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LEGACY OF VIOLENCE The situation of perpetrators of intimate partner violence

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Abstract: Researching for more than twenty years on the subject of violence against women, my gaze sharpened, my understanding sharpened. My position has changed to take a broad view of domestic violence as it is called in Latin America and marital violence as we approach it in France. After caring for women in situations of violence, adolescents, I accompanied men, perpetrators of violence. Working with men is a big step and a determining factor in the fight against recidivism. I understood that it was necessary to work with all age groups, genders, ethnic and racial groups. Because society is a producer and reproducer of violence. Because we raise our sons and daughters in a traditional way that does not allow change; that does not allow respect, equity, freedom to be who we are. We build shelters, we send men to jail. How many children are orphaned when their mother is killed? What happens to these children? Did we solve the problem? Then it became clear to change the paradigm, stop «fighting against» to propose another way to transform relationships and violence. defend something In this case, we defend education for peace, which implies education for citizenship, the responsibility of each one as a citizen. Spousal violence is a public health problem and a problem for each and every one of us.

INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I have been working for more than twenty years, researching violence against women. My research has extended to children, adolescents, the elderly and men. Everyone suffers violence; differentiated violence based on gender, ethnicity, social class, age group, region of the world where they live. In this sense, the concept of intersectionality

1. Feminist, teacher at UCLA School of law y Columbia Law School, specialized in issues of race and gender, as well as constitutional law.

has become unavoidable.

We cannot study any population individually and outside of its social and historical context, within a society made up of different groups. We know that groups exist, grow, eventually fall apart due to the other groups with whom they need to live, fight (for power, be recognized or not).

The concept of intersectionality was created by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw¹, a feminist specialist in issues of race and gender. She first used this term in 1991, when she presented a survey related to violence experienced by women of color, in disadvantaged classes, in the United States.

An activist for racial equality, an unusual professional, she intervenes in several studies in the United States to obtain more equality in American society. She also addressed the issue of civil rights in Brazil.

Inherited from American black feminist theories, intersectionalism is a sociological concept that designates the situation of a person who brings together racial, social, sexual, spiritual and religious characteristics that make him accumulate various social disadvantages and make him a victim of various forms of discrimination. Obviously I am talking about disadvantages in relation to a hegemonic power that dictates rules, codes and determines who is in power and who must submit to that power, since they are not part of this elite, of this group.

It addresses the different forms of domination or discrimination.

Kimberlé Crenshaw defines intersectionality as «ways of capturing the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination: sexism, racism, patriarchy, which is the opposite of the way Western societies segment such violence». So, don't just study the fact of being a woman, study at the same time the

fact of being black, belonging to the LGBT group, a religious or spiritual group, and the consequences of these characteristics in the life of a black, poor, single woman, homosexual for example... Such a person will crystallize all these discriminations and each one will expand, reinforce the others.

I have used this concept for decades without naming it. I didn't know him when I did a field research, for a doctorate, between Recife and Calcutta, along with artisan street food vendors. It essentially worked on questions of identity. She wanted to know how the women, the food vendors, felt working in the streets. My great surprise was to discover that the common point between them was the feeling of poverty. They did not present themselves as women, cooks, mothers, workers...

They did not talk about gender, about being a woman. They talked about being poor, preparing poor food, living in a poor place... This poverty was perceived, lived and compared in relation to the wealth of middle-class women, who have a car, beautiful clothes and well-done nails.

Feeling that this changed depending on the country: the Pernambucans were happier than the Bengalis because they enjoyed the advantages and the pleasure of being on the street, and then they perceived it as a place of freedom. This feeling of freedom was related to the fact that they do not have a schedule, they do not have a boss and they can take their children to the streets. It was an illusion, but that illusion helped them to live.

The Bengalis suffered from being on the street, because the place of a woman, of a mother is not on the street, it is inside the house. They suffered from belonging to the caste of the untouchables, for the most part and feeling the contempt of the representatives of the other castes.

In Marseille, France, I also questioned female identities: women, migrants, from

different countries, sometimes in conflict, married, single, victims of domestic violence... They had all encountered obstacles during migration and settling in that new country. Each had found solutions to adapt, depending on their own history.

When I saw men who were the perpetrators of violence, another world was revealed. I understood that, for these men, we can also talk about intersectionality: ethnic, social, religious orientation. Human beings are multiple. I discovered that men suffer other forms of violence and that they need to learn to speak, to consider themselves, to see themselves as they are. This work with masculinities is essential for men, women, society in general and to reduce violence, at a personal, group, social and international level.

Working with masculinities means understanding the origin of this violence, it means working with the aim of reducing violence against women. It also means reflecting and seeking answers about violence. Such violence is interpersonal but also and above all social, societal since society allows the production and reproduction of violence.

I usually use various tools, but two of them were used with men who committed violence, to make them recognize themselves as multiple human beings, to make them understand that it's not just men who attack, to assess where this violence came from, how they acquired it, because they can't deal with it. Because it manifests itself when they least expect it and because they cannot tame it, since it is she who tames in this context.

METHODOLOGY

I will present these two important tools within the scope of qualitative methodology to monitor male perpetrators of violence, in different contexts, cities, countries, cultures.

The first is **to talk**.

Talking is a powerful tool for both women and men. It is the first step to take ownership of your own life story, understand it and face it. Talking about your life story allows you not only to explain to the researcher the elements of your life since childhood, but also to understand your own violence. Returning to childhood, despite being painful, brings explanations and allows an awareness and start of treatment.

It is important to explain that the men were treated after being reported by their partner for domestic violence. They do not occur spontaneously. In most cases, they deny violence, due to relational anesthesia (Guimarães, 2015) because they do not want and cannot accept this type of violence. In the process, the person removes part of the events from her awareness in order to survive the pain. On the one hand, the subject protects himself or thinks that he is protecting himself from a reality that he does not want to see. At least in the short term. Most of the men who commit violence, when they are called to join the working group with psychologists, do not identify with this group: I have nothing to do with these men who beat their women.

Relational anesthesia makes them unable to face such violence. In the process, the person removes part of the events from her consciousness in order to survive the event. pain.

On the other hand, they remain dependent and at the mercy of emotions, post-traumatic suffering and the cycle of violence that will not stop as long as they deny it. We will develop this issue later.

During our first meeting, the men who committed violence present themselves as innocent. I didn't do anything, I don't know what I'm doing here... She was the one who provoked me... I mean, they deny violent acts, they don't recognize themselves as aggressors.

After that first phase, they often blame their partner: she is the one making fun of me... She doesn't play her part... She doesn't respect me... And our goal is to make the perpetrator of violence aware of the acts that, recognizes and assumes responsibility for what happened. It is interesting to understand that when the subject begins to speak, he releases his feelings, his emotions, he releases anger and hatred. He tells the story of him.

This tool is part of the context of qualitative research and research - action, that is, something dynamic where the researcher and the researched create bonds of trust, dialogues and where they seek answers to a situation that calls for social solutions. Thus, in addition to violence, the central theme revolves around masculinities. What does it mean to be a man? How to behave like a man? What are the codes and obligations of men in Brazilian society? Is domestic violence accepted in society for showing authoritarianism and masculine power? Many examples show that because men and women think about gender, sex, its determination, the adaptation of the individual is not just about the natural order. It also has to do with the symbolic.

Brazilian society, being patriarchal, distributed roles and labels to men and women. Many men and women, for example, consider it normal for men to be the breadwinners in the family; do not engage in housework, do not care for children, except to place the fair inside the house; also be aggressive, also be possessive.

In the same way that you are not born a woman, you become a woman, you are not born a man, you become a man. Male models are slowly changing. Society continues to impose on man a model of being a man. The economic and financial charges are multiple.

On the other hand, what happens when a child sees violence against his mother, when he himself suffers violence and becomes a

direct victim? How can this child experience, understand and assimilate this acquired violence? Today we know that a child, a person who has suffered a trauma related to violence, if it is not treated, if it is not talked about, if it is not accompanied by a professional, will suffer consequences for their life. He imprints a trauma on his brain and just waits for an opportunity, which will manifest itself with a voice, a smell, a song, a memory, and the pain will return with great force, remembering the violence of the first pain.

Muriel Salmona (2018) talks about post-traumatic memory, which appears tens of years after an assault and will have irreversible consequences on the mental and physical health of the subject. These consequences will manifest in various ways, such as flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, permanent stress and fear, with addictive behaviors such as addictions to cigarettes, drugs, medications...

For this reason, I consider that there is a phenomenon of social reproduction of violence in male aggressors. Essentially when they are unaccompanied.

When she tells the story of his life, the object of the investigation becomes the subject, the subject of her own life. He understands that, by narrating his story, he frees himself from a burden, from pains that he wanted to forget but that, at any moment, in any circumstance, he remembered that they existed, tormenting him and preventing tranquility, causing anger, hatred, waking up the ogre that slept inside it.

The second tool is the Margarida. The daisy, as everyone knows, is a flower with many petals. I learned this dynamic from a teacher friend who spent most of his life between Algeria and Morocco, teaching French to young students. The cross-cultural theme was ubiquitous in formal classes as well as in informal gatherings. Then he developed this daisy exercise so that each one of his students

would understand that he is a multiple and complex being that cannot be reduced to a single qualification, to a single facet of his personality, of his being. The daisy dynamic brings discussion about how I feel and how others perceive me. Each participant fills a quality, a characteristic within each petal. Exercise is difficult for many of them. They did not stop to think about who they really were. In general, a significant part, half of the petals remain empty.

What do you mean by writing who I am? I'm nothing; I don't know how to do anything; I'm a man...

And what is it to be a man?

Being a man is being a good father, a good son. To be a man is to put the fair inside the house; it is playing soccer with friends on the beach; is hanging out with friends and having a beer.

They don't talk about themselves. The impression is that they don't know each other, they don't want to talk about them. They don't want to bother: it's not interesting, nobody cares who I am, what I do, what I like. Men don't want to give up, talk about themselves. They were never heard. They do not know how to speak, express emotions, desires, professional and/or psychological aspirations. No one paid attention to his emotional needs. So they think they are worthless. They were denounced by their partner for violence and do not accept this situation.

Another notable element in their speech is that the men respond by saying what they think they are expected to say. They do not respond by saying who they really are, what they like, why, what they do, what they would like to do.

They answer to have a beautiful speech. They don't respond to who they are, what they do, how they do it, and why they do it.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: THE DIFFICULTY OF ASSUMING WHO THEY ARE

These tools help establish contact with men who commit violence and facilitate speech and expression. By verbalizing the acts, they are aware of the facts and can take responsibility for what happened.

In Brazil, the investigation together with men took place in Jaboatão dos Guararapes - Pernambuco - between 2014 and 2015. The multidisciplinary team of the Jaboatão Domestic Violence Court, made up of a psychologist, a social worker and two interns, based their actions on the perpetrators of domestic violence in article 30 of the Maria da Penha law (11.340 / 06). The skills of the multidisciplinary team, among others, consist of developing guidance, referral, prevention and other measures directed at the perpetrator of violence, at the individual and group level. In addition, the objective is to make article 45 of Law 11,340 / 2006 effective, in which it states that the «judge may determine the compulsory attendance of the aggressor in recovery and re-education programs», which reinforces the need to act together with the perpetrators of domestic violence. I was lucky to be able to work together with the team and have access to the perpetrators of violence. All accepted the survey based on a questionnaire and the daisy.

We discuss the results with the working group.

To complete the research, I used the «life story» method with women and men who agreed to do this exercise.

The economic situation of the participating men is difficult; the social group, in general, is low-income. Men live from informal work when they find one and the level of education is basic or non-existent.

16 questionnaires were applied.

Almost all (12) state that they do not have or have had dependency problems (with alcohol or drugs).

Two (2) spoke of physical violence, eight (8) of verbal violence and threats; the other six (6) denied any type of violence.

Two things seem important to me:

Men are, on average, 35 years old. 12 have children. 11 work, the majority in informal work. They explain that when they go to prison, the CPF is dirty and they can no longer get formal jobs. Many speak of bicos, informal work, a precarious situation.

Almost all (12) state that they do not have or have had dependency problems (with alcohol or drugs).

Two (2) spoke of physical violence, eight (8) of verbal violence and threats; the other six (6) denied any type of violence.

- The main element was that no man wrote on the daisy that he was a man. Everyone put on like father, son, husband, boyfriend, friend...

When I asked about the identity of a man, the answers were very conventional. They probably answered what they thought they needed to answer. In other words, the man needs to put the fair inside the house... The father plays with his son...

It would be important to organize debates, training, classes, to address the issues of masculine identity and identity with students, men and women, at work, in communities, at school to accompany young people and adults in this construction of masculinity.

- The second is that they affirm that the violence does not come from them, but from external elements: alcohol, according to them, if there were no alcohol, there would be no violence, or the partner, it is she who causes it.

These two elements show that they do not consider themselves men, as they must be, they feel inferior for not having financial

conditions, for not providing the family with a better life.

Perhaps the most important thing is the lack of responsibility for the violence, which leads us to accompany these men in rendering accounts of their own actions; acknowledge that they were the perpetrators of the violence. The essential to avoid recurrence.

QUESTIONS ABOUT MALE IDENTITY

The anthropologist finds various forms of masculinities according to the history of societies, cultures and the impact of religions.

He could provide countless examples to show that, being thought by men and women, gender, sex, their determination, the adaptation of the individual is not only related to the natural order. They also have to do with the symbolic. And society as a whole carries this symbolic, which makes it more difficult to transform.

When the psychologist de la Vara resumed Margarida's work with men to talk about the reality of being a man, only positive qualities were identified, masculine qualities, such as:

To take care of the family, be a worker, accompany the children, be a good father, be a good husband, be a provider, be brave ... That is, qualities that were shown to them (and not taught), as a model, as what they must be, as a goal to be achieved in order to be a «good man». These qualities are what morality proposes, or the dominant group shows as the rule, but they do not always correspond to reality.

They did not talk about what they really were, how they felt, how they felt ashamed for not corresponding to the male hegemonic model, a model expected by society and especially by their partner. A true man.

Robert W. Connell (2000) speaks of «an ethnographic moment in masculinity studies,» when he explains that the variety of

topics and social contexts brings diversified research. The empirical, in a defined space, in a particular time and in a chosen medium, enriches these investigations, showing plural masculinity, hierarchy and hegemony.

In Brazil, as in the vast majority of world cultures, to be considered a man, the first quality is to be manly. Man must have the social characteristics attributed to him by the hegemonic standard: strength, courage, the ability to fight, the «right to violence», honor, power, sexual potency. This virility is taught and imposed on the young men by the group of men during socialization.

For example, in ancient Rome, the recognition of being virile implied a frugal life, dedicated to politics and war, to the things of «man». The less a man cared about sex, the more virile he was. He did not depend on pleasures, he did not submit to pleasure, which kept him from serious things.

But virility is not masculinity.

The extraordinary subjective power of masculine ideology comes from the fact that it not only structures the relations of domination between the sexes, but also the global representation of the world. All our categories of thought were formed in this binomial: masculine / feminine:

Hot/cold, dry/humid, inside/outside, high/low, active/passive, theoretical/practical, rational/irrational, and other fundamental dualities, as well as positive and negative (Héritier, 2012).

The «myth of virility» today is, in fact, an alienation both for men (whether or not they have distanced themselves from the hegemonic model) and for women.

Men who commit violence need assistance to recognize reality as it is, to recognize that they are or were violent, and to want to change that reality. Besides the fact that they are responsible for the violence itself. This responsibility for the violence of the

perpetrators is fundamental since it allows them to put words on the events, the emotions, the feelings and their history.

It is decisive in this, since by assuming this responsibility, they avoid recurrence and, mainly, become agents of transformation with other men in the neighborhood where they live.

- My working hypothesis regarding conjugal and/or domestic violence lies in the fact that there is, in the first place, a dominated-dominant relationship. One has power over the other.

So, being like that, I met women who were the perpetrators of marital violence, since they had the power in the relationship. They spoke loudly, they demanded, they threatened, they hit, always mistreating because they had the power. There are some testimonials in England and France written by men who have experienced spousal violence. They had empowered their mate.

My hypothesis is reinforced by the little research we have on homoaffective couples where violence is as important as in heteroaffective couples.²³⁴

- Coutanceau (2011) says that the fact of not feeling like a real man makes the perpetrators of violence attack, for not having enough self-esteem. The partner is the closest person, the one who observes, coexists, knows who the partner really is. She is assaulted for knowing who he is. Her despair at not being who she wanted to be makes him violent.

PROPOSALS AND ALTERNATIVES TO LIMIT FAMILY VIOLENCE

My proposal is the same since I started working with the perpetrators of violence. It is urgent to organize work groups, reflection and responsibility groups, directed at the perpetrators of violence.

Accompanying the perpetrators of violence, we seek explanations at the root of the problem, at the origin of the violence. Working with the life stories of the authors allows us to understand that:

- Most of them suffered violence in childhood. This suffering was not treated and over the years it crystallized.

- I suggest monitoring all people in situations of violence (perpetrators and victims): identify violence, recognize it and treat it.

- Domestic violence demonstrates relationships of power and domination between two or more people. This power relationship may have to do with gender, age, economic status, or even ethnic origin; sometimes all these data intervene in relationships of violence.

I remember that we are plural and that various elements can interfere with interpersonal and intra-family relationships.

In this sense, it is important to introduce training on respect, self-esteem, diversity and how to live with others in educational institutions.

In other words, the problem of domestic violence is much broader than a couple problem, it is a social problem that can be transformed, if society as a whole so decides.

2. "And when are they? Violent relationships in a lesbian perspective", master's thesis defended by Nathalia Christina Cordeiro, at the Federal University of Bahia

3. Gaget Maxime "Ma compagne, mon bourreau »

4. Skeel Alex, 22-year-old Englishman testified to extreme conjugal violence by his partner

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