

Femicide in Brazil: Institutional Recognition and Evidence Production for Public Policies

Feminicídio no Brasil: reconhecimento institucional e produção de evidências para as políticas públicas

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ABSTRACT

This article examines femicide in Brazil by exploring the relationship between conceptual and legal debates, national indicators of lethal violence against women, and the experience of the Feminicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro (OFRJ). This study combines a literature review, documentary analysis, and secondary data from the National Public Security Information System (SINESP) and the Rio de Janeiro State Public Security Institute (ISP/RJ). It argues that femicide reflects structural inequalities of gender, race, class, and territory, and that its measurement depends on institutional processes of investigation, classification, and recording. This article further maintains that qualified and integrated information constitutes a strategic dimension of public policies aimed at combating violence against women. Finally, it discusses the OFRJ as an ongoing experience focused on producing evidence to support institutional planning, as well as monitoring and preventing femicidal violence.

Keywords: femicide; public policies; evidence production; violence against women.

RESUMO

O artigo analisa o feminicídio no Brasil a partir da articulação entre os debates conceituais e jurídicos, os indicadores nacionais de violência letal contra mulheres e a experiência do Observatório do Feminicídio do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (OFRJ). Combina revisão bibliográfica, análise documental e dados secundários do Sistema Nacional de Informações de Segurança Pública (SINESP) e do Instituto de Segurança Pública do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (ISP/RJ). Argumenta que o feminicídio expressa desigualdades estruturais de gênero, raça, classe e território e que sua mensuração depende dos processos de investigação, classificação e registro. Sustenta que a qualificação e a integração das informações constituem dimensão estratégica das políticas públicas de enfrentamento à violência contra as mulheres. Discute, por fim, o OFRJ como uma experiência em implementação voltada à produção de evidências para o planejamento, o monitoramento e a prevenção da violência feminicida.

Palavras-chave: feminicídio; políticas públicas; produção de evidências; violência contra as mulheres.

ARTICLE

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Introduction

The growing visibility of femicide in governmental, academic, and feminist movement agendas has contributed to the strengthening of mechanisms for recording, monitoring, and producing information on lethal violence against women. This process results from decades of social mobilization and political struggles aimed at recognizing the specificity of the murders of women motivated by gender inequalities, contributing to the public problematization of a historically naturalized violence. However, the understanding of femicide remains permeated by conceptual, methodological, and institutional challenges.

The identification of cases, the production of indicators, and the interpretation of data depend on processes of investigation, classification, and institutional recognition that do not always manage to capture the complexity of gender-based violence dynamics. Furthermore, available statistics frequently reflect inequalities in the investigative capacity of states, in recording procedures, and limitations of information systems, producing gaps that hinder a comprehensive understanding. In this context, the provision of qualified information constitutes a strategic element to support public policies aimed at both preventing and combating lethal violence.

It is within this horizon that this article is situated, which aims to analyze femicide based on the interplay among three complementary dimensions: the conceptual and legal debates that support the category, the national indicators related to femicide and lethal violence against women, as well as the contributions of the Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro (OFRJ) to the production of knowledge and the consolidation of public policies to combat violence against women. It starts from the premise that femicide constitutes the extreme outcome of a continuum of gender-based violence, an expression of historically constructed relations of power and inequality. Thus, critical analysis requires an approach capable of integrating theoretical, empirical, and institutional contributions, recognizing lethal violence as a social, political, and legal manifestation deeply related to the structural inequalities that permeate Brazilian society.

From a methodological standpoint, the study combines literature review and documentary analysis. Contributions from feminist literature, gender studies, research on violence against women, and normative documents related to Brazilian legislation on femicide were employed. Moreover, secondary data produced by the National Public Security Information System (SINESP) and the Rio de Janeiro State Public Security Institute (ISP/RJ) were analyzed.

Institutional documents, technical reports, and materials produced within the scope of the Observatory were also used, seeking to understand how the production, systematization, and analysis of information can support strategies for monitoring, preventing,

and combating the violation of women's human rights. The combination of quantitative and documentary sources enables the verification of both recent trends in femicide and the challenges related to its measurement and institutional recognition.

Femicide: contested concepts and legal recognition in Brazil

Femicide constitutes one of the most violent expressions of gender inequality in patriarchal societies and represents the culmination of a continuous process of rights violations. Its understanding, therefore, requires going beyond the strictly criminal dimension and situating it within the social relations that sustain male domination, gender hierarchies, and the naturalization of violence against women and girls. The very naming of these deaths as femicide results from political, academic, and institutional struggles for the recognition of gender-based violence, demonstrating that qualified information also participates in the processes of making this violence visible and combating it.

Theoretical formulations on the subject emerge from the field of feminist studies, particularly from the contributions of Russell (2006), who uses the term *femicide* to designate the murder of women motivated by hate, contempt, discrimination, or a sense of entitlement exercised by men. The relevance of this formulation lies precisely in the rupture with the category of homicide, showing that certain deaths have a motivation related to socially constructed gender-based power relations.

Subsequently, Latin American debates expanded this understanding. Lagarde Y De Los Ríos (2008) proposed the use of the category femicide to emphasize not only the violent death of women but also the political and institutional responsibility of the state in the face of these deaths, especially when prevention, protection, investigation, and accountability actions prove to be insufficient. This distinction is not merely terminological. While certain approaches focus on identifying the individual motivation of the aggressor, the notion of femicide developed in Latin America shifts the analysis to the structural contexts that make these deaths possible.

This shift gains strength especially from the debates produced around the systematic murders of women in Mexico¹, which highlighted the interconnection between gender-based violence, impunity, institutional precariousness, and the selectivity of state protection. Femicide thus comes to be understood as the result of historical systems of oppression in which patriarchy, racism, and class inequalities intersect, reproduced by a symbolic economy of power continuously produced and updated on the cultural, discursive, and ideological levels (Segato, 2003).

1 It refers to the systematic murders of women in Ciudad Juárez (Mexico) since the 1990s, whose impunity was central to the Latin American formulation of femicide as a structural phenomenon.

In the Brazilian context, this analytical perspective acquires particular relevance given the profound inequalities that permeate the country's social formation. Lethal violence against women is distributed unevenly among different social groups, affecting Black, peripheral women, and residents in territories marked by the precariousness of living conditions with greater intensity. Gonzalez's (2020) contributions allow us to reflect that women's lived experiences are permeated by historically produced racialization processes, which reverberate in unequal conditions of access to state protection, rights, and citizenship. Such reality highlights the limits of generic interpretations and reinforces the need for approaches capable of understanding how gender, race, and class operate together in the production of social unprotection.

Understanding femicide therefore requires analysis of a continuum of violence. Before death, different forms of aggression, control, and subordination are frequently present, such as psychological, moral, physical, sexual, economic, institutional, political, and symbolic violence. Femicide represents the extreme expression of this process, constituting the fatal result of trajectories marked by successive rights violations and by daily mechanisms that operate through the naturalization of gender inequalities and social tolerance of various forms of violence.

In the Brazilian context, the institutional recognition of gender-based violence was significantly strengthened by the promulgation of Law No. 11,340 (Brazil, 2006), known as the Maria da Penha Law, which consolidated mechanisms for prevention, protection, and accountability in the face of domestic and family violence against women. Its promulgation represented a milestone in the recognition of gender-based violence as a human rights issue and a state responsibility, contributing to the strengthening of policies to protect women.

The legal recognition of lethal violence against women occurred nine years later, with the promulgation of Law No. 13,104 (Brazil, 2015), which introduced femicide as a qualifying circumstance of homicide and included it among heinous crimes. The legislation defined femicide as the murders of women committed in the context of domestic and family violence or due to contempt for and discrimination against the condition of being a woman. More recently, Law No. 14,994 (Brazil, 2024) promoted substantial changes by transforming femicide into an autonomous crime, provided for in its own article of the Penal Code, reinforcing the legal recognition of the specificity of this form of violence and expanding the applicable penalties to the cases. These changes consolidate a process of institutionalization of femicide in the Brazilian legal system, although challenges related to its identification, recording, and measurement persist.

Thus, the institutionalization of the concept also produces effects on the ways in which violence is recognized and classified by the state. In discussing the dual making of

gender and the state, Vianna and Lowenkron (2017) demonstrate that state classifications integrate broader processes of producing social reality, granting intelligibility to certain subjects, relationships, and forms of violence. The juridification of femicide is inserted in this movement by incorporating a concept formulated by feminist theories and women's movements into a specific regime of state classification.

This incorporation requires the definition of criteria for the identification and recording of cases, converting a concept originally elaborated to explain historical structures of domination into a normative category intended for application by the justice system. It is in this process of institutional translation that the gap between the analytical density of the concept and the stability required by the legal norm is produced. While juridification requires relatively stable identification criteria, academic production seeks to expand the concept's analytical capacity in light of the diversity of contexts in which lethal violence against women manifests itself.

Beyond intimate partner femicides, including those committed by either current or former partners, the specialized literature has begun to identify modalities related to sexual violence, racism, lesbophobia, transphobia, organized crime, territorial conflicts, and political gender-based violence (OFRJ, 2025a). These typologies represent the effort to apprehend different empirical configurations of the same structural phenomenon, showing that femicidal violence takes distinct forms according to the historical, social, and institutional contexts in which it is produced, without losing the analytical unity conferred by structural gender relations.

Therefore, the trajectory of the concept of femicide shows that its construction results from a historical process of collective knowledge production and the progressive expansion of the forms of recognition of lethal violence against women. Initially formulated within the scope of feminist mobilizations and later developed by critical Latin American theories, the concept surpassed the limits of academic production by influencing international organizations, legal systems, and state institutions, influencing legislative reforms, public policies, and information production mechanisms—showing that knowledge production, institutional recognition, and policy formulation constitute mutually implicated dimensions in the same historical process.

This trajectory also shifts the gaze upon laws, information systems, and statistics: more than instruments for recording reality, they are devices through which the state produces recognition of violence and delimits which experiences will be recorded and incorporated into state action. Therefore, the analysis of femicide indicators goes beyond describing the magnitude of the problem and simultaneously reveals institutional advances and the limits, debates, and gaps that still permeate its identification and recording—which reinforces the role of feminist movements and academic production in the critical problematization of these criteria.

Overview of femicide in Brazil: recent trends and challenges to evidence production

The consolidation of femicide as a legal category expanded the possibilities of producing information on gender-based lethal violence. The available indicators, however, result from institutional processes of police investigation, classification, and recording that condition what can be officially recognized as femicide. Its analysis makes it possible to assess the scale of violence and, simultaneously, understand how different institutional capacities interfere with the visibility of the phenomenon and the formulation of public policies aimed at its prevention (OFRJ, 2026).

The national data used in this analysis were extracted from the National Public Security Information System (Sinesp), a platform linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security responsible for consolidating the records forwarded by the units of the Federation. For the specific analysis of the state of Rio de Janeiro, information produced by the Rio de Janeiro State Public Security Institute (ISP/RJ) was employed. The rates were calculated per 100,000 women, taking as a reference the female population recorded by the 2022 Demographic Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (OFRJ, 2026).

In 2025, the highest rates of completed femicide were recorded in Acre, with 3.18 cases per 100,000 women, followed by Rondônia, with 2.87; Mato Grosso, with 2.74; Tocantins, with 2.28; and Amazonas, with 2.23 (Brazil, 2026). The recurrent presence of states in the North and Central-West regions among the highest rates highlights a deeply unequal territorial distribution of femicidal violence. These patterns corroborate the reading proposed by Monárrez Fragoso (2009), which situates the occurrence of femicide in territorial configurations marked by the overlapping of structural inequalities, persistent dynamics of violence, institutional frailties, and the absence and/or precariousness of specialized services for assisting women in situations of violence.

The gravity of this scenario acquires greater clarity when attempted femicides are incorporated. In 2025, the sum of completed and attempted femicide records reached 17.11 cases per 100,000 women in Amapá, 15.2 in Mato Grosso, and 14.3 in Acre (Brazil, 2026). The inclusion of attempts allows us to observe situations of high lethal potential that did not result in death but reveal trajectories of violence permeated by control, threats, repeated aggressions, and asymmetrical power relations. An analysis restricted to completed cases would therefore offer a partial image of women's exposure to extreme violence.

Attempts also have strategic relevance for prevention. Studies developed within the scope of the Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro demonstrate that they are capable of signaling high-risk situations and opportunities for intervention before the fatal out-

come (OFRJ, 2026). Their recurrence points to the need to strengthen risk assessment mechanisms, immediate protection, and coordination between public security, health, social assistance, the justice system, and the specialized service network. These records allow shifting the focus from the moment of death to the trajectories of violence that precede it, expanding the possibilities of preventive action.

The comparison between formally recognized femicides and expanded indicators of intentional lethal violence against women exposes another challenge. States such as Roraima, Amapá, Sergipe, and Mato Grosso present intentional homicide rates of women significantly higher than those of femicide. The distance between these categories suggests that part of the violent deaths of women may remain outside the specific statistics, either due to the conditions under which the crimes occurred or due to difficulties in investigating and identifying the gender motivation. The legal and statistical naming of violence influences its public visibility, guides the production of diagnoses, and limits the reach of government responses.

Although the information made available by SINESP does not allow for a uniform examination of the racial distribution of femicides in all federative units, the 19th Brazilian Public Security Yearbook points out that Black women accounted for approximately 64% of the victims recorded in 2024 (FBSP, 2025). The concentration of violence among Black women is not reduced to their demographic participation, as it expresses historical processes of racialization that produce unequal conditions of protection, access to rights, and exposure to violence.

Gonzalez's (2020) contributions allow us to understand this distribution as the result of the intersection of racism, sexism, and social inequalities in the formation of Brazilian society. Lethal violence does not reach all women equally. Its manifestations vary according to social positions, racial belonging, economic conditions, and territorial insertions, highlighting the differential production of state protection. Gender, race, and territory constitute, in this sense, inseparable dimensions for the interpretation of national patterns of femicide.

The analyzed indicators reveal both the persistence of violence and the limits of the state mechanisms used to recognize it. The data are produced by institutions that investigate, classify, and record occurrences based on distinct procedures, technical resources, and operational capacities. Variations between states may reflect changes in the dynamics of violence, alterations in investigative practices, improvement of information systems, or difficulties in framing the cases.

Therefore, the increase in femicide records should not automatically be interpreted as a worsening of violence, since it can accompany processes of greater recognition and qualification of institutional classification. The production of evidence thus constitutes a

central component of public prevention policies. Qualified information makes it possible to identify priority territories, monitor violence trajectories, recognize risk factors, and evaluate the limits of existing responses (OFRJ, 2026).

The experience of the State of Rio de Janeiro offers relevant elements to observe this relationship between evidence production and the qualification of institutional capacities. In 2025, the state presented a completed femicide rate of 1.24 per 100,000 women and a femicidal violence rate of 3.62. Although the indicators remain below those recorded in the states with the highest national coefficients, their stability over recent years confirms the persistence of gender-based lethal violence as a challenge for state public policies.

The Rio de Janeiro historical series, however, reveals movements that would not be perceptible in isolated annual comparisons (OFRJ, 2025b). The Rio de Janeiro trajectory demonstrates that data production participates in the very constitution of femicide as a public problem. The qualification of records expands the visibility of deaths motivated by gender reasons, provides evidence for the actions of feminist and women's movements, and strengthens the advocacy of researchers, civil society organizations, and public institutions. The growing capacity to recognize the phenomenon has contributed to inserting the prevention of lethal violence into the state agenda and sustaining the demand for structured, intersectoral, and evidence-based policies.

In the state of Rio de Janeiro, the progressive improvement of these capacities created conditions for the institutionalization of a permanent policy of research, monitoring, and inter-institutional coordination. It is in this trajectory that the Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro is inserted, analyzed in the next section as an experiment of incorporating knowledge production into public strategies for the prevention of violence against girls and women.

The Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro: the construction, in process, of a public prevention policy

The creation of the Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro is inserted in a historical process of strengthening public policies for women in the state, marked by the progressive expansion of forms of institutional recognition of gender-based lethal violence. This path links transformations in the legal field, in data production, in the organization of government structures, and in the impact of feminist and women's movements on the public agenda, highlighting that the construction of femicide as a state problem results from a continuous process of interplay among social mobilization, knowledge production, and the institutionalization of public policies (Vianna; Lowenkron, 2017).

A first milestone of this process occurred with the promulgation of Federal Law No. 13,104/2015, which inaugurated conditions for the qualification of systems for recording and monitoring lethal violence against women, expanding the state's capacity to identify, classify, and give visibility to deaths previously absorbed by general homicide statistics.

In the state of Rio de Janeiro, this movement was reflected in the consolidation of the indicators produced by the Public Security Institute (ISP), published systematically starting in October 2016. The historical series shows substantial growth in records in subsequent years, going from 68 completed femicides in 2017 to 85 in 2019, while attempts increased from 248 to 334 cases in the same period. This increase must be understood in light of the strengthening of institutional capacities for recognizing the phenomenon, resulting from the incorporation of the femicide category into the recording practices of public security agencies, while at the same time revealing the persistence of lethal violence against women as a serious public problem in the state.

Table 1. Historical series of homicides, completed femicides, and attempted femicides in Rio de Janeiro (2016-2025) (OFRJ, 2025b)

Year	Homicides	Completed femicides	Attempted femicides
2016 ²	382	16	53
2017	354	68	248
2018	350	71	288
2019	332	85	334
2020	306	78	270
2021	293	81	246
2022	291	111	293
2023	271	99	308
2024	265	107	382
2025 ³	161	105	307

Source: Public Security Institute (2016-2025)

The analysis of the historical series produced by the Feminicide Observatory (2025b) reaffirms one of the main issues discussed previously: reading the indicators requires simultaneously considering the transformations in the dynamics of violence

- 2 In 2016, the ISP began disclosing the femicide indicator (State Law No. 7,448/2016), which is why the data series for that year is partial. Until 2024, the murder of women was also counted within the femicide category, creating duplication—see methodological note at: https://www.ispdados.rj.gov.br/Arquivos/feminicidio_tabela.pdf.
- 3 The 2025 data (161 victims) is not directly comparable to previous years. Starting in 2026, the ISP began recording femicides in a separate category, without duplicating them in the intentional homicide indicator for women, aligning with the legal strengthening of Federal Law No. 14,994/2024.

and the improvement of institutional conditions for recognizing femicide. Between 2016 and 2025, while women's homicides showed an expressive reduction, records of completed femicide and attempted femicide gained progressive centrality in official statistics. Far from constituting contradictory movements, these results express the consolidation of femicide as a legal, statistical, and political category, whose growing visibility accompanied the strengthening of public policies aimed at preventing and combating violence against women.

This growing visibility drove, in 2019, the installation of the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Femicide by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro, coordinated by the Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights. More than an instrument of parliamentary investigation, the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission constituted an institutional space for listening and systematizing the demands historically formulated by feminist and women's movements, civil society organizations, researchers, and professionals who worked in the network to combat violence. By transforming these demands into recommendations addressed to the Executive Branch, the Commission reaffirmed that the prevention of femicide required structuring public policies, supported by evidence, intersectorally coordinated, and capable of strengthening state capacities for prevention, monitoring, and the production of integrated data.

Another decisive milestone in this process occurred in 2023, with the creation of the Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat for Women, through Decree No. 48,301 of January 1, 2023, followed by the definition of its organizational structure by Decree No. 48,310 of January 9, 2023. The result of a historical demand by feminist and women's movements, the new department represented the institutionalization of a permanent government structure dedicated to formulating, coordinating, and implementing public policies aimed at guaranteeing rights, promoting women's full autonomy, and combating gender-based violence. The creation of the Secretariat expanded the state's capacity to develop specific policies for women and consolidated the institutional conditions necessary for the implementation of structuring initiatives, among them the Femicide Observatory.

It was in this context that the Rio de Janeiro state established, through State Law No. 9,644/2022, later regulated by State Decree No. 49,147/2024, the Femicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro (OFRJ). Its implementation materialized one of the main recommendations formulated by the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Femicide by structuring a permanent public policy of knowledge production, research, monitoring, and inter-institutional coordination aimed at preventing lethal violence against girls and women. More than an indicator monitoring system, the Observatory was designed to consolidate itself as an intelligence center in public policies, coordinating the university, public management, data-producing bodies, and the justice

system in the progressive construction of an instrument for planning, evaluation, and government innovation.

From this perspective, the creation of the Observatory expresses a relevant step in a historical process in which feminist and women's movements, the legislative branch, the university, and the executive branch operate collaboratively in the production of knowledge, in the strengthening of state capacities, and in the construction of increasingly qualified institutional responses for the prevention of femicide. The OFRJ thus illustrates the understanding developed throughout this work that the production of integrated information, institutional recognition, and the formulation of public policies constitute mutually implicated dimensions of the same trajectory of combating gender-based violence.

It should be recognized, however, that the Observatory is in its initial phase of consolidation, with just over a year and a half of effective operation since its regulation in 2024. The actions described below therefore correspond to a policy still under construction, whose partial results are still being consolidated and are subject to course adjustments as institutional experience accumulates.

It is from this encounter that the Observatory emerges to face one of the main challenges of policies to combat violence against women: the dispersion of information across different institutional systems. Its proposal is based on the understanding that lethal violence against women must be analyzed along the entire critical path of violence, and not only based on completed cases of femicide (OFRJ, 2025a). This perspective approaches the perception of femicide as the extreme stage of a continuum of violence, allowing for the identification of previous episodes of aggression, repeated rights violations, attempted femicides, recurrences, and institutional failures that frequently precede the lethal outcome.

The Observatory's actions are structured around a coordinated set of actions aimed at producing knowledge, strengthening institutional capacities, and permanently improving public policies. Its scientific agenda is organized into two structuring lines, designed to bring academic research closer to the concrete needs of public management and the protection network for women.

The first line is dedicated to the Criminal Justice System, examining the institutional processes of recognizing femicide and gender-based violence. The investigations focus on analyzing administrative flows, criteria for classifying cases, the production of official records, and the coordinated action of the bodies that make up the criminal justice system. The aim is to understand how these institutions produce state recognition of gender-based lethal violence and how their procedures reverberate in the production of evidence, the monitoring of the phenomenon, and the improvement of public policies.

The second line of research focuses on the Women's Protection Network, developing qualitative studies on the implementation of public policies and the functioning of specialized services. To date, activities have focused on conducting institutional technical visits to Specialized Women's Assistance Centers and reference hospitals, seeking to understand concrete service flows, identify operational challenges, map good practices, and recognize the obstacles faced by women along their trajectories in the protection network. Particular attention is given to territorial inequalities and difficulties in accessing services in areas marked by armed conflict and other forms of social unprotectedness, allowing an understanding of how gender, race, class, and territory simultaneously condition the experience of violence and the possibilities of state protection. The gradual expansion of these researches to other facilities in the specialized network is part of the Observatory's development agenda.

Although they have distinct objects, the two lines share the same analytical perspective: understanding femicide beyond the lethal event, investigating the social, institutional, and territorial processes that precede its occurrence. The production of integrated information seeks to synthesize quantitative and qualitative evidence, bringing together statistical indicators, academic research, and the daily experience of professionals working in the service network. It is about recognizing that understanding gender-based violence depends on a permanent exchange between different fields of knowledge and different public institutions.

This concept also guides the strategy of permanent training developed by the Observatory in partnership with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Through extension courses, professional development programs, seminars, and continuing education activities, it seeks to strengthen the technical capacities of professionals in public security, health, social assistance, the justice system, and other bodies that make up the specialized network. Continuing education, which already comprises four courses held between 2025 and 2026, is understood as a constitutive dimension of public policy, promoting the circulation of knowledge among researchers, managers, and professionals responsible for the daily implementation of measures to prevent and combat violence against girls and women.

The Observatory also develops intense activity in the production and dissemination of evidence through the elaboration of technical reports, thematic studies, analytical bulletins, technical notes, and materials aimed at improving public management. In this context, the organization of the 1st Scientific Symposium of the Femicide Observatory stands out, conceived as a permanent space for exchange between the university, public management, and professionals from the response network. The initiative brings together representatives from Specialized Police Stations for Assisting Women, Lilac Rooms (Salas Lilás), the Public Security Institute, the Maria da Penha Patrol, hospitals, the Public

Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Judiciary, social services, and other partner institutions, recognizing that the experience accumulated in the daily implementation of public policies also constitutes a legitimate form of knowledge production. The publication of an edited volume stemming from the Symposium reaffirms this commitment by systematizing experiences produced in the implementation of public policies and by valuing the knowledge built both at the university and by professionals working at the forefront of the protection network.

Another strategic axis of the Observatory's work consists of the organization and integrated analysis of different sources of information produced by the bodies that make up the response network. In this sense, the OFRJ integrates information from the health, public security, and justice systems, bringing together data from the Information System for Notifiable Diseases (SINAN), the Mortality Information System (SIM), the National Public Security Information System (SINESP), the Rio de Janeiro State Public Security Institute (ISP/RJ), and the Rio de Janeiro State Court of Justice (TJ/RJ). The systematization of these different databases expands the analytical capacity of available information, making it possible to monitor different moments in the violence trajectories faced by girls and women and to identify institutional bottlenecks that interfere with the state's response capacity.

The platform developed by the Observatory⁴ represents a first step in building a data integration agenda. At this stage, its objective is not to promote interoperability between systems, but to map, organize, and produce integrated readings on information historically dispersed across different institutions. It is a strategy aimed at improving information governance, allowing the identification of potential, overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for future integration initiatives.

The diagnoses produced by the Observatory have been contributing, albeit initially, to the improvement of state public policies, suggesting that evidence production can constitute an instrument for institutional transformation. Among the results already observed is the methodological improvement promoted by the Public Security Institute starting in 2025, in light of the legal strengthening promoted by Federal Law No. 14,994/2024, when the indicators of intentional homicide of women and femicide began to be disclosed independently, eliminating the duplication that previously existed between the categories and increasing the analytical precision of official records. The change represents a relevant advance in the statistical qualification of gender-based violence and contributes to strengthening the state's capacity to monitor its public policies.

4 For more information on the data platform developed by the Feminicide Observatory of Rio de Janeiro, visit: www.observatoriofemicidiorj.com.br

Another development directly related to the Observatory's work consists of the creation of the Elza Soares System, developed to digitize the service records provided by the 54 Specialized Women's Assistance Centers in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Until then, this information remained predominantly recorded on physical forms, limiting its systematization and use in formulating public policies. The implementation of the system will make it possible to establish a state database of information on the services provided, strengthening the monitoring of the specialized network, the identification of recurrent demands, and the evaluation of the institutional responses offered to women in situations of violence. The name was chosen to pay tribute to Rio de Janeiro artist Elza Soares, whose life trajectory symbolizes the resilience of Brazilian women and the fight against the cycle of domestic violence.

These initiatives suggest that the Observatory's work tends to go beyond research production and statistical monitoring, even though its effects on the organization of public management are in the initial phase of consolidation. By qualifying official indicators, fostering new information systems, and strengthening evidence production instruments, the OFRJ contributes, in an incipient and growing way, to expanding the state capacities to understand, monitor, and prevent gender-based violence.

This agenda stems from the recognition that the fragmentation of information systems frequently reproduces the very fragmentation of state responses to women in situations of violence. The existence of multiple points of entry, organized according to different institutional logics and poorly coordinated with each other, hinders the understanding of the trajectories traveled by women in the service network, limits the evaluation of public policies, and increases the probability of critical routes marked by the discontinuity of institutional protection. Producing secure data tracking mechanisms—observing the legal parameters for personal data protection, secrecy, and confidentiality—constitutes one of the main challenges for strengthening public policies to combat gender-based violence in Brazil.

The relevance of this agenda becomes even more evident in light of recent legislative advances at the national level. The approval, by the Chamber of Deputies, of Supplementary Bill No. 41/2026, which establishes the *National System for Combating Violence Against Girls and Women*, represents an important opportunity to strengthen federative coordination and the integration of public policies aimed at preventing gender-based violence. Among its guidelines, the qualification of coordination mechanisms between the different bodies and levels of government stands out, including the improvement of the production, organization, and integration of information used in the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies. Although the proposal is still moving through the National Congress, it signals the recognition, at the federal level, that the fragmentation of information systems con-

stitutes one of the main challenges for qualifying state responses to violence against girls and women.

From this perspective, the Observatory's experience goes beyond the limits of the Rio de Janeiro reality and points to a national challenge. The progressive integration of information produced by public security, health, social assistance, and justice systems represents a strategic horizon for qualifying public policies, making it possible to understand violence trajectories more systemically, identify risk factors, and strengthen increasingly coordinated inter-institutional responses—a necessarily gradual process that requires continued investments, agreements between institutions, and the permanent strengthening of state conditions. In this sense, interoperability between systems should not be understood as a merely operational objective, but as part of a broader process of institutional transformation, oriented toward building increasingly systemic responses centered on women's needs.

It is for this reason that initiatives like the Femicide Observatory must be understood as state policies under construction, and not just as government programs already concluded: the production of integrated information on gender-based violence requires institutional continuity and the capacity to traverse administrative changes over time. By bringing together the university, public management, the justice system, and feminist and women's movements, the OFRJ has been building an experience of co-production of knowledge in which academic research becomes part of the processes of formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies, suggesting that the prevention of femicide also depends on the state's capacity to produce, integrate, and utilize knowledge—a capacity that, in the case of the OFRJ, is still being built and tested.

Concluding remarks

The recognition of femicide as a legal category represented an important milestone for the visibility of lethal violence against women in Brazil. However, as we have sought to discuss throughout this article, the institutionalization of the concept does not end the contestations surrounding its definition, identification, and measurement. On the contrary, it inaugurates new challenges for the state, which involve the capacity to recognize this violence, produce consistent information, and transform it into evidence for the formulation of public policies.

By analyzing national indicators, we observe that the numbers do not only express the magnitude of violence, but also the different levels of institutional development of the systems responsible for investigating, classifying, and recording these deaths. In this sense, reading the data requires caution. Variations in indicators may reflect changes in

the dynamics of violence, but also changes in recording processes, in investigative capacity, and in the very institutional recognition of femicide. Evidence production, therefore, does not constitute a subsequent stage to public policy; it integrates the very process of constructing the public problem.

This perspective helps to understand the recent experience of the State of Rio de Janeiro. The creation of the State Secretariat for Women, the establishment of the Femicide Observatory by state law, and its regulation by decree express an institutional strengthening movement that seeks to incorporate knowledge production into strategies for preventing and combating violence against women. It is too early to assess the impact of this experience on public policymaking. Many of its instruments are in the implementation phase and must be permanently improved in light of the challenges posed by management, the integration of information, and the very dynamics of the protection network.

Perhaps the main contribution of this experience lies precisely in the premise that confronting femicide requires expanding the state's capacity to know the reality in which it intends to intervene. This implies recognizing that information systems, research, the ongoing training of professionals, and the spaces for cooperation between the university, public management, the justice system, and social movements do not occupy peripheral positions. They constitute dimensions of public policy itself, to the extent that they allow for the qualification of diagnoses, the identification of institutional frailties, and the guidance of intervention priorities.

Important challenges, however, persist. The fragmentation of databases, the heterogeneity of recording procedures, territorial inequalities in access to services, and the need to consolidate permanent inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms continue to limit the understanding of the violence trajectories experienced by women. Producing evidence capable of engaging with this complexity remains an open agenda for researchers, managers, professionals, and social movements.

Femicide continues to demand a response from the Brazilian state not only due to the gravity of the deaths it produces, but due to its capacity to reveal historical inequalities that permeate the relations of gender, race, class, and territory. Confronting it requires public policies committed to protecting women's lives, but also to the critical production of knowledge about the processes that make these deaths possible. It is in the integration of recognition, evidence, and public action that, in our view, lies one of the paths to strengthening prevention strategies and expanding the state's response capacity in the face of femicidal violence.

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