear of physical attack.

Another issue related to these norms in the institutions of reception appears in the speech of Daniele: "There are many rules. If they give you a clothing in there, you cannot use another, you cannot change; otherwise you take suspension for any reason". Data from an institutional reality also found in the study of Tiradentes (2007), in which half of the women interviewed (50%) consider that their freedom is repressed in the shelter, because there are many rules imposed, such as the time to enter and leave the shelter, the time to go to sleep, the need to take a shower, not being able to sleep with the partner, among others. These rules were also found in the following speech:

You can not talk to men (the accommodations are separated by sex) ... you can not talk loud there, because the others want to sleep ... you have to wake up very early, at 5 a.m., there's no time to wake up on the street, you can sleep, it's bad that you have to wait in line to enter. (Daniele, 25 years old)

And in the words of Leticia, 39: "It's a very good shelter, I'm not talking ... but it takes a little away the freedom, something that God gave us, right?" It is observed in the speeches of the participants that the institutions are often characterized as places of accumulation of people, with rigid rules, of observation and punishment of behaviors. They do not welcome their needs, individualities and even the socialization among people is not valued.

From the moment you enters these institutions, it seems that the identity of the participants is withdrawn or loses value. The individual needs are disregarded for the benefit of the collectivity. Rules of coexistence prevail, which are convenient for managers or the staff. The rules themselves are also drivers of development when they benefit the organization of demands of the person and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2011). However, if the person experiences this as something negative in the process, the feeling that will prevail is that of non-freedom, as in the case of the homeless women, and this can affect the relationship of linkage to the service and the program as a whole. Perhaps this lack of negotiation might harm the consolidation of a policy of assistance that acts more effectively.

Institutional violence also occurs in the way public services are provided, denied or neglected. The main examples are health, social security and public safety services. The issue of institutional violence perpetrated by the organs of public security appears in the speeches of five participants and manifests itself in the person, in his/her proximal process and in the contexts in which he/she attends, such as in the example of Luciane, 31: *"Well, when they (military police) see that you are a homeless person, they do not care at all, we are also trash for them", or "There are times that they do not even talk, there are times that they come to us with violence"*.

In the example of Ana, 28 years old: *"I was waiting for a colleague to go to work, we push carts, then they (police officers) came beating in everybody, and they hit me with a nightstick, which dislocated a finger and left me bruised"*. And in the speech of Regina, 29 years old: *"For being homeless person they (police officers) arrive already beating you, not explaining the reason for the approach"*.

These statements demonstrate the way street people are treated by police officers, and it seems to portray their invisibility in the face of the abuse of authority. The institutional violence (microsystem) reflects the structural violence that exists in the macrosystem, that is, the oppression experienced and the feeling of impotence in the face of this established condition are indicative of the existing inequalities. This conception of violence is described by Foucault (2012) as domination, which seeks to annul the potentialities of the other. In the study about the perception of people of popular classes about the police violence carried out by Machado and Noronha (2002), it was verified that the personal appearance - ethnicity, way of dressing, quality of the clothes - is determinant in the relationship between police officers and street dwellers, because the police suspects and often attacks mostly, only the blacks and the poor. This preconception is described by Bronfenbrenner (2011) as a limiter of the proximal process, because it inhibits the approximation of people and reinforces a discriminatory view. Besides, these actions evidence the performance of an ineffective security institution in relation to the non-fulfillment of its purpose, that is, instead of protecting, it promotes more violence.

Aguiar and D'Oliveira (2011) complement the concept of institutional violence by revealing that this violence is also expressed in the negligence of assistance, in the emotional/psychological violence, in the physical violence and sexual abuse. In the emotional violence gross treatment, threats, reprimands, shouts and intentional humiliation, appear, for example: *"They (police officers) throw punches, throw bombs on the floor to scare"* (Daniele, 25) or *"Verbal (violence) sometimes hurt more than the carnal ones, as I say. There is a lot of humiliation, they humiliate because we are homeless"*. (Ana, 28 years old).

In the physical violence, there are kicks, punches, etc., for instance: *"Here in the Park there is a bathroom that they take you there at the back and nobody hears anything, they put a bag on your head, they hit you"* (Regina, 29 years old). In the sexual abuse, perpetrated by agents who should care for the well-being of the population and do not do this, the harassment, the sensation of rape threat, among others are described. The following example demonstrates this violence:

The brigade (military police) searching you, being men, not presenting a female police officer and beating you, do you understand the danger of being raped on the way? Male police officers have several times searched me; they have already said me to take off my bra, lower the bra in front of them. If I did not lower, they would shoot me, would hit me. I told them "I will not lower my bra", but if I did not lower my bra, they would punch me. (Regina, 29 years old)

In this study, perpetuated by other institutions and people, social discrimination, prejudice and indifference appeared. Example: *"Verbal (violence) sometimes hurt more than carnal. It is as I say. There is much humiliation, they humiliate because we are homeless"*. (Ana, 28 years old). *"It is also because I*

am a homeless person, and also these prejudices, but it is more because of my HIV problem, well ... you might get hurt and contaminate another person, this has nothing to do with it!" (Luciane, 31 years old, about the prejudice she suffers when looking for a job). *"Just because they see that we are homeless people they do not like to give us a ride. They do not give us ride; they expel us from the bus. There are some who even beat us".* (Luciane, 31, speaking of bus drivers). *"Sometimes the guys in the bars do not understand, they do not want to give anything to those who are on the street, and if they give, they give sour, rotten things".* (Elisabeth, 55 years old, about the refusal of people to offer food for homeless people).

When we were sleeping there in downtown, a car full of drunk guys stopped and they saw my friend sleeping, what did they do? They threw alcohol and set fire to him, and they said: look there that shameless beggar lying on the sidewalk, hindering the way of others. This was just by prejudice because he was lying there in the corner. (Luciane, 31 years old)

There is also the abandonment of the family (seen as an institution that should be protective) as in the speech of Leticia, 39 years old: *"I said thus: mother, I have a problem of epilepsy, mother, I will have an epileptic seizure, then what will happen ... well, if you die we will bury you and that is it ... this was the answer".* (Leticia says that she ended up on the streets because she was abandoned by her family). Violence that generates helplessness, depression, depersonalization and feelings of isolation and loneliness as showed in another speech of Leticia, 39 years old:

There is the sad part that you feel out of context, you do not know from where you really belong ... it is like a movie, I mean... you know what is happening but at the same time, you are not part of that movie, do you see what I mean?

According to Brofenbrenner (2011), the family should ensure not only the survival of the child, but be a source of support for socialization in such a way that he/she can develop the ability of the human being in development to communicate and relate with competence in his/her physical and social environment. Thus, when the family does not fulfill its role, it enhances the feeling of the person of not belonging to the environment.

According to Minayo (2007), institutional violence is also a result of the lack of access to the necessary services, lack of quality or inadequacy of the assistance, which represents another aggression to the person seeking assistance for different types of needs. According to Chauí (1985), institutional violence is the conversion of a difference and an asymmetry into a hierarchical relationship of inequality for the purpose of domination, exploitation and oppression. It is the conversion of differences into unequal and the inequality in relation to those who are understood as superior and inferior. Action that treats a human being not as a human being, but as a "thing". This is characterized by the passivity and silence, so that, when the activity and the speech of others are prevented or canceled, there is violence. Therefore, institutional violence is a reality experienced in the everyday life of these street dwellers and that affect their development, since they are directly related to their self-esteem, self-concept and their capacity for social interaction.

2) Structural violence

According to Minayo (2007), structural violence is considered as one of the cruelest forms of violence, since it concerns the most different forms of maintenance of social, cultural, gender, age and ethnic inequalities, which produce misery, hunger and the several forms of submission and exploitation of some people by others. It is violence the responsible for the misery in the world. The structural violence contains the institutional violence, but for the purposes of understanding the phenomenon, in this study they were separated in their analyses. The intent of this separation is precisely to give visibility to the violence that women suffer in the context of the street, which reflects the way that the society treats them. The speech of Leticia reveals how the structural violence manifests itself:

This (rape) happened once ... no, several times, because sometimes I had to hook up with guys who I did not like just to have food. It is not a type of rape, you have to be there because you have nowhere to be, and you have nothing to eat so you have to be with this person without liking, without loving him, by necessity.

The speech of Regina, 29 years old, shows the vulnerability of unequal gender relationships: *"If you do not give the money, you are beaten up, you are tortured. It is harder for a woman than for a man; do you know what I mean? Because the woman sometimes has no defense, the man is stronger than the woman"*.

Minayo (1990) points out that structural violence is "the one that comes from the social system itself, creating inequalities and their consequences, such as hunger, unemployment, and all the social problems with which the working class coexists" (p. 290). It also the one that provides a milestone for behavioral violence and is applicable both to organized and institutionalized family structures and to economic, cultural and political systems, leading to the oppression of groups, classes, nations and individuals, making them more vulnerable to suffering and death (Minayo, 1994). Such as in this example: *"I was an inmate, then I had to settle a lot of paperwork to get a job. Now that I have arranged everything, they do not want to give me a job, just because I am a homeless person"*. (Regina, 29 years old).

According to Diniz, Lopes, Arrazola, Gesteira, and Alves (2004) two modalities are considered in the structural violence: violence by omission and violence by commission, the first being conceptualized as the total or partial denial of medical-sanitary actions, as well as the institutional precariousness observed through the disregard, negligence and omission or the inexistence of a public service. This violence appears in the words of Leticia, 39 years old:

The police ... let us speak the truth, like, actually, you call them and they say that it is not their job, and then when you call again, they say that they cannot do anything and they hang up on you, that is true. Then you say to the municipal guard that you have a problem and they say that they can do nothing for you there, and that it is not their job, it is the task of another person and so forth, we become like a ping-pong ball being tossed from side to side.

As for the violence by commission, it comprises the technical violence inherent to the theory and the practice within the health services. It is the violence embedded in the undesirable and/or unnecessary practices and procedures and the consequent repercussions on the health and life of the user population. The structural violence is also present in the ecological systems and, mainly reinforced by a political and economic system based on the exclusion of those who are not regarded as productive.

Living on the street is not a contemporary phenomenon; on the contrary, this is historically present by the way in which Brazil was colonized. Abandoned children, crazy people and beggars were part of the daily life of the streets in Brazilian capitals. With the arrival of total institutions, the same institutions that once committed violence such as orphanages and asylums, the process of street sanitation became an ideal of the most favored economic classes. These institutions were also inefficient.

For decades, the State has not invested in policies that can alleviate this situation and the growth of the street population has increased with the same breath than the general population. Additionally, this lack of investment in several areas such as education, housing and work fomented the aggravation of these social inequalities. The Unified System of Social Assistance (SUAS) is still a recent policy and in the process of implementation and requires from many, efforts for an effective change. The invisibility of the needs for protection of these women is proportional to the lack of governmental or non-governmental programs. Besides, policies and programs that go beyond the welfarist logic are needed, but which comprise the logic of life of this population. The permanence on the street makes still more difficult the return to a level where there is a delimitation of physical space and a requirement with the self-care.

It is unquestionable that male and female street dwellers are initially confined in this environment by the lack of financial resources, housing and employability. However, according to Pimenta and Silva (2010), the issues related to the loss of family ties, identity and sensation of freedom also contribute to these people to remain in this condition. Besides, being on the street can be a sign of problems with drugs and/or presence of some severe and persistent mental disorder. Therefore, the violences present

and discussed in this study (Institutional and Structural) against street women reveal social, gender inequality and lack of access to the constitutional and human rights.

Final considerations

In relation to the violence in the ecological systems identified as categories in this study, it can be affirmed that the institutional and structural violences are present in all contexts (micro-, meso-, exo- and in the macrosystem). Street women denounce the violence perpetrated by military police and other professionals from public institutions, who should care for their and the entire population welfare. These and other people that they have contact present in their practices, according to the street dwellers, ideologies of discredit and loss. They seem to treat them as citizens without rights, destituted of qualities and they do not take into account the individuality, desires and needs of them. The police officers, for instance, they are seen as people who abuse of power, and this fact is present in the speeches in which appear exploitation, discrimination and denial of rights.

One may think that in all the ecological systems in which the dwellers are inserted there are situations of violence, since they do not have basic resources (housing, adequate food, hygiene conditions, respect) for their full development. An example of this is in the family microsystem, where their families of origin were already living in extreme social vulnerability or in the street microsystem, due to the precarious environmental and social conditions. In the mesosystem, there is the lack of social support and a more efficient network of services; in the exosystem, there is the social assistance policy still in the process of implementation of the programs and, finally, the macrosystem with ideologies, beliefs, preconceptions that lead to discrimination and violation of rights as citizens.

It was evidenced, in this study, that female street dwellers are exposed to different types of violence in their different contexts. The existence of multiple forms of violence leads to situations of vulnerability that exacerbate even more the picture of misery in which they are exposed and the quality of life of these street women.

It is believed that the research was beneficial for the street women, because they used such space to denounce their reality, their daily life and the feelings resulting from this experience. It can be perceived that despite the public policies of protection come from the Unified System of Social Assistance (SUAS), or from other sectors, such as the sector of public security, human rights and health area, these street women are still invisible to the social system, because they have restricted access to services. The challenge of this study was precisely to show the existence of this population and to provide space for the participants to reflect, think and position themselves in relation to something that is part of their daily life and that is often trivialized.

The limitations of this study are related to the fact that the research addresses a context of an urban center with its own characteristics, and that these data are specific and not generalizable. However, they reflect a reality that is present in most Brazilian cities that possess homeless people. Another issue is related to the place where the interviews were conducted, that is, within a public institution, which may have inhibited some criticism about the institutions, since the participants praised the performance of the CENTROPOP. More studies on the subject are necessary, because their scarcity reveals the lack of interest of the scientific society of Psychology on certain themes, especially of a marginalized population. Recognizing these violences and thinking about change is a driving force for the healthy development of these people who live on the streets, for the qualification of the services that assist them and for the evolution of the society as a whole. According to Bronfenbrenner (2011), it is "making humans more human".

References

- Aguiar, J. M. & D'Oliveira, A. F. P. L. (2011). Violência institucional em maternidades públicas sob a ótica das usuárias. *Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*, 15 (36), 79-92.
- Arendt, H. (1994). *Sobre a violência*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume - Dumará.
- Bardin, L. (2011). *Análise de Conteúdo*. Lisboa, Portugal: Edições 70.
- Botti, N., Castro, C. G., Silva, M. F., Silva, A. K., Oliveira, L. C., Castro, A. C., & Fonseca, L. L. (2010). Prevalência de depressão entre homens adultos em situação de rua em Belo Horizonte. *Jornal Brasileiro de Psiquiatria*, 59(1), 10-16.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2011). *Bioecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Tornando seres humanos mais humanos*. Porto Alegre: Artmed.
- Carloto, C. M. & Garcia, L. C. (2009). Mas afinal porque a rua? *Serviço Social em Revista*, 12, 1-15.
- Chauí, M. (1985). Participando do debate sobre mulher e violência. In M. Chauí, R. Cardoso, & M. C. Paoli (Orgs.). *Perspectivas antropológicas da mulher* (pp.25-62). Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.
- antas, M. (2007). *Construção de Políticas Públicas para População em Situação de Rua no Município do Rio de Janeiro: Limites, Avanços e Desafios*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.
- Decreto n. 7.053. (2009, 23 de dezembro). Institui a Política Nacional para a População em Situação de Rua e seu Comitê Intersetorial de Acompanhamento e Monitoramento, e dá outras providências. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República.
- Diniz, N. M. F., Lopes, R. L. M., Arrazola, L. S. D., Gesteira, S. M. A., & Alves, S. L. B. (2004). Violência doméstica e institucional em serviços de saúde: experiências de mulheres. *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem*, 57(3), 354-356.
- Foucault, M. (2012). *Uma trajetória filosófica para além do estruturalismo e da hermenêutica* (2ª ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária.
- Frangella, S. M. (2004). *Corpos urbanos errantes: uma etnografia da corporalidade de moradores de rua em São Paulo*. Tese de Doutorado. IFCH/UNICAMP, Campinas, São Paulo.
- Lovisi, G. M. (2000). *Avaliação de distúrbios mentais em moradores de albergues públicos das cidades do Rio de Janeiro e de Niterói*. Tese de Doutorado. Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública/Fiocruz, Rio de Janeiro.
- Machado, E. P. & Noronha C. V. (2002). A Polícia dos Pobres: Violência Policial em Classes Populares Urbanas. *Sociologias*, 7, 188-221.
- Minayo, M. C. S. (1990). A violência na adolescência: um problema de saúde pública. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 6(3), 278-292.
- Minayo, M. C. S. (1994). A Violência social sob a perspectiva da saúde pública. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 10 (1), 07-18.
- Minayo, M. C. de S. (2007). Conceitos, teorias e tipologias de violência: a violência faz mal a saúde individual e coletiva. In E. R. Souza (Org.). *Impactos da Violência na Saúde* (pp.14-35). Rio de Janeiro: EAD/ENSP.
- Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome [MDS] (2008). Secretaria de Avaliação e Gestão da Informação. Meta Instituto de Pesquisa de Opinião. Sumário Executivo. *Pesquisa Nacional sobre a População em Situação de Rua*. Brasília: MDS. Brasília (DF): SAGI.
- Organização Mundial de Saúde [OMS] (2002). *Relatório mundial sobre violência e saúde*. Genebra.
- Pimenta, C. A. M. & Silva, C. L. (2010). Moradores de rua e realidade social contemporânea. *Rev. Bras. de Gestão e Desenvolvimento Regional*, 6 (3), 136-158.
- Prates, J. C., Abreu, P., & Cezimbra L. (2004). Mulheres em situação de rua. In L. C. Bulla, J. M. R. Mendes & J. C. Prates (Orgs.), *As múltiplas formas de exclusão social* (pp. 165- 190). Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS.
- Rosa, C. M. M. (2005). *Vidas de Rua*. São Paulo: Hucitec.
- Rosa, A. S. & Bretãs, A. C. P. (2015). A violência na vida das mulheres em situação de rua na cidade de São Paulo, Brasil. *Interface- Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*, 19(53), 275-85.
- Schuch, P. & Gehlen, I. (2012). A situação de rua para além de determinismos: explorações conceituais. In P. Schuch & K. Krieger. *A Rua em Movimento: debates a cerca da situação da população adulta de rua na cidade de Porto Alegre* (pp. 27-42). Belo Horizonte: Didática Editora do Brasil.
- Tiradentes, L. R. (2007). *Diagnósticos de enfermagem identificados em mulheres em situação de rua*. Dissertação de Mestrado em Enfermagem. Universidade de Guarulhos. São Paulo.

Received: May. 05, 2016

Approved: Sep. 15, 2016

Clarissa De Antoni: Doctorate in Developmental Psychology (UFRGS, 2005), Master's Degree in Psychology (UFRGS, 2000), Specialist in Social Psychology, Graduation in Psychology. Experience in teaching, research and professional in the area of Psychology with emphasis on Community Health. Focus of research and intervention in development of Children, Teenagers and Families in Situation of Psychosocial Risk, Intra-Family Violence, Resilience and Family Vulnerability, Public Policies in Collective Mental Health. She is Adjunct Professor III of the Federal University of Health

Sciences of Porto Alegre (UFCSPA) and of Specialization Courses in the area of Psychology. Head of the Department of Psychology- UFCSPA in 2013-2014. Tutor at PET in Health in 2010-13. Coordinator of the PET in Health/Care Networks II.

Aline Assmann Ruas Munhós: psychologist by the Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre - UFCSPA. She acts as a Clinical Psychologist and as a volunteer, through Volunteer Partners, at the Hospital Nossa Senhora das Graças -Canoas. Professional experience in health, school area and assistance. She performs lectures in institutions.