Violence, institutions and culture

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to understand how civil society networks engaged in policies for the prevention and countering of gender-based violence can effectively act and influence the political agenda, and, more specifically, how political participation is understood and articulated in terms of constructing democracy based on the non-violation of human rights. In this regard, analyzing the relationship between institutions and culture makes it possible to codify the dialectic between tension, trust, and transformation, starting from the subjective experiences of encounters with anti-violence centers, which are embedded in relations of intersubjective and political trust. The working hypothesis is that the dialectic between tension and trust—interpreted through the relationship between culture and institutions—may give rise to dynamics of transformation within local contexts and territories.

Key words

Violence; institution; culture

1. Introduction

Our reflection aims to focus on the experience of anti-violence centers in Southern Italy, particularly in Calabria, from a particular point of view, that of the relationship between institutions and culture. The research reconstruct existing experiences and the path taken over the years through specific theoretical lenses to try to understand why in Calabria anti-violence centers represent different and complex places.

In some cases they prove capable of building important networks to address different issues related to violence, other times they are configured as parallel paths, which also have difficulty communicating with each other.

The role of civil society organizations active in combating violence against women has recently (July 2023) been emphasized by the European Union's accession to the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and is also shaped as important in the process of evaluating the implementation of the Convention. The Convention, signed on May 11, 2011, was ratified in Italy by Law – N. 77 of 06/27/2013 where it is recognized that gender-based violence is a serious violation of human rights, particularly against women, physical and psychological integrity, security, freedom and dignity of the person. This legislation is the reference for regional laws to regulate the subject with some significant differences, some regions have issued a general law that has the character of framework legislation (such as Emilia Romagna and Lazio), others have opted for a plurality of regulatory interventions regulating independently the various profiles of the subject (such as Campania) and other regions finally that have regulated only some profiles (Regional Observatory on Gender Violence) and have to intervene to regulate other areas.

Calabria opted to promulgate an initial law in 2007 on anti-violence centers, in October 2017 it presented a bill that aims to regulate interventions to prevent, combat and subsequently support women and their children who are victims of gender-based violence and regulates the establishment of the Regional Observatory. The regional legislation on paper turns out to be well articulated, in addition to Framework Law 328/2000, Law 154/2001 for combating violence in family relationships, Law 20/2007 for the support of listening centers and shelters, the aforementioned law establishing the observatory, Law 285/2017 for the prevention and support of victims (which has remained in limbo in the III committee) and various junta resolutions, such as N. 539/2017, which established a regional thematic working table, have been approved. The latest intervention is the law approved on March 8, 2022, which provides measures to overcome gender discrimination and incentives for women's employment, passed in February and remained without financial coverage.

These legislative measures are complemented by activities promoted by regional executive bodies. In particular, it is appropriate here to point out the "regional working table for preventing and combating violence against women," a technical body with the task

of contributing to the planning of lines of intervention as well as promoting the integration of policies to combat violence against women with social, social-health, training and labor policies. The law on femicide, which entered into force on 2 December 2025, marks a crucial step in the Italian legal framework for combating violence against women. This reform introduces into the Criminal Code a new autonomous offence—femicide—and substantially reshapes both the criminal provisions related to gender-based violence and the organization of investigations and precautionary measures, with the explicit aim of strengthening the protection afforded to victims.

At the core of the reform lies the newly enacted Article 577-bis of the Criminal Code, which establishes femicide as an autonomous criminal offence. The provision mandates life imprisonment for the killing of a woman when the act constitutes an expression of hatred, discrimination, domination, control, or coercion, or when it is connected to a woman's refusal to initiate or continue an intimate relationship, or to conduct that seeks to restrict her personal freedoms. The law therefore conceptualizes femicide not as a mere "aggravated homicide" but as a distinct phenomenon, rooted in cultural patterns that transform gender relations into dynamics of possession. The prescribed penalty—life imprisonment, reflects the severity of a crime that epitomizes, in its most extreme form, systemic violence against women.

Alongside this autonomous offence, the law introduces a new gender-based aggravating circumstance, applicable to several offences central to the dynamics of gendered violence: domestic abuse, bodily harm, stalking, sexual violence, and non-consensual termination of pregnancy. In all these cases, the penalty is increased when the conduct arises from the same power structures underpinning femicide. These enhancements have far-reaching implications not only in terms of sentencing but also on procedural aspects, including rules governing wiretapping and precautionary measures. The aim is to make visible the entire escalation pathway that frequently precedes the most tragic outcomes, thereby acknowledging the seriousness of everyday violence, not only its lethal forms.

Among the provisions with the greatest practical impact are those concerning domestic abuse: the offence is now extended to situations in which the victim and the perpetrator no longer cohabit but remain connected through shared parental responsibilities. The law also

introduces mandatory confiscation of mobile phones and digital devices used to commit acts of domestic abuse.

Equally significant are the reforms to the Code of Criminal Procedure. Jurisdiction over several "red code" offences is reorganized; the rules on wiretapping and precautionary measures are revised; and public prosecutors are granted broader powers to order conservatory seizures aimed at protecting victims' claims. A major innovation concerns the victim's hearing: upon the victim's request, the public prosecutor must conduct the interview personally, unless a written justification for delegation is provided. This requirement may, however, strain prosecutorial offices given the high number of proceedings in domestic violence cases.

The law also intervenes in the system of precautionary measures by introducing a presumption in favor of custodial measures for certain offences and by doubling the minimum distance required under restraining orders from 500 to 1,000 meters. Additionally, victims must now be notified whenever a court revokes electronic monitoring or declines to confirm precautionary measures subject to review.

Another notable element concerns testimonial examination: judges are expressly prohibited from allowing questions that might infringe upon the dignity or decorum of the victim or lead to forms of secondary victimization. Although symbolically and culturally meaningful, this provision opens the door to future interpretive debates, particularly regarding its interaction with the defendant's right to a full and fair defense.

Finally, the law incorporates several additional measures: expansion of the offences limiting eligibility for penitentiary benefits, mandatory specialized training for judges and prosecutors handling gender-based violence cases, and new rules governing coordination between criminal and civil proceedings, especially when minors are involved.

Taken together, the reforms aim to strengthen the criminal justice response to gender-based violence. Yet no legislative intervention can, by itself, transform the cultural terrain in which such violence develops and persists. Gender-based violence does not arise suddenly; it is a gradual, everyday, often silent process. Addressing this process requires intertwining legal reform with profound cultural change, only by acting on both levels can society hope to erode the deep-rooted structures that continue to enable violence against women.

Within the broader framework shaped by the national reform,

Calabria's Regional Law No. 34/2025 constitutes an essential component for understanding how gender-based violence policies take concrete form at the territorial level. Rather than merely absorbing national directives, the regional legislation develops its own operational model, firmly situated within the perspective of the Istanbul Convention and grounded in the recognition that violence against women is a structural phenomenon rooted in enduring power asymmetries and cultural patterns.

At the heart of the law lies an emphasis on prevention, premised on the idea that violence does not erupt suddenly but emerges gradually through everyday practices that often remain invisible. This perspective drives a strong commitment to acting on culture, social representations, and relational competencies. The Region promotes awareness-raising initiatives, educational programmes in schools and universities, and public campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes and dismantling the normalization of male dominance. This approach shifts the focus from immediate punitive reactions toward transforming the social environments that make violence possible.

Alongside this cultural work, the law delineates an articulated system of territorial governance. The creation of a Regional Anti-Violence Network, mirrored by local networks, responds to the need to overcome fragmentation among services and institutions. Social services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, the judiciary, universities, and specialized associations are brought together into a single protective infrastructure. This design reflects a model of territorial welfare that values interconnectedness and recognizes both the complexity of women's pathways out of violence and the need for coordinated, integrated responses.

Calabria also invests in strengthening Anti-Violence Centres, Shelter Houses, and Centres for Perpetrators of Violence (CUAV). The co-existence of these structures expresses the understanding that addressing gender-based violence requires multilayered interventions: immediate protection, psychological and legal support, socio-economic empowerment, and—importantly—specialized programmes for perpetrators, aimed at disrupting the reproduction of violent behaviours. From this standpoint, violence is not treated merely as an individual act but as a learned pattern that can—and must—be addressed through targeted educational intervention.

Particular attention is devoted to children exposed to domestic

violence. The law explicitly acknowledges that witnessing violence constitutes a form of maltreatment in its own right and provides specific psychological and educational support measures, including free access to essential school services. This represents a significant step, as it situates gender-based violence within a broader sociological reflection on family dynamics and the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

On the institutional side, the law strengthens mechanisms for monitoring and public planning, including the enhancement of the Regional Observatory on Gender-Based Violence and the adoption of a Three-Year Regional Plan guiding strategic priorities and operational actions. Data collection and systematic evaluation thus become structural components of a public policy that aims not only to intervene but also to understand, map, and anticipate social phenomena.

Finally, the legislation allows the Region to allocate assets confiscated from organized crime to support anti-violence centres, shelters, and CUAV structures. This measure carries a powerful symbolic weight: it links the protection of women with the social reclaiming of spaces once controlled by criminal power, reaffirming that the fight against gender-based violence is inseparable from the construction of democratic citizenship.

Taken as a whole, Calabria's regional law offers a concrete example of how a territory can translate national legislation into a coherent architecture of integrated policies combining prevention, protection, socio-educational intervention, and cultural transformation. This approach does not merely respond to emergencies but acknowledges gender-based violence as a systemic and structural phenomenon requiring sustained, collective, and continuous work.

2. Culture and institution

However, legislative measures, although important in that they set the rules of the game and the principles from which to start, are not enough to bring about real change in the prevention of gender-based violence and feminicide. Meanwhile, because there is ample self-regulatory power in the legislation that can become a moment of experimentation accrued by the territory within the territory, but which can also be reinterpreted by local actors on the basis of interests and

purposes other than those intended or on the basis of their possibilities and capacities for action. Decrees are important, but they are not enough; we need to turn our eyes to real territorial processes, to the needs of places; we need to build interconnections and collaborations. There is a need for an active role of the institutional political system that is not limited only to the promulgation of laws, but must regulate processes, involving local actors, identifying methods and strategies that take into account territorial realities, potentials and constraints, initiating processes animated by a broad and participatory cultural and political-institutional debate to generate readiness for joint action. Cognitive and cultural change must be promoted, as evidenced by the various incidents of violence against women. "Most cultures promote and allow forms of sexual aggression; psychological and physical harassment are often justified by virtue of belonging to a certain cultural community and its traditions. Culture is not something fixed and unchanging that derives from nature: rather, it is an artificial and social construct that is constantly changing. In other words, culture creates the sense of society, but it is itself a social creation. Sexual harassment finds its context within this circularity: rape culture has produced social mores and rules with dominant attitudes that justify and promote gender-based violence. In this context, cultural systems define genders through stereotypes, erasing people's real experiences, depriving them of authentic recognition and destroying the credibility of their narratives. In summary: abuse is an episode that is part of a system where culturally constructed gender roles come into play."

Culture refers to the knowledge, customs and values shared and disseminated in a given society throughout history and guides decisions and actions as they are internalized by individuals. Values motivate action by conforming it to goals deemed valid in society, but it is institutions that through specific obligations, norms and sanctions formally or informally define behavior and ensure compliance by individuals. Institutionalist sociologists such as Streeck (1994) Wildavsky (1987) assert that norms, rules, values, customs, and traditions influence the decisions an actor makes, and it is social, economic, political, and cultural relations that determine what is desired. Moral codes, norms of behavior, and informal conventions, transmitted by culture over the long periods of history, as well as formal constraints and rules help to regulate relations between individuals and society. The tension

that arises between formal and informal constraints produces change and requires the presence of institutions that enable the construction and maintenance of social order. A strong institutional political system is able to establish the rules that govern the incentive structure, regulate political representation, and ensure balance in the distribution of power and expertise. For social order to be guaranteed, the consistency between values, the source of legitimacy, and institutions is crucial (Trigilia 2015). The correspondence between cultural and structural elements also turns out to be an important factor in dealing with gender-based violence. When this congruence between values and norms, culture and institutions is realized, strong and accountable political institutions can grow, effectively inclusive ones that positively resolve prejudice and inequality by ensuring social cohesion. On the contrary, the lack of integration and reciprocity between institutional spheres results in an obvious weakness in the ability to represent weaker social groups and a growth of inequality. The differences that are generated also concern the distances that separate individuals that can be identified in different dimensions and weaken fundamental rights such as that to health, education, security, justice, and equality. The causes and consequences of inequalities, understood as disparities in outcomes and opportunities, are attributable not only to economic variables, but especially to institutional factors that influence the concrete implementation of rules and the functioning of organizations that condition the concrete implementation of policies and the enjoyment of citizenship rights and the quality of basic services. The "trap of institutions," which Trigilia speaks of, induces adaptation pathways that reproduce the weakness of civil society and the public sphere and shift the focus away from how public organizations can affect the provision of public services whose quality is guaranteed to all citizens, effectively reducing inequalities. "This is a fundamental aspect of territorial cohesion goals that calls into question not only policies, but a change in institutions understood as shared social practices that makes them more responsive to collective interests" (Trigilia 2019, p. 135). Institutions and the interaction with cultural and value aspects, can also be considered as an interpretive key with regard to gender-based violence insofar as social action, oriented by subjective and shared systems of meaning guides behavior giving rise to certain logics of action (Borghi, Magatti, 2002). In the informal modes of social organization, in fact, both

adaptation and innovation can be expressed; the construction of such paths involves a continuous work of social weaving that different actors enact through the construction of networks of formal and informal relations in the different institutional spheres, between the dimensions of culture, economy, and politics, and that contribute to regaining the equilibriums broken in out-of-squad societies. Balanced societies, on the other hand, are characterized by institutions capable of regulating different processes and reducing the distance between institutions and citizens by enabling processes of inclusion and integration.

For example, the Regional Observatory on Gender-Based Violence, established to monitor the phenomenon of violence against women in Calabria and initiate structured actions to raise awareness and prevention, interrupted its activities due to the lapse of its members and only recently, in March 2023 after about 5 years, were new members appointed. The coordinator of the Observatory in an interview pointed out that the constant discussion with women and anti-violence centers and networks has led to the identification of some actions to be implemented through synergy and collaboration between the different actors involved in assisting women victims of violence. In this regard, the president of the Regional Council, noted how, "In Calabria, where the numbers on violence against women are alarming, it is necessary to make concrete efforts to support the culture of legality, implementing a system of protection rooted in the territories. From the strengthening of the network of anti-violence centers, to the increase of shelters, to the activation in all hospitals of pink paths for women victims of violence."

The problems, in addition to the lack of resources to implement the activities planned by the anti-violence centers, also concern the institutional capacity to plan effective interventions. To this end, it is important to consolidate an efficient system of data collection and classification that is functional to the various cognitive needs. As reported in the Observatory's 2019 Report, "A systematic and structured activity of research, documentation and monitoring does not only allow to describe the phenomenon from a statistical point of view, but aims to monitor the trend of the phenomenon, provide interpretations also related to the context, in order to allow to plan appropriate interventions. For this activity to be effective, it presupposes coordination work with all the nodes of the network (institutional actors, associations and the third sector), a process of involvement and coordination that is often

confronted with the criticalities of developing and testing shared procedures, particularly with reference to languages and the selection of information. The Report states, "Coordinating and sharing, in this perspective, does not mean pooling all the information available to the network; rather, it means proceeding to the selection of a minimum common standard (indicators) that can link communication languages and allow monitoring and understanding of some aspects of the phenomenon of male violence against women. Critical issues related to sharing and differences among the network actors therefore highlight the importance of opening an informed and conscious discussion and reflection on experiences and data collection models. One of the most important criticalities highlighted – with regard to synergies among network subjects – is the so-called 'traceability,' that is, the possibility of identifying the path taken by a woman who has suffered violence in her request for help addressed to external subjects, through a common and computerized system of data collection. This specific aspect, which does not directly concern monitoring activities-strictly anonymous-raises undoubted methodological questions. On the one hand, there is a clear need to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected, i.e., the guarantee that what each woman tells about her life story and experience will not be shared except at her explicit request; on the other hand, there emerges the need to create a data collection system common to several network subjects (law enforcement, social services, health services, anti-violence centers, etc.) that allows access to the relevant data under conditions of absolute security. There are no well-established good practices on this aspect at the national level; however, it is clear that in the face of the need for protection and the creation and consolidation of a relationship of trust with women who have suffered violence, any possible methodological criticality in the data collection system must be evaluated with extreme care and flexibility."

3. The research

Within this theoretical approach, the decision was made to focus on the role of civil society networks engaged in policies aimed at preventing and combating gender-based violence, seeking to understand how these networks can effectively act and influence the political agenda. The reference framework, formalized by the definition of violence

established by the Istanbul Convention, then makes it possible to develop a second research question concerning institutional action in terms of building forms of democracy grounded in the non-violation of human rights. In particular, the aim of the work can be summarized in an attempt to codify the dialectic between tension, trust, and transformation and to start from subjective experiences and the' encounter with anti-violence centers considered as immersed in relationships of intersubjective and political trust.

The main hypothesis therefore is that the dialectic between tension and trust, read in the relationship between culture and institutions, can give rise to dynamics of transformation of contexts and territories.

In this direction, we conducted in-depth interviews with female staff members, representatives, and volunteers from anti-violence centers, as well as with institutional representatives. We also analyzed political and regulatory proposals, along with institutional and political outputs.

3.1. Anti-violence centers and political participation

In the study on the link between institutions and culture starting from the theme of violence against women, it was important to read the activities of anti-violence centers from a political perspective, starting from the categories linked to the construction of power which is reflected in asymmetric dynamics also at the institutional level.

The analysis carried out in the first part of the research allowed us to identify the practices of anti-violence centers and analyze them as forms of political participation, in a constant tension between taking part and being part, into the decision-making spaces of institutions. First of all, it was necessary to understand that the aim of anti-violence centers was to deconstruct violence as an emergency issue, defining it in the public sphere as a structural matter and one of public relevance. The next step was to politicize violence both as an issue connected to definitions of power, and by placing violence back at the center as a violation of human rights. The analysis then focused on the forms of participation of anti-violence centers in relation to institutional activities, identifying three models of actions undertaken: actions contesting decisions that had been made, actions contesting decision-making gaps, and actions exerting pressure on the political priorities considered at any given time.

By analyzing these three models of action in detail, it was possible

to develop some observations on the perception and representation of anti-violence centers, starting from the need to regard centers as the space and time of direct knowledge of the phenomenon, and to re-center women and relational dynamics.

Therefore, it is easy to observe action models aimed at asserting a central role in shaping public and political debate, and thus at being formally recognized also at the institutional level. The definition of specialized knowledge is therefore the result of a field of power, which can be assessed based on the degree of involvement of anti-violence centers in institutional forums. Within this context also fall the complex dynamics between academic knowledge and the knowledge produced by anti-violence centers, which move along two axes: cooperation and sharing of knowledge and tools, versus the assertion of exclusive spaces. At the level of communication, anti-violence centers contribute to the creation of an autonomous public sphere that becomes a substantially anarchic communicative space. In this public space, it is possible to perceive new problematic situations outside the institutionalized channels of mainstream media and political-institutional decision-making processes. As we have already pointed out, in analyzing how anti-violence centers implement actions and models of deconstructing power, an intersectional approach was chosen, starting from Collins's (1999) matrix of domination. It is therefore proposed to describe the organization of power relations in society, the processes of empowerment of subjectivities that find theoretical and practical application also in the study of violence against women. Specifically, the activities were analyzed within the categories connected to the intersection of the structural, disciplinary, and hegemonic levels of power, as well as the ways in which they influence action, as summarized in table 1.

Structural	Disciplinary	Hegemonic
Elimination of inequalities - elimination of real and symbolic obstacles	Deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices	Paths for the deconstruction of patriarchy
Institutional practices	Awareness - raising and training	Paths for the deconstruction of institutional paternalism
Trade union action	Commemorative political action	Performative - expressive action

Table 1

In the structural domain, in general it is possible to consider the social and political institutions that organize society, in particolar the state, the legal system, the education system, the labor market, and the economic policy. In this case we have to analyze formal rules, policies, and institutional hierarchies, such laws, regulations, and organizational policies that shape access to rights, resources, and opportunities. This level refers to systemic inequalities embedded in the social structure, and it's the level at which oppression becomes normalized through institutions.

The activities thus brought by the anti-violence centres have the objective to elimination of inequalities, and the elimination of real and symbolic obstacles, for example by participating in institutional activities. It is also essential to underscore that, at the structural level, the question of labor becomes particularly salient, especially with regard to the professional profiles operating within the centers. The issue of resources is central to policy analysis, as ensuring continuity requires conceptualizing this work in terms that clearly distinguish it from volunteerism. Claims for institutional recognition therefore intersect with demands for professional recognition, as well as with the broader need to render the centers autonomous from temporary or short-term funding mechanism. In Collins's framework, the disciplinary domain of power refers to the mechanisms through which institutions administer, manage, monitor, and regulate individuals and groups. It focuses on how power operates through bureaucratic procedures, organizational routines, and surveillance practices that enforce social hierarchies. In particular, we have considered the institutional rules and administrative practices that regulate social

behavior, the mechanisms of surveillance and control, the normalization of discipline within organizations (how people internalize rules and adapt to institutional expectations). So, we find in this level, the activities oriented to the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices, with activities of awareness-raising and training, for example in educational fiel and schools. Particular attention is devoted to the role of memory, with commemorative activities that acquire a political significance. An example of this can be seen in foundations and anti-violence centers that bear the names of women who were victims of male violence. Processing the hegemonic domain of power we considered the cultural sphere through which dominant ideologies, values, and meanings shape how people understand the world and their place within it. This domain operates by producing and legitimizing ideas that make systems of inequality appear natural, normal, or inevitable. In this case, we have to consider the cultural narratives and dominant ideologies that justify social hierarchies of power. Here we thus find activities connected to forms of patriarchy and to processes of rupture, and, at the institutional level, to the deconstruction of the models that we have defined as forms of institutional paternalism. Still within the hegemonic domain, we also find expressive forms, including those of an artistic nature. Particularly noteworthy are activities connected to the visual arts, theater, and music.

In conclusion, it has been possible to analyze the activities of anti-violence centers as different forms of participatory action at the institutional and political levels, as well as to identify the aspects related to transformations in local contexts and territories. In the following paragraph, we will summarize the various ways in which local institutions have responded to this type of political action undertaken by anti-violence centers.

3.2. The institutional reactions

Starting from the dialectic between tension, transformation, and trust, the research then focused on institutional responses. Following the analysis of the outputs and of the activities carried out at the local and regional levels, it was possible to develop a typology that situates these activities within an analytical framework:

1. Security frame

2. Paternalistic frame
3. "Red bench" frame
4. Empowerment frame
5. Networking frame
6. Self-referential frame
7. "Mafiogenic" frame

Within the first frame, we find institutional practices that fall within the security sphere, translating violence against women into a public-order problem attributable only to specific environments and contexts. In the second frame, we have included all institutional activities situated within a paternalistic perspective, encapsulated in the figure of a male institutional actor whose task is to "save" women victims.

The "red bench" is an operational practice consisting of the inauguration and placement of a red bench—symbol of violence against women and femicides—in public spaces. Within this frame, however, we also find actions of a markedly temporary nature, such as those associated with the 25 November commemorations. In this approach, we have included activities that are merely performative and lack meaningful connection to women's lived experiences.

We then considered positively the activities situated within the frames connected to policies aimed at supporting women's pathways toward autonomy and exiting violence, as well as those aimed at fostering the development of dedicated networks composed of institutional, social, and labor-market actors. A final aspect to highlight in the Calabrian case is what we have defined as the mafia-frame, namely the tendency to associate the phenomenon of violence against women with mafia-related violence, employing the same interpretive categories as well as similar counteraction tools. Although recent research underscores the need to study the two phenomena through an intersectional lens (Garofalo 2023), the two phenomena cannot be regarded as mutually assimilable.

4. Conclusion

What emerges from the research—through the analysis of the activities of anti-violence centers as forms of political action within the matrix of power, and the corresponding institutional reactions—concerns the need to address the denial of fundamental rights, such as the right to

health, access to reporting mechanisms, access to justice, and, not least, access to institutional and social services. In the cases examined, it is possible to identify both formal and informal obstacles to the realization of rights pertaining to individuals. In this regard, it is also necessary to take into account freedom of thought, personal freedom, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and, even more crucially, economic freedom. Violence against women—using the political categories of the Istanbul Convention—thus represents an obstacle to active participation, reproducing well-known dynamics of the denial of women's citizenship. The daily and often silent work of anti-violence centers compels reflection on the mechanisms of discrimination and inequality. In this direction, further avenues for research may be identified, particularly concerning social rights—such as the right to work, to welfare support, to education, and to healthcare—and understanding how violence intersects with the denial of these rights through power dynamics tied to the recognition of individual female subjectivities. In this sense, the action of anti-violence centers, situated within the ongoing dialectic between institutional practices and culture, represents both the space and the time for constructing processes of democratization.

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