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**Reimagining the policing of gender violence: lessons from women's police stations in Brasil and Argentina**

**Redesenhando a atuação policial na violência de gênero: lições a partir das experiências das delegacias da mulher no Brasil e Argentina**

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# Reimagining the policing of gender violence: lessons from women's police stations in Brasil and Argentina\*

## Redesenhando a atuação policial na violência de gênero: lições a partir das experiências das delegacias da mulher no Brasil e Argentina

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### Abstract

The criminalisation of domestic violence during the 1970s and 1980s was lauded by feminists as a victory, as the state taking responsibility for the safety of women. The problem was that its regulation was delegated to a masculinist judicial system and its policing delegated to a militarised and masculinised police service that left victims disappointed, re-victimised or disbelieved. Our paper investigates how to re-imagine the policing of victims/survivors of gender-based violence from a women-centred perspective. Drawing on secondary and primary empirical research on women's police stations (WPS), that first emerged in Brasil in 1985 and Argentina in 1988, this paper investigates whether this model could offer an innovative remedy to the masculinised ill-equipped traditional models of policing of gender-based violence. Framed by southern theory our project reverses the notion that knowledge/policy transfer should flow from the Anglophone countries of the Global-North to the Global-South. Our project aimed to discover, firstly, how women's police stations – a unique invention of the Global-South, respond to and prevent gender-based violence and, secondly, what aspects could inform the development of new approaches to policing and prevention of gender-based violence elsewhere in the world. We conclude that this uniquely South American innovation might serve as an inspiration to Australia and elsewhere in the world struggling with the shadow pandemic of gender violence. Our paper draws on original empirical and historical research undertaken in Brasil, Argentina and Australia to offer new practical and conceptual insights into how to enhance the policing of gender-based violence.

**Keywords:** Women's Police Stations. Gender Violence. Southern theory.

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## Resumo

A criminalização da violência doméstica entre os anos de 1970 e 1980 foi celebrada pelas feministas como uma vitória, uma vez que o Estado assumiu a responsabilidade pela segurança das mulheres. O problema é que sua regulamentação foi delegada a um sistema judiciário masculino e seu exercício entregue a um serviço policial militarizado e machista que deixou as vítimas decepcionadas, vitimizadas novamente ou descrentes. O nosso artigo investiga como repensar a atuação policial para vítimas/sobreviventes de violência de gênero a partir de uma perspectiva centrada nas mulheres. Com base em pesquisas empíricas secundárias e primárias sobre Delegacias da Mulher (DM), que surgiram pela primeira vez no Brasil em 1985 e na Argentina em 1988, este artigo busca determinar se esse modelo poderia oferecer uma solução inovadora para os modelos machistas tradicionais e mal equipados para a atividade policial em casos de violência contra a mulher. Amparada pelas Teorias do Sul, o nosso projeto inverte a noção de que a transferência de que o conhecimento/política deve fluir dar-se desde países anglófonos do Norte Global para o Sul Global. Nosso projeto teve o objetivo de averiguar, em primeiro lugar, como as delegacias da mulher - uma invenção única do Sul Global, respondem e previnem a violência de gênero e, em segundo lugar, quais aspectos podem balizar o desenvolvimento de novas abordagens para o monitoramento e prevenção da violência de gênero em outras partes do mundo. Concluímos que essa inovação exclusivamente sul-americana pode servir de inspiração para a Austrália e outros países que lutam com a sombra da pandemia da violência de gênero. O nosso artigo baseia-se em pesquisas empíricas e históricas originais realizadas no Brasil, Argentina e Austrália para oferecer novos insights práticos e conceituais sobre como melhorar a atuação policial em casos de violência de gênero.

**Palavras-chave:** Delegacias da Mulher. Violência de Gênero. Teorias do Sul.

## 1 Introduction

Gender-based violence is a global problem, impacting women of all nationalities and classes. The consequences are staggering: almost 87 women are murdered per day around the world by their current or former partner,<sup>1</sup> and the annual economic cost of violence against women is estimated in US\$ 6.3 trillion.<sup>2</sup> In Australia, approximately one woman is killed per week, and domestic violence has been declared a national emergency.<sup>3,4,5</sup> The annual total cost of violence against women and children to the Australian economy was estimated \$22 billion in 2015-16.<sup>6</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Hannah Clarke (31-year-old), and her three children, Aaliyah, 6, Laianah, 4, and Trey, 3, were murdered by her estranged husband who incinerated them by pouring petrol over their car. The perpetrator made his intentions known before he did it and the victim told her mother she was worried he would kill her. This horrific domestic and family violence murder, which could have been prevented, made Australians reflect deeper about this national emergency and ask: What

<sup>1</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls*. UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> FITZ-GIBBON, Kate et al. (ed.). *Intimate partner violence, risk and security: Securing women's lives in a global world*. Routledge, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> ÁVILA, Thiago Pierobom de. Políticas públicas de prevenção primária à violência contra a mulher: lições da experiência australiana. *Revista Gênero*, v. 17, n. 2, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> BRYANT, Willow; BRICKNELL, Samantha. *Homicide in Australia 2012-13 to 2013-14: National Homicide Monitoring Program report* (Statistical Reports no. 2). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Disponível em: [aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr002](http://aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr002), 2017. Acesso em: 10 fev. 2020.

<sup>5</sup> WALKLATE, Sandra et al. *Towards a Global Femicide Index: Counting the Costs*. Routledge, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> KPMG MANAGEMENT CONSULTING. *The cost of violence against women and their children*. 2009. Disponível em: [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08\\_2016/the\\_cost\\_of\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_and\\_their\\_children\\_in\\_australia\\_-\\_summary\\_report\\_may\\_2016.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2016/the_cost_of_violence_against_women_and_their_children_in_australia_-_summary_report_may_2016.pdf). Acesso em: 10 fev. 2020.

failed Hannah Clark and her children? What can we do to prevent the murder of women and children in this situation?

Australia, while geographically located in the Global-South, has been often guided by knowledge produced in the Global-North and published in English, its national language. Yet, Australia also shares with non-English speaking countries from the Global-South, such as Brasil, violent past of colonisation, dis-possession but also the existence of university systems subjugated by the global hegemony of knowledge dominated by the Global-North.<sup>7,8</sup> In the global organisation of knowledge production, the periphery was initially pressed into service as a ‘data mine’ for metropolitan theory, as examples of ‘primitive’, ‘tribal’ or ‘pre-modern’ societies.<sup>9</sup> This epistemological process bolstered the hegemony of northern theory whilst either ignoring or excluding ideas and theory rooted in the history and experience of societies of the South, including Latin America.<sup>10</sup> The unstated assumption was that all societies were bound to follow the lead of modern societies of the Global-North if they were to successfully modernise. This theoretical strategy produces ‘readings from the centre’, making universal knowledge claims based on the specificity of the wealthy countries from the largely Anglo speaking world.<sup>11</sup> This way of seeing the world has been challenged by de-colonial, post-colonial, southern and subaltern perspectives.<sup>12,13,14,15,16</sup>

Framed by a southern perspective,<sup>17</sup> our project reverses the notion that knowledge/policy transfer should flow from the Anglophone countries of the Global-North to the Global-South.<sup>18</sup> Our project aimed to discover, firstly, how women’s police stations – a unique invention of the Global-South, respond to and prevent gender-based violence and, secondly, what aspects could inform the development of new approaches to responding and preventing gender-based violence in Australia and elsewhere in the world. We argue that this uniquely South American innovation might serve as an inspiration to Australia and elsewhere in the world struggling the shadow pandemic of gender violence.<sup>19</sup>

A small body of research has been undertaken on novel models of state-based female-led police responses to gender-based violence unique to the Global-South. Many have taken shape in challenging historical political contexts: emerging during or post-conflict<sup>20,21</sup> or following the fall of dictatorships or periods of political

<sup>7</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn et al. Re-making the global economy of knowledge: do new fields of research change the structure of North–South relations?. *The British Journal of Sociology*, v. 69, n. 3, p. 738-757, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12294>

<sup>8</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry; HOGG, Russell; SOZZO, Máximo. Southern criminology. *The British Journal of Criminology*, v. 56, n. 1, p. 1-20, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge Social Science*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007. p. 66

<sup>10</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry; HOGG, Russell; SOZZO, Máximo. Southern criminology. *The British Journal of Criminology*, v. 56, n. 1, p. 1-20, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge Social Science*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007. p. 44

<sup>12</sup> AAS, Katja Franko. ‘The Earth is one but the world is not’: Criminological theory and its geopolitical divisions. *Theoretical criminology*, v. 16, n. 1, p. 5-20, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> AGOZINO, Biko. Imperialism, crime and criminology: Towards the decolonisation of criminology. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, v. 41, n. 4, p. 343-358, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge Social Science*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> MIGNOLO, Walter. The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, v. 101, n. 1, p. 57-96, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry; HOGG, Russell; SOZZO, Máximo. Southern criminology. *The British Journal of Criminology*, v. 56, n. 1, p. 1-20, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge Social Science*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> PFITZNER, Naomi; FITZ-GIBBON, Kate; TRUE, Jaqui. *Responding to the ‘shadow pandemic’: practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions*. Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, Monash University, Victoria, Australia, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> SEELINGER, KIM THUY. Domestic accountability for sexual violence: The potential of specialized units in Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda. *Int’l Rev. Red Cross*, v. 96, p. 539, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> MOSER, Annalise. *Case Studies of Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Rwanda and Timor Leste*. 2009.

instability,<sup>22,23</sup> or where state institutions are weak, or hybrid regulatory systems sustain gender inequality.<sup>24,25,26,27</sup> The most significant of these innovations in the Global-South have included Women's Police Stations in Argentina and Brasil;<sup>28</sup> Women's Help Desks and Women's Justice Centres or Violence Against Women Centres in Punjab; multi-disciplinary centres that co-locate medical, counselling, on-site emergency accommodation services, forensics, legal and police support for victims of gender violence in Rwanda; Women's Justice Centres in Peru; All Women Police Units in Tamil India,<sup>29</sup> all women police units called Crimes Against Women Cells in Delhi, and Mobile Women's Police units in Hyderabad and Jaipur; and Family Support Units which are specialised police units attached to police stations for women and children victims of violence in Sierra Leone. Variations of women-centred policing responses to gender violence have since spread across other parts of the Global-South—in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay, and more recently in Sierra Leone, India, Ghana, Kosovo, Liberia, the Philippines, South Africa and Uganda.<sup>30</sup> In this article, we focus on the foundation of women's police stations in Brasil and Argentina. This article then explores their possibility for improving the prevention and policing gender violence in Australia and elsewhere.

## 2 Women's Police Stations in Brasil

### 2.1 Context

After a coup d'état, a military dictatorship was imposed in Brasil from 1964 to 1985. These years were marked by extreme violence, torture, murders, arrests, imprisonment, repression, censorship, lack of rights and intense social control implemented by military governments using an extensive and intricate network of political police.<sup>31,32</sup> Amidst this context, feminist movements in the country played essential roles, fighting for human rights, democratisation, and resisting this authoritarian regime.<sup>33,34,35</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s, they also focused on protecting and empowering women by founding emergency groups known as SOS

<sup>22</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. Criminologies of the global south: Critical reflections. *Critical Criminology*, v. 27, n. 1, p. 163-189, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Policing by and for women in Brazil and beyond. *The SAGE Handbook of Global Policing*, p. 573-593, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> RAMAN, Usha; KOMARRAJU, Sai Amulya. Policing responses to crime against women: unpacking the logic of Cyberabad's "SHE Teams". *Feminist Media Studies*, v. 18, n. 4, p. 718-733, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> IQBAL, Nasira. Legal Pluralism in Pakistan and Its Implications on Women's Rights. *Scratching the Surface: Democracy, Traditions, Gender*. Pakistan: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> KHAN, Fatima Khalid. *Improving the State's Response to Gender-Based Violence in Punjab*. Pakistan. Disponível em: <http://www.cornellpolicyreview.com/gbv-punjab-pakistan/#post-4932-footnote-15>. Acesso em: 08 jun. 2020.

<sup>27</sup> NATARAJAN, Mangai. Women police stations as a dispute processing system. *Women & Criminal Justice*, v. 16, n. 1-2, p. 87-106, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. Criminologies of the global south: Critical reflections. *Critical Criminology*, v. 27, n. 1, p. 163-189, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> NATARAJAN, Mangai. Women police stations as a dispute processing system. *Women & Criminal Justice*, v. 16, n. 1-2, p. 87-106, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Women's Police Stations in Latin America: An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice*. Quito: CEPLAES, IDRC, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> BORGES, Arleth Santos; BARRETO, Renata Caldas. Ditadura, controle e repressão: revisitando teses sobre os governos militares no Brasil. *Revista de Ciências do Estado*, v. 1, n. 2, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> CONNELL, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge Social Science*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> MACHADO, Lia Zanotta. Feminismos brasileiros nas relações com o Estado. Contextos e incertezas. *Cadernos pagu*, n. 47, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> VILLAR, Pamela Torres. A proteção das mulheres e o direito penal: um estudo quantitativo sobre os casos de feminicídio no Tribunal do Júri. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Criminais*, n. 151, 2018.

groups, like *SOS Corpo* and *SOS Mulher* all around the country.<sup>36,37</sup> According to Pasinato,<sup>38</sup> these groups can be considered the first idea of a specialised service targeting women facing violence, assisting them to leave this situation by providing personal, psychological and legal assistance.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1980s, feminist movements gained more visibility among communities and the media. These movements demanded a State response to the murders of women from the middle and upper classes by their male partners, which often result in impunity.<sup>40</sup> These femicides were frequently identified as crimes of passion and perpetrators were rarely punished, as they often used provocation defences known at this time as ‘legitimate defence of male honour’.<sup>41,42</sup> These perspectives reinforced the roots of gender-based violence against women - because women were seen as men’s property, and contributed to normalise and romanticise violence.<sup>43</sup> Besides, women facing domestic violence were often not heard at the traditional police stations, because the police officers refused to attend them or advised them to go home and make amends by “cooking their husbands a tasty dinner and not provoking further arguments”.<sup>44,45</sup> Domestic violence was seen as the women’s fault. These policing responses clearly reflect the rigid stereotypes and norms that violence against women is a private not a police matter.<sup>46,47</sup> In response to this discriminatory treatment by masculinist policing services, feminist movements and organisations called for legal reform and recognition of domestic and sexual violence as a violation of human rights. This led to the engagement and actions of the SOS groups, which were the foundation of the first WPS in 1985.<sup>48,49</sup>

## 2.2 WPS in Brasil

Brasil was the pioneer in creating and implementing *Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento à Mulher (Specialised Police Stations for Women – hereafter WPS)*. WPS are considered the first public police directed explicitly to assist women in Brasil.<sup>50,51</sup> They also became the central public policy to combat violence against women

<sup>36</sup> BANDEIRA, Lourdes Maria. Violência de gênero: a construção de um campo teórico e de investigação. *Sociedade e Estado*, v. 29, n. 2, p. 449-469, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Oito anos de Lei Maria da Penha.: Entre avanços, obstáculos e desafios. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v. 23, n. 2, p. 533-545, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> See also SILVA, Carmen; CAMURÇA, Silvia. *Feminismo e movimento de mulheres*. Recife: SOS Corpo–Instituto Feminista para a Democracia, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> SANTOS, Cecília Macdowell; MACHADO, Isadora Vier. Punir, restaurar ou transformar? Por uma justiça emancipatória em casos de violência doméstica. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Criminais*, v. 146, n. A. 26, p. 241-271, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> ÁVILA, Thiago Pierobom de. Gender Violence Law Reform and Feminist Criminology in Brazil. In: WALKLATE, Sandra; FITZ-GIBBON, Kate; MAHER, JaneMaree; MCCULLOCH, Jude (ed.). *The Emerald Handbook of Feminism, Criminology and Social Change*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de. Criminologia e feminismo: conversando com Vera Andrade. In: PRANDO, Camila Cardoso de Mello; GARCIA, Mariana Dutra de Oliveira; ALVES, Marcelo Mayora (ed.). *Construindo as Criminologias Críticas*. Lumen Juris, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> VIEIRA, Sinara Gumieri. In: TECENDO Fios das Críticas Feministas ao Direito no Brasil. Consórcio Lei Maria da Penha, 2019.

<sup>44</sup> VIEIRA, Sinara Gumieri. In: TECENDO Fios das Críticas Feministas ao Direito no Brasil. Consórcio Lei Maria da Penha, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Handbook on Effective police responses to violence against women*. UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010. p. 53

<sup>46</sup> BOSELLI, Giane. *Delegacia de Defesa das Mulheres: permanências e desafios*. CFEMEA, abr, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> VIEIRA, Sinara Gumieri. In: TECENDO Fios das Críticas Feministas ao Direito no Brasil. Consórcio Lei Maria da Penha, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de. Criminologia e feminismo: conversando com Vera Andrade. In: PRANDO, Camila Cardoso de Mello; GARCIA, Mariana Dutra de Oliveira; ALVES, Marcelo Mayora (ed.). *Construindo as Criminologias Críticas*. Lumen Juris, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> SANTOS, Cecília Macdowell; MACHADO, Isadora Vier. Punir, restaurar ou transformar? Por uma justiça emancipatória em casos de violência doméstica. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Criminais*, v. 146, n. A. 26, p. 241-271, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> O'THERO, C. P.; VALENTE, J. L. Entre a crítica feminista ao abolicionismo penal e a crítica abolicionista ao feminismo: a necessidade de aliar os dois movimentos. In: CANÊDO, C. A.; VALENTE, J. L.; MEDRADO, N. R.; ALBUQUERQUE, L. A. R. (ed.). *Criminologia crítica e crítica criminológica: Estudos em homenagem aos 10 anos do Grupo Casa Verde*. Belo Horizonte: Initia Via. 2019.

<sup>51</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Oito anos de Lei Maria da Penha.: Entre avanços, obstáculos e desafios. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v. 23, n.

and are currently recognised as the only national policy whose existence has been uninterrupted since the 1980s.<sup>52, 53, 54</sup> This is particularly important in a country marked by political discontinuity. The WPS played a fundamental role in recognising violence against women, often invisible, as a common, serious, social and public matter.<sup>55</sup> WPS provided a means to break the silence about domestic violence, recognise this violence as a crime and a threat to women's rights as well as to create a new professional field for policewomen (and also men) among the police structure.<sup>56, 57, 58</sup>

WPS have prevention and enforcement roles based on human rights and the principle of Democratic Rule of Law.<sup>59</sup> WPS aimed to encourage reports of domestic and family violence, by providing a welcoming, multi-disciplinary and specialised spaces in which women could feel safe to denounce their aggressors.<sup>60</sup> To achieve this goal, it was initially thought that this service should be provided by female staff only, because some women at risk or experiencing violence may feel more comfortable to talk to policewomen, which were also expected to be more sensitive than policemen, especially considering past negative and sexist responses from traditional police stations and its male-dominated environment.<sup>61, 62, 63</sup> The presence of a multi-disciplinary service, including psychologists and social workers, also contributed to make WPS a 'feminine place'.<sup>64</sup> The attempt to make WPS a 'feminine space' was a way of making reporting a positive and supportive experience, conducive to an increase of denouncements of domestic and family violence. Yet this essentialist assumption was also criticised by experts in the field.<sup>65, 66</sup> According to Pasinato<sup>67</sup> and Santos<sup>68</sup> better service and responses to women facing family and domestic violence cannot be achieved without training, regardless of the sex of the police officer. In this vein, the Technical Standard for the Standardisation of *Specialised Police Stations for Women in Brasil*<sup>69</sup>,<sup>70</sup> prescribed that the police chief of WPS should be preferably women, and the police officers and all staff should be qualified, trained to comprehend and respond to gendered violence according to Maria da Penha Law.<sup>71</sup> In this vein, Frugoli and colleagues<sup>72</sup> highlighted that following the Technical Standard, WPS staff should use active listening skills, capable of providing adequate support and guidance, besides following the legal procedures. The reporting should happen in a private and humanised space, with different rooms for victims/survivors and aggressors, without prejudice and discrimination. Ideally, all that should occur in all WPS<sup>73</sup>

2, p. 533-545, 2015.

<sup>52</sup> PASINATO, Wânia; SANTOS, Cecília M. *Mapeamento das delegacias da mulher no Brasil*. São Paulo: PAGU, UNICAMP, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> SENHORAS, Cândida Alzira Bentes de Magalhães; SENHORAS, Elói Martins. *Trinta Anos de Delegacia da Mulher em Boa Vista (1986-2016)*. EdUFRR, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> SAFFIOTTI, Heleieth Iara Bongiovani. Violência de gênero no Brasil atual. *Estudos feministas*, p. 443-461, 1994.

<sup>56</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Mapeamento Regional das Delegacias da Mulher na América Latina*. CEPLAES, 2008.

<sup>57</sup> BRASIL. *Norma Técnica de Padronização das Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento às Mulheres*. 2010.

<sup>58</sup> BRASIL. *Norma Técnica de Padronização das Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento às Mulheres*. 2010.

<sup>59</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de; SEVERI, Fabiana Cristina. Violência contra mulheres e a crítica jurídica feminista: breve análise da produção acadêmica brasileira. *Revista Direito e Práxis*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 962-990, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de. Desafios na implementação da Lei Maria da Penha. *Revista Direito GV*, v. 11, n. 2, p. 391-406, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> <sup>64</sup> SAFFIOTTI, Heleieth Iara Bongiovani. *O poder do macho*. Editora Moderna, 1987.

<sup>62</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>63</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Handbook on Effective police responses to violence against women*. UNO-DC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010.

<sup>64</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>65</sup> BOSELLI, Giane. *Delegacia de Defesa das Mulheres: permanências e desafios*. CFEMEA, abr, 2005.

<sup>66</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Lei Maria da Penha. Novas abordagens sobre velhas propostas. Onde avançamos?. *Civitas-Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 216-232, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>69</sup> BRASIL. *Norma Técnica de Padronização das Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento às Mulheres*. 2010.

<sup>70</sup> See also FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> BRASIL. *Lei nº 11.340, de 07 de agosto de 2006*. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br>. Acesso em: 1 fev. 2020.

<sup>72</sup> FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019.

<sup>73</sup> FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde*

Maria da Penha Law<sup>74</sup> is the legislation to address domestic and family violence in the country and is considered one of the best legislation in the world to combat gendered violence against women because it established an integrated policy approach based on prevention, assistance and punishment.<sup>75, 76, 77</sup> It recognises that violence against women is a gendered violation of human rights.<sup>78</sup> Following the human rights conventions signed by the country and the United Nations Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women that legislation in this field should not be gender-blind, but gender-sensitive.<sup>79</sup> Thus, it acknowledges the historical inequalities between men and women, and the need to address the problem with a gender lens. The importance of WPS was outlined in Maria da Penha Law, which increased the WPS attributions including starting legal procedures, ensuring the compliance of domestic violence orders, and resulting in more WPS being implemented around the country.<sup>80</sup> Today, there is approximately 460 WPS in Brasil, yet, this number means that only 8.3% of cities in the country have a WPS.<sup>81</sup>

WPS is part of the service network (*rede*) to respond and support women in a violent situation. This service network faces several challenges regarding its implementation in practice, including the scarcity of human and financial resources which affects the quality the police service and the availability of multi-disciplinary service; and the lack of personnel trained from a gendered and human rights perspective.<sup>82, 83</sup> Despite these limitations, the pioneering foundation of WPS generated awareness about violence against women and improved responses to gendered violence - reflected in the sharp increase of reports and women using WPS services, enabling women to exercise their citizenship rights and access to justice.<sup>84, 85, 86</sup> . An empirical study of WPS in Brasil found that where they existed the female homicide rate dropped by 17 per cent for all women, but for women aged 15-24 in metropolitan areas the reduction was an astonishing 50 per cent (or 5.57 deaths reduction per 100,000).<sup>87</sup> The popularity and credibility achieved by WPS in Brasil, led other countries to implement similar models of WPS, such as Argentina, India, Philippines and Uruguay.<sup>88, 89, 90</sup> The Argentinean experiences of WPS is presented in the next section.

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*e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019.

<sup>74</sup> BRASIL. *Lei nº 11.340, de 07 de agosto de 2006*. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br>. Acesso em: 1 fev. 2020.

<sup>75</sup> ÁVILA, Thiago Pierobom de. Facing domestic violence against women in Brazil: advances and challenges. *International journal for crime, justice and social democracy*, v. 7, n. 1, p. 15, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> SANTOS, Cecília Macdowell; MACHADO, Isadora Vier. Punir, restaurar ou transformar? Por uma justiça emancipatória em casos de violência doméstica. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Criminais*, v. 146, n. A. 26, p. 241-271, 2018.

<sup>77</sup> UNIFEM. *Who answers to women?: gender and accountability*. United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2008.

<sup>78</sup> BRASIL. *Lei nº 11.340, de 07 de agosto de 2006*. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br>. Acesso em: 1 fev. 2020.

<sup>79</sup> UNITED NATIONS. DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN. *Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women*. United Nations Publications, 2010.

<sup>80</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Lei Maria da Penha. Novas abordagens sobre velhas propostas. Onde avançamos?. *Civitas-Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 216-232, 2010.

<sup>81</sup> INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA. *Perfil dos municípios brasileiros: pesquisa de informações básicas municipais 2017*. 2018.

<sup>82</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de. Desafios na implementação da Lei Maria da Penha. *Revista Direito GV*, v. 11, n. 2, p. 391-406, 2015.

<sup>83</sup> FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019

<sup>84</sup> FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019

<sup>85</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Mapeamento Regional das Delegacias da Mulher na América Latina*. CEPLAES, 2008.

<sup>86</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>87</sup> PEROVA, Elizaveta; REYNOLDS, Sarah Anne. Women's police stations and intimate partner violence: Evidence from Brazil. *Social Science & Medicine*, v. 174, p. 188-196, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. The role of women's police stations in widening access to justice and eliminating gender violence. *Proceedings of the United Nations 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)*, p. 1-17, 2019.

<sup>89</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Lei Maria da Penha. Novas abordagens sobre velhas propostas. Onde avançamos?. *Civitas-Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 216-232, 2010.

<sup>90</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Handbook on Effective police responses to violence against women*. UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010.

## 3 Women's Police Station in Argentina

### 3.1 Context

The first Women's Police Station explicitly designed to respond to violence against women in Argentina was established in La Plata, the capital city of Buenos Aires province, in 1988. They were initially called *Comisaría de la Mujer* -Police Stations for Woman, and change the denomination to *Comisarias de las Mujer y la Familia* -Police Stations for Woman and Family, in 2006. However, its history dates back to the middle of the last century. In 1947, a group of 30 women formed the first female brigade (*Brigada Femenina*) in Argentina and indeed the first women in law enforcement across all of Latin America.<sup>91</sup> The first female police in Argentina were assigned to work in the Female Detachment Units in the cities of La Plata and Mar del Plata, in the Province of Buenos Aires. These female police units functioned as a form of “surveillance of women accused of minor crimes and contraventions”.<sup>92</sup> This was a period marked by the recognition and expansion of women's rights, which made possible their participation in public life. After decades of alternation between democratic governments and military dictatorships, these police units were closing and the female officers assigned to other areas and tasks.

Back in the eighties, it is possible to identify three main rationalities for their establishment. Firstly, during a crucial period of re-democratisation, it was hoped Women's Police Stations would re-legitimise the reputation of Buenos Aires Police Department (Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, PPBA). The PPBA had participated in brutal state terrorism during the period of military dictatorship, including in kidnapping, raping, torturing, murdering and disappearing young women.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, the United Nations was increasingly influential during this post-dictatorship period securing peace in Latin America. The democratic Argentinian state subscribed to a number of UN International Conventions during the 1980s, including ratifying in 1985 the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW). Women's Police Stations were established in part as an institutional response to demonstrate Argentina's commitment to women's rights as set out under UN Conventions.<sup>94</sup> Thirdly, Women's Police Stations were created in response to demands by feminist movements that the state act to protect women from men's violence. In 1987, the governor of Buenos Aires Province, Antonio Cafiero (1987-1991), established the Provincial Council for Women to advise the government on gender equality policies.<sup>95</sup> The Council implemented a Program to Prevent Family and Domestic Violence and raise community awareness of women's rights. In 1990, through the Decree 4570/90, the governor ratified an agreement between the Provincial Council for Women and the Ministry of Government, initiating the gradual creation of Women's Police Stations across the Province.<sup>96</sup>

Initially, the number of Women's Police Stations in Buenos Aires province grew slowly—with only 37 established over a 22-year period between 1988 and 2010. The establishment of an additional 91 Women's Police Stations followed. By the end of 2018, Buenos Aires Province had 128 Women's Police Stations employing around 2300 officers who in that year responded to approximately 257,000 complaints of domestic violence and 7000 complaints of sexual assault (according to statistics provided by the Directorate of the

<sup>91</sup> CALANDRON, Sabrina; GALEANO, Diego. La “Brigada Femenina”. Incorporación de mujeres a la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (1947-1955). In: SALVATORE, Ricardo; BARRENECHE, Osvaldo (ed.). *El delito y el orden en perspectiva histórica*. Rosario: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2013.

<sup>92</sup> CALANDRON, Sabrina; GALEANO, Diego. La “Brigada Femenina”. Incorporación de mujeres a la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (1947-1955). In: SALVATORE, Ricardo; BARRENECHE, Osvaldo (ed.). *El delito y el orden en perspectiva histórica*. Rosario: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2013.

<sup>93</sup> CALANDRON, Sabrina. *Cultura institucional y problemáticas de género en la Reforma de la Policía de Buenos Aires, 2004-2007*. 2008. Licentura en Sociología Monograph, Universidad de La Plata, La Plata, Buenos Aires, 2008.

<sup>94</sup> CALANDRÓN, Sabrina. *Género y sexualidad en la Policía Bonaerense*. UNSAM Edita, 2014.

<sup>95</sup> CALANDRÓN, Sabrina. *Género y sexualidad en la Policía Bonaerense*. UNSAM Edita, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> CALANDRÓN, Sabrina. *Género y sexualidad en la Policía Bonaerense*. UNSAM Edita, 2014.

Coordination of Gender Policy, Ministry of Security in March 2019). In the following section, further characteristics of WPS in Argentina will be provided.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.2 WPS in Argentina

The structure of policing in Argentina differs somewhat from how many police services operate in countries like Australia, the UK or US. Rather than operating as a single unified police service, 12 commissioners oversee the hierarchal command structure of distinctly different police units. These include road safety; accident safety; rural safety; police planning and operations; gender policy; judicial investigation; drug trafficking investigations and illicit crime organisation; scientific police; criminal intelligence; communications; social services and local crime prevention; and general secretary of police.<sup>98</sup> There are eight regional superintendents and one Superintendent to whom all commissioners report. The Province has two different types of police stations that offer the public an emergency response: the common police (*Comisaría*) and police stations for women and families (*Comisaría de la Mujer*). There are currently 645 stations in total in the Province, of which 517 are common police stations and the remaining 128 Women's Police Stations.<sup>99</sup> Accordingly, one in five police stations in the Province is specifically designed to respond to and prevent gender violence. Their Sub-Commanders (who are mostly women) report to the Superintendent of Gender Policy, providing a career structure for female officers in law enforcement. Their main features drawing on Carrington et al's original research in Argentina are summarised below.<sup>100</sup>

The first characteristic that can be highlighted is that WPS are mainly staff by female police officers. Also, they have the same powers as common police as well as the same training. The only requirement to work there is to undergo specialist training on gender violence, despite the police officer's gender.

The second particularity is that WPS buildings are deliberately designed to receive victims, not offenders and do not have holding cells. Most of them are located in brightly painted houses far from the inner cities, have welcoming reception rooms and playrooms or spaces exclusively for children. Those playrooms are a trough to prevent children from being re-victimised while their mothers are denouncing. Part of the police officer's working activities at WPS is to provide child care.<sup>101</sup>

In the third place, WPS work from a gender perspective policing and preventing gender violence. This approach has a legal and institutional frame. The provincial law, passed in 2001, on Family Violence; and the national law, passed in 2009, to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women,<sup>102</sup> provide WPS

<sup>97</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women's Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 42-67, 2020.

<sup>98</sup> MINISTERIO DE SEGURIDAD. Ministerio de Seguridad. Gobierno de la Provincia de Buenos Aires. *Estructura*. Disponível em: <http://www.policia.mseg.gba.gov.ar/estructura.html>. Acesso em: 10 out. 2019.

<sup>99</sup> The number of general and traffic police stations versus Women's Police Stations was calculated by using the public maps of police location in the Province of Buenos Aires (Seguridad Provincia ND).

<sup>100</sup> For a deeper understanding of how they operate see CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women's Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 42-67, 2020.

<sup>101</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women's Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 42-67, 2020.

<sup>102</sup> This law widened the legal definition of violence to include: physical, psychological, sexual, economic, patrimonial, and symbolic forms of gender violence. According to the Law, economic and patrimonial aims to cause impairment in the economic or patrimonial resources of the woman. It can be exercised through: the disturbance of women's possessions or properties; the loss, subtraction, destruction, retention or undue use of objects, work instruments, personal documents, assets, values or property rights; the limitation of the economic resources destined to satisfy their needs or deprivation of the indispensable means to live a dignified life; and the control of women's income, as well as the perception of a lower salary for the same task, within the same workplace. Symbolic violence refers to stereotyped patterns, messages, values, icons or signs that transmit and reproduces domination, inequality and discrimination in social relations, naturalising the subordination of women in society. These definitions are broader than the Law of Family Violence of the Province of Buenos Aires because they include violence against women in a range of other contexts—beyond the domestic sphere to include institutional, obstetric and work settings.

with tools to comprehend and respond from a gender-sensitive perspective. Institutionally, WPS are under the scope of the Commissioner of Gender Policy Coordination within the PPBA. Created in 2004 as the General Directory to Coordinate Gender Policies, it shifted in 2015 elevating the state response to gender violence into a higher position in the police hierarchy. The Commissioner is in charge of WPS including their design, recruitment, plans, and programs. In addition, it is responsible for training of police officers in preventing and responding violence against women from a gender perspective.

The fourth distinguishing feature is that they work in multi-disciplinary teams of lawyers, social workers, psychologists and police to provide an integral service to respond to cases of VAW. These teams offer “legal support, counselling, and housing and financial advice to help address the multidimensional problems that survivors of domestic and sexual violence typically experience”.<sup>103</sup>

In the fifth place WPS coordinate actions and strategies to respond to and prevent gender violence through Local Boards (*Mesas Locales*). They were established in 2005 by the Ministry of Social Development in the Province of Buenos Aires. They integrate all the municipal and provincial services involved in implementing a Provincial Program Against Family Violence. The boards brought together staff from agencies in Health, Education, Human Rights, Justice, Security, Children and Adolescents Rights, and the Provincial Council of Women. The objective of the Local Boards is to coordinate public policies to prevent and address family violence, at a local, regional and provincial level.

Finally, WPS are mandated to undertake prevention activities in the community at least once a month. They organise community prevention campaigns around an annual program of festival and events, such as days of protest against femicide (known as *Ni Una Menos day*), women’s right day, children’s day, or Christmas. Through these activities, WPS seek to challenge the cultural norms and values that support IVP and VAW.<sup>104</sup>

#### 4 Can women’s police stations improve the policing and prevention of gender violence in Australia and elsewhere?

There is some evidence that women’s police stations are more strategically designed than traditional policing models to widen women’s access to justice.<sup>105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112</sup> Nevertheless, the role of women as police, in policing of gender violence, is contentious.<sup>113</sup> Do they simply reproduce masculinist biases and dismiss victims? Or do they navigate gender, cultural and faith-based norms and forms of authority and

<sup>103</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women’s Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 48, 2020.

<sup>104</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women’s Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 56, 2020.

<sup>105</sup> AMARAL, Sofia; NISHITH, Prakash; BHALOTRA, Sonia. Gender, crime and punishment: Evidence from women police stations in India. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC), p. 3, 2018.

<sup>106</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. Criminologies of the global south: Critical reflections. *Critical Criminology*, v. 27, n. 1, 2019.

<sup>107</sup> FRUGOLI, Rosa et al. De conflitos e negociações: uma etnografia na Delegacia Especializada de Atendimento à Mulher. *Saúde e Sociedade*, v. 28, p. 201-214, 2019

<sup>108</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Policing by and for women in Brazil and beyond. *The SAGE Handbook of Global Policing*, p. 573-593, 2016.

<sup>109</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Mapeamento Regional das Delegacias da Mulher na América Latina*. CEPLAES, 2008.

<sup>110</sup> MILLER, Amalia R.; SEGAL, Carmit. Do female officers improve law enforcement quality? Effects on crime reporting and domestic violence. *The Review of Economic Studies*, v. 86, n. 5, p. 2220-2247, 2019.

<sup>111</sup> NATARAJAN, Mangai. Women police stations as a dispute processing system. *Women & Criminal Justice*, v. 16, n. 1-2, p. 87-106, 2005.

<sup>112</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women’s police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>113</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Policing by and for women in Brazil and beyond. *The SAGE Handbook of Global Policing*, p. 573-593, 2016.

state power in different ways when they respond to victims of gender violence? While we know in Latin American contexts specialist women's police units provided new jobs for women and, for the first time, a career structure in what is traditionally a deeply masculinist field of employment,<sup>114</sup>,<sup>115</sup>,<sup>116</sup> what we do not know is: in what context, and to what extent, could these novel approaches to policing gender violence adapt to, or transfer to, other settings in the Global-South.<sup>117</sup> This is the question that Carrington's ARC funded research team have been studying.

Initially, the team undertook three months of field research in Argentina investigating how Women's Police Stations respond to and prevent gender-based violence.<sup>118</sup>,<sup>119</sup>,<sup>120</sup> They discovered that these police stations operate in unique ways to respond and prevent gender violence. Firstly, by denaturalising violence and empowering women; by partnering with the community to transform the local norms that sustain violence against women and by working collaboratively with other local organisations to produce a local roadmap.<sup>121</sup>

The team then constructed a survey based on those unique characteristics to explore whether the innovative strategies used by specialist police stations in Argentina could improve the way Australia could respond to gender violence. Their survey was completed by a Community cohort ( $n=566$ ) and a Workforce cohort ( $n=277$ ).<sup>122</sup> One of the key questions in both surveys, asked "In your opinion, which aspects of Women's Police Stations (in Argentina) could improve how Australian police stations respond to victims of gender violence?" (see Figure 1). There was a considerable level of agreement that following nine aspects of women's police stations would improve how Australia responds to the victims of gender violence:

- Work in multi-disciplinary teams with lawyers, counsellors and social workers;
- Collaborate with local agencies to prevent gender violence;
- Provide emergency support to victims of violence;
- Police Stations designed to receive victims;
- Provide childcare and a space for children;
- Undertake violence prevention work in the local community;
- Provide interview rooms designed for victims (not offenders); and
- Work with both victims and offenders to break the cycle of violence.

(See Figure 1)<sup>123</sup>

One of the most contentious aspects of women's police stations is whether police units that respond to domestic and sexual violence should work from a gender perspective and whether they should be sta-

<sup>114</sup> BOSELLI, Giane. *Delegacia de Defesa das Mulheres: permanências e desafios*. CFEMEA, abr, 2005.

<sup>115</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Handbook on Effective police responses to violence against women*. UNO-DC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010. p. 53.

<sup>116</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. *Women's police stations: gender, violence, and justice in São Paulo, Brazil*. Springer, 2005.

<sup>117</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women's Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>118</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women's Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>119</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. Criminologies of the global south: Critical reflections. *Critical Criminology*, v. 27, n. 1, 2019.

<sup>120</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women's Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, 2020a.

<sup>121</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women's Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>122</sup> See CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women's Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>123</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women's Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

ffed by women.<sup>124,125,126</sup> Just over half (56%) of Workforce respondents favoured police stations staffed predominantly by female police officers, compared to just under half (46%) for Community respondents. Workforce respondents were considerably more in favour of working from a gender perspective (62%) than community respondents (38%). Some empirical research suggests that policewomen are not always naturally more empathetic to female victims of violence.<sup>127</sup> This is because policewomen can also be part of a wider institutional culture of policing that is militarised and masculinized,<sup>128</sup> where “machista” values, such as those that lead to victim-blaming, are internalised.<sup>129,130,131,132</sup> The assumption that female police will automatically express empathy with female victims of gender violence has been rightly criticised as essentialist.<sup>133,134, 135,136,137</sup> Importantly, being female is not an essential requirement for working as a police officer in Argentina’s women’s police stations. However, working from a gender perspective is crucial, and supported with mandatory training. Notably, 78 per cent ( $n=216$ ) of Workforce survey respondents indicated they wanted more specialist training in responding to gender violence.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>124</sup> BULL, Melissa; GEORGE, Nicole; CURTH-BIBB, Jodie. The virtues of strangers? Policing gender violence in Pacific Island countries. *Policing and society*, v. 29, n. 2, p. 155-170, 2019.

<sup>125</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

<sup>126</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Policing by and for women in Brazil and beyond. *The SAGE Handbook of Global Policing*, p. 573-593, 2016.

<sup>127</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

<sup>128</sup> OSTERMANN, Ana Cristina. Communities of practice at work: Gender, facework and the power of habitus at an all-female police station and a feminist crisis intervention center in Brazil. *Discourse & Society*, v. 14, n. 4, p. 477, 2003.

<sup>129</sup> ÁVILA, Thiago Pierobom de. Facing domestic violence against women in Brazil: advances and challenges. *International journal for crime, justice and social democracy*, v. 7, n. 1, p. 15, 2018.

<sup>130</sup> CAMPOS, Carmen Hein de. Desafios na implementação da Lei Maria da Penha. *Revista Direito GV*, v. 11, n. 2, p. 391-406, 2015.

<sup>131</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

<sup>132</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. Handbook on Effective police responses to violence against women. UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010. p. 53

<sup>133</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women’s Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, 2020a.

<sup>134</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

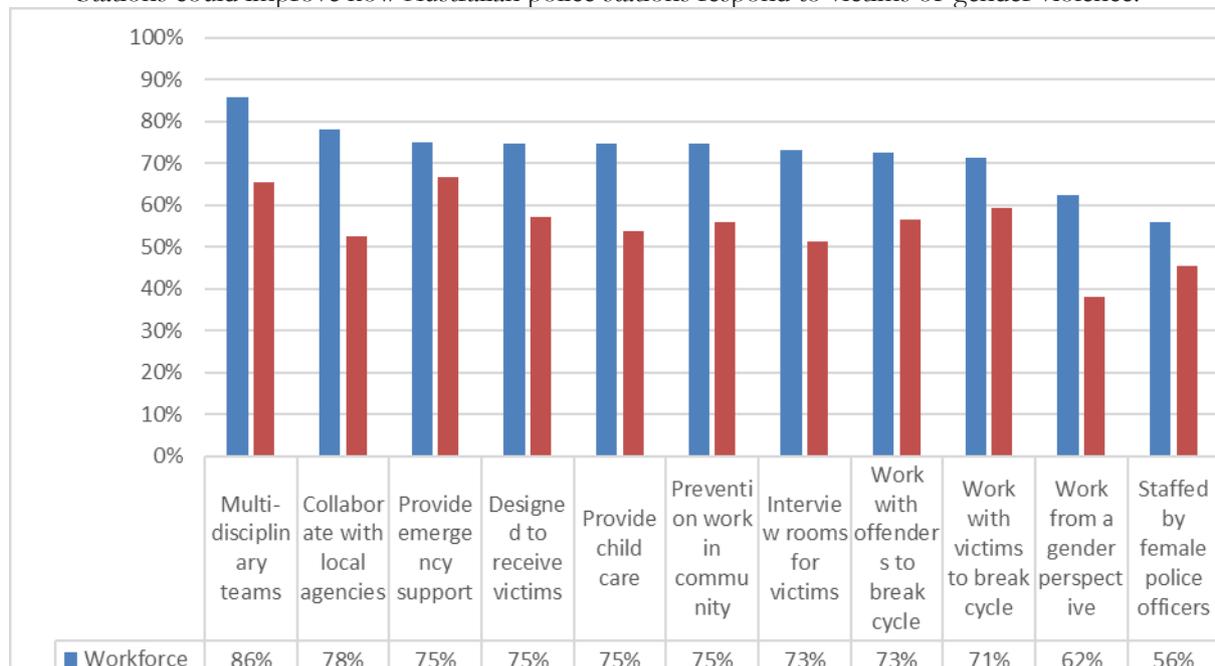
<sup>135</sup> OSTERMANN, Ana Cristina. Communities of practice at work: Gender, facework and the power of habitus at an all-female police station and a feminist crisis intervention center in Brazil. *Discourse & Society*, v. 14, n. 4, 2003.

<sup>136</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. Lei Maria da Penha. Novas abordagens sobre velhas propostas. Onde avançamos?. *Civitas-Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 216-232, 2010.

<sup>137</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. En-gendering the police: women’s police stations and feminism in Sao Paulo. *Latin American Research Review*, p. 29-55, 2004.

<sup>138</sup> See CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women’s Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

Figure 1: Positive Response Rates for “Which of the following aspects of Women’s Police Stations could improve how Australian police stations respond to victims of gender violence?”



Source: What can Australia learn from Women’s Police Stations Workforce Survey Data ( $n=277$ ) and Community Survey Data ( $n=566$ ). Note: Positive = Strongly Agree or Agree.<sup>139</sup>

Carrington and colleagues conclude that Australia does have much to learn about how to improve the policing of gender violence from women’s police stations that first emerged in Brasil and Argentina.<sup>140</sup> They argue that adapted to an Australian context where Indigenous women are many times more likely to experience domestic family violence, these specialist police stations will need to be appropriately staffed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous officers trained to work from both gender and culturally sensitive perspectives.<sup>141</sup> As a by-product they could also address the significant gender equity discrepancies in policing in Australia, attracting more women into the profession and providing a more rewarding career for those who choose to work in the field of violence prevention.

## 5 Concluding Remarks: The need for alternative policing responses to gender violence

When domestic violence became a crime in many countries during the 1970s it was lauded by feminists as a victory, as the state taking responsibility for ensuring the safety of women. The problem was that its regulation was delegated to a masculinist judicial system<sup>142</sup> and its policing delegated to a militarised and masculinised police service.<sup>143, 144</sup> This male dominance matters because a victim’s first contact with the justice system is often through front line police, who have systematically disappointed victims of gender

<sup>139</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women’s Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>140</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. What can Australia Learn from Women’s Police Stations to Prevent Gender Violence: Report of Community and Workforce Surveys. *QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology*: Brisbane, ISSN 2652-3809, 2020b.

<sup>141</sup> NANCARROW, Heather. *Unintended consequences of domestic violence law*: Gendered aspirations and racialised realities. Springer Nature, 2019.

<sup>142</sup> SMART, Carol. *Feminism and the Power of Law*. London: Routledge, 1989.

<sup>143</sup> RADFORD, Jill. Women and Policing: Contradictions Old and New. In: HANMER, Jalna; Radford, Jill; STANKO, Elizabeth (ed.) *Women, policing, and male violence*: international perspective. Oxen: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>144</sup> SILVESTRI, Marisa. *Women in charge*. Routledge, 2013.

violence by not believing them, not taking their complaints seriously or worse blaming them for their own victimisation.<sup>145,146,147,148,149,150,151</sup> One of the responses to this problem has been to increase the number of women who enter policing.<sup>152</sup> Women have been making gains and steady progress in their assimilation into contemporary police forces and now represent between 20-25% of police in England, South Africa, Australia Ireland, Fiji and Scotland.<sup>153</sup> While the proportion of women entering policing has grown over the last century, it remains male-dominated, especially among the senior ranks.<sup>154,155</sup> Policing services worldwide face difficulty in attracting and retaining women<sup>156</sup> who ‘universally suffered discrimination and marginalisation’.<sup>157</sup> Consequently, policing gender violence in Australia and elsewhere continues to be carried out by male-dominated institutions ill-equipped to respond to victims of gender violence with empathy and understanding.<sup>158,159,160,161,162,163</sup>

Empirical studies of women police, and women’s police stations in Latin America and India have consistently shown that women are more comfortable reporting to women police in a family-friendly

<sup>145</sup> DOUGLAS, Heather. Policing domestic and family violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 8, n. 2, p. 31, 2019.

<sup>146</sup> GOODMAN-DELAHUNTY, Jane; GRAHAM, Kelly. The influence of victim intoxication and victim attire on police responses to sexual assault. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 22-40, 2011.

<sup>147</sup> TAYLOR, S. Caroline et al. Policing just outcomes: Improving the police response to adults reporting sexual assault. Perth: Edith Cowan University, 2012.

<sup>148</sup> POWELL, Martine B.; CAUCHI, Rita. Victims’ perceptions of a new model of sexual assault investigation adopted by Victoria Police. *Police practice and research*, v. 14, n. 3, p. 228-241, 2013.

<sup>149</sup> ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE. *Criminal Justice Report: Executive summary and Parts I-II*. Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 504, 2017.

<sup>150</sup> SPECIAL TASKFORCE ON DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN QUEENSLAND. Not Now, Not Ever: v. 1, Report and Recommendations, p. 251, 2015.

<sup>151</sup> TAYLOR, S. Caroline et al. *Policing just outcomes: Improving the police response to adults reporting sexual assault*. Perth: Edith Cowan University, 2012.

<sup>152</sup> PRENZLER, Tim; SINCLAIR, Georgina. The status of women police officers: An international review. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, v. 41, n. 2, p. 115-131, 2013.

<sup>153</sup> RABE-HEMP, Cara; GARCIA, Venessa. The Status of women Police Across the Globe, p. 5. In: RABE-HEMP, Cara; GARCIA, Venessa (ed.) *Women Policing Across the Globe*. London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2020.

<sup>154</sup> LOFTUS, Bethan. Dominant culture interrupted: Recognition, resentment and the politics of change in an English police force. *The British Journal of Criminology*, v. 48, n. 6, p. 756-777, 2008.

<sup>155</sup> PROKOS, Anastasia; PADAVIC, Irene. ‘There oughtta be a law against bitches’: masculinity lessons in police academy training. *Gender, work & organization*, v. 9, n. 4, p. 439-459, 2002.

<sup>156</sup> PRENZLER, Tim; SINCLAIR, Georgina. The status of women police officers: An international review. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, v. 41, n. 2, p. 115-131, 2013.

<sup>157</sup> FLEMING, Sheena. Women in Policing in Australia: Indigenous Women in Blue, In: RABE-HEMP, Cara; GARCIA, Venessa (ed.) *Women Policing Across the Globe*. London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2020.

<sup>158</sup> DOUGLAS, Heather. Policing domestic and family violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 8, n. 2, p. 31, 2019.

<sup>159</sup> GOODMAN-DELAHUNTY, Jane; GRAHAM, Kelly. The influence of victim intoxication and victim attire on police responses to sexual assault. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 22-40, 2011.

<sup>160</sup> LOFTUS, Bethan. Dominant culture interrupted: Recognition, resentment and the politics of change in an English police force. *The British Journal of Criminology*, v. 48, n. 6, p. 756-777, 2008.

<sup>161</sup> PROKOS, Anastasia; PADAVIC, Irene. ‘There oughtta be a law against bitches’: masculinity lessons in police academy training. *Gender, work & organization*, v. 9, n. 4, p. 439-459, 2002.

<sup>162</sup> PRENZLER, Tim; SINCLAIR, Georgina. The status of women police officers: An international review. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, v. 41, n. 2, p. 115-131, 2013.

<sup>163</sup> BULL, Melissa; GEORGE, Nicole; CURTH-BIBB, Jodie. The virtues of strangers? Policing gender violence in Pacific Island countries. *Policing and society*, v. 29, n. 2, p. 155-170, 2019.

environment.<sup>164,165,166,167,168,169,170,171</sup> Policewomen are uniquely placed to gain the trust of women because of their gender and experiences of having families and partners, but female police also have the authority of the state to advocate on behalf of female victims in ways that women cannot.<sup>172</sup> Police who negotiate the divide between gender and justice are simultaneously both regulators of the social order and ‘engines for change’ who challenge prevailing patriarchal norms that sustain gender violence.<sup>173</sup> This body of research suggests female police enhance women’s willingness to report, which then increases the likelihood of action taken to prevent revictimisation. As they operate as a holistic service, they also enlarge women’s access to a range of other services such as counselling, health, legal, financial and social support.<sup>174, 175, 176</sup> Most crucially better service and responses to women facing family and domestic violence cannot be achieved without training, regardless of the sex of the police officer. ‘Law and policing have long proved weak remedies to a seemingly intractable problem that demands more imaginative and sustainable solutions including primary prevention’.<sup>177</sup> Women who are victims of gender-based violence need a ‘remedy beyond law’.<sup>178</sup> We conclude that there is mounting evidence that WPS, especially those that prioritise prevention over a criminal justice response, could be one of those innovative remedies to gender-based violence.<sup>179,180,181,182,183,184,185,186</sup>

<sup>164</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

<sup>165</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Women’s Police Stations in Latin America: An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice*. Quito: CEPLAES, IDRC, 2010.

<sup>166</sup> MILLER, Amalia R.; SEGAL, Carmit. Do female officers improve law enforcement quality? Effects on crime reporting and domestic violence. *The Review of Economic Studies*, v. 86, n. 5, p. 2220-2247, 2019.

<sup>167</sup> NATARAJAN, Mangai. Women police stations as a dispute processing system. *Women & Criminal Justice*, v. 16, n. 1-2, p. 87-106, 2005.

<sup>168</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. The Maria da Penha law: 10 years on. *SUR-Int’l J. on Hum Rts.*, v. 24, p. 155, 2016.

<sup>169</sup> SARDENBERG, Cecília Maria Bacellar et al. *Domestic violence and women’s access to justice in Brazil*. 2010.

<sup>170</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. En-gendering the police: women’s police stations and feminism in Sao Paulo. *Latin American Research Review*, p. 29-55, 2004.

<sup>171</sup> SOUZA, Lídio de; CORTEZ, Mirian Beccheri. Women’s defense police station towards the rules and laws for combating violence against women: A case study. *Revista De Administração Pública*, v. 48, n. 3, p. 621-639, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> BULL, Melissa; GEORGE, Nicole; CURTH-BIBB, Jodie. The virtues of strangers? Policing gender violence in Pacific Island countries. *Policing and society*, v. 29, n. 2, p. 155-170, 2019.

<sup>173</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women’s Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, 2020a.

<sup>174</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Women’s Police Stations in Latin America: An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice*. Quito: CEPLAES, IDRC, 2010.

<sup>175</sup> PEROVA, Elizaveta; REYNOLDS, Sarah Anne. Women’s police stations and intimate partner violence: Evidence from Brazil. *Social Science & Medicine*, v. 174, p. 188-196, 2017.

<sup>176</sup> SANTOS, Cecília MacDowell. En-gendering the police: women’s police stations and feminism in Sao Paulo. *Latin American Research Review*, p. 29-55, 2004.

<sup>177</sup> FINNANE, Mark; KALADEFLOS, Andy; KARSTEDT, Susanne. *Femicide: an intractable history*. Disponível em: <https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/social-affairs/femicide-intractable-history>. Acesso em: 10 fev. 2020.

<sup>178</sup> GOODMARK, Leigh. *A troubled marriage: Domestic violence and the legal system*. NYU Press, 2013.

<sup>179</sup> AMARAL, Sofia; NISHITH, Prakash; BHALOTRA, Sonia. Gender, crime and punishment: Evidence from women police stations in india. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC), p. 3, 2018.

<sup>180</sup> CARRINGTON, Kerry et al. How Women’s Police Stations Empower Women, Widen Access to Justice and Prevent Gender Violence. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, v. 9, n. 1, 2020a.

<sup>181</sup> HAUTZINGER, Sarah. Criminalising Male Violence in Brazil’s Women’s Police Stations: From flawed essentialism to imagined communities. *Journal of Gender Studies*, v. 11, n. 3, p. 243-251, 2002.

<sup>182</sup> JUBB, Nadine et al. *Women’s Police Stations in Latin America: An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice*. Quito: CEPLAES, IDRC, 2010.

<sup>183</sup> MILLER, Amalia R.; SEGAL, Carmit. Do female officers improve law enforcement quality? Effects on crime reporting and domestic violence. *The Review of Economic Studies*, v. 86, n. 5, p. 2220-2247, 2019.

<sup>184</sup> NATARAJAN, Mangai. Women police stations as a dispute processing system. *Women & Criminal Justice*, v. 16, n. 1-2, p. 87-106, 2005.

<sup>185</sup> PASINATO, Wânia. The Maria da Penha law: 10 years on. *SUR-Int’l J. on Hum Rts.*, v. 24, p. 155, 2016.

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