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MOVING MEMORIES: STORIES OF THE TINA MARTINS SHELTER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

Memórias em movimento: Histórias da casa Tina Martins no combate à violência de gênero

Recuerdos en movimiento: Historias de la casa Tina Martins en la lucha contra la violencia de género

Thais Zimovski Garcia de Oliveira¹ | thais.zimovski@yahoo.com.br | ORCID: 0000-0003-1130-0810

Rafael Diogo Pereira² | rdpereira@face.ufmg.br | ORCID: 0000-0002-1057-2614

Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri¹ | alexandre@face.ufmg.br | ORCID: 0000-0001-8552-8717

Gabriel Farias Alves Correia¹ | correiafga@gmail.com | ORCID: 0000-0002-8534-0543

¹ Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Centro de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisas em Administração, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

² Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Departamento de Ciências Administrativas, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This article presents different stories and memories of the Tina Martins Women's Referral Center. To this end, we moved away from the qualitative studies of history and memory in organizational studies that are based on the historic turn, which aims to go beyond the production of narratives that resort to the past as a tool for reproducing the power relations of the present. A vast amount of material was compiled from observing participants, including a field notebook, event records, and photographs, and individual interviews were recorded and transcribed. The results were organized into two main thematic axes: the first presents the process that led to the Center's foundation and the political disputes over its space, while the second addresses the meanings present in the group's everyday life. Given the construction of diversified and procedural historical narratives, this article proposes some critical reflections on the Center's experience that were discussed with its members, and instigates, via memories, the adoption of the historical approach to organizational studies.

KEYWORDS | Memory, gender violence, social movements, Casa Tina Martins, History.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar as diversas histórias e memórias da Casa de Referência da Mulher Tina Martins. Para isso, partiu-se dos estudos qualitativos sobre história e memória nos Estudos Organizacionais baseados na virada histórica (historic turn), a qual visa ir além da produção de narrativas que utilizam o passado como ferramenta de reprodução das relações de poder do presente. Por meio de uma observação participante, foi construído um vasto material, como um caderno de campo, registros de eventos, fotografias e entrevistas individuais gravadas e transcritas. Esses resultados foram organizados em dois percursos temáticos principais: primeiro, apresentou-se o processo de criação da Casa, envolvendo as disputas políticas pelo seu espaço. Em seguida, foram trabalhados os sentidos presentes no cotidiano do grupo. Tendo em vista a construção de narrativas históricas diversificadas e processuais, foram propostas algumas reflexões críticas sobre a experiência da Casa, discutidas junto às integrantes, instigando, por meio das memórias, trabalhos históricos no campo dos Estudos Organizacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE | Memórias, violência de gênero, movimento social, Casa Tina Martins, História.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar las diversas historias y recuerdos de la Casa de Referencia de la Mujer Tina Martins. Para ello, se partió de los estudios cualitativos sobre historia y memoria en los Estudios Organizacionales basados en el giro histórico (historic turn), cuyo objetivo es ir más allá de la producción de narrativas que utilizan el pasado como herramienta para reproducir las relaciones de poder del presente. A través de una observación participante, se construyó un vasto material, como un cuaderno de campo, registros de eventos, fotografías y entrevistas individuales grabadas y transcritas. Estos resultados se organizaron en dos caminos temáticos principales: primero, se presentó el proceso de creación de la Casa. Luego, se abordaron los sentidos presentes en la vida diaria del grupo. Como conclusión, se propusieron algunas reflexiones críticas sobre la experiencia de la Casa, discutidas con las mujeres del grupo, promoviendo a través de recuerdos trabajos históricos en el campo de los Estudios Organizacionales.

PALABRAS CLAVE | Recuerdos, violencia de género, movimiento social, Casa Tina Martins, Historia.

INTRODUCTION

The *Map of Violence* (Waiselfisz, 2015) and the project entitled *Gender and Politics in Latin America* (Corrêa & Kalil, 2020) show that gender violence persists in Brazil. It is a complex phenomenon that branches into different spheres of everyday life and presents specific challenges for each social stratum (Narvaz & Koller, 2006; Segato, 2003). One must bear in mind that despite the progress achieved through women's struggles, such as the creation of public policies and the *Maria da Penha Law* (Law No. 11.340), many other challenges lie ahead, especially for non-white women, given the significant increase in femicide rates in Brazil (Waiselfisz, 2015).

In this context, the *Casa de Referência da Mulher Tina Martins* ("Tina Martins' Women's Referral Center", hereinafter the TMWRC or "Center"), which was founded in 2016 by the Olga Benário Feminist Movement, began with the occupation of a cafeteria in a building that used to house the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) School of Engineering. The TMWRC trajectory began with a tense, 87-day negotiation with the Minas Gerais state government and culminated with the provisional cession of a listed building in downtown Belo Horizonte, which is now maintained by the movement's female members.

The project is currently part of the *Rede Estadual de Enfrentamento à Violência contra a Mulher do Estado de Minas Gerais* ("Minas Gerais State Network for Coping with Violence against Women"), and stands alongside other government organizations and agencies, such as the *Centro de Apoio à Mulher Benvinda* ("Benvinda Women's Support Center") and the *Núcleo de Defesa dos Direitos da Mulher em Situação de Violência* (NUDEM, "Center for the Defense of Women's Rights".) Since the network is mobilized to fill gaps left by the government in state towns outside the capital, just a fraction of the most critical cases is referred to the TMWRC, which, despite being in the state capital, has a state-wide scope of action. It is worth noting that the femicide rate in Minas Gerais is higher than the national average, with 1.3 homicides for every 100,000 women, or 136 cases in 2019 (Velasco, Caesar, & Reis, 2020).

This paper presents the different stories and memories of that experience, based on the accounts of women who have participated in the project since it was set up. To this end, the study distances itself from qualitative, historical organization approaches based on the historic turn, which aims to go beyond the production of narratives that resort to the past to reproduce power relations in the present (Godfrey, Hassard, O'Connor, Rowlinson, & Ruef, 2016). By way of participant observation, extensive research material was compiled, including a field notebook, event records, photographs, and individual interviews. These data were organized to prepare diversified and procedural historical narratives that can address the complexity of the meanings produced by the social movement during its trajectory.

The third section describes this paper's methodology in greater depth, following discussion of history and memory in management studies, and of gender violence. By immersing ourselves in the group, we sought to question the apparent dichotomy between theory and practice in science, particularly in management studies (Carrieri, Perdigão, Martins, & Aguiar, 2018; Gabriel & Carr, 2002). In this sense, this study moves towards presenting the results of women's practices in the context of a social movement against gender violence, and incorporating their memories as a source for constructing academic knowledge in organizational studies. This, in turn, encourages historical discussions that focus on minor subjects, and shows how memory can access different forms of knowledge and historicize the diverse resistance tactics adopted by and in social organizations.

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND MEMORIES IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Various studies in recent times have addressed the contributions of historical perspective and memory to organizational studies, among which the following stand out: Clark and Rowlinson (2004); Costa, Barros and Martins (2010); Rowlinson, Booth, Clark, Delahaye and Procter (2010); Vizeu (2010); Souza and Costa (2013); Barros and Carrieri (2015); Maclean, Harvey and Clegg (2016); Coraiola, Foster and Suddaby (2017); Carrieri *et al.* (2018); Costa e Silva (2019); Carrieri and Correia (2020); and Decker, Rowlinson and Hassard (2020). What they all have in common is that they discuss the advances made and the possibilities that the interdisciplinary approach offers, by presenting alternative ways to overcome the concentration of management studies framing the great stories, subjects, and narratives.

The recent increase in historical studies in management was pointed out by Clark and Rowlinson (2004), who emphasize the academic production that is based on the historic turn. Vizeu (2010) argues that such studies are associated with the methodological and epistemological turns of social sciences that occurred in the second half of the 20th century, which dealt with the practices and discourses adopted in academia.

According to Clark and Rowlinson (2004), the influence of the historical perspective led to the “simple” and “scientific” variables in management studies being questioned. Therefore, the historic turn opened up research possibilities in the field to novel methodological tools, objects of investigation, and views on past events, in addition to reflections on historical narratives and the role of history that depart from the notion of the past as a process and a context (Costa *et al.*, 2010). This movement also underlines the relevance of minor events, narratives, practices, and knowledge forms that are promoted by minor subjects who have been typically disregarded in the knowledge creation process (Barros & Carrieri, 2015; Carrieri *et al.*, 2018; Joaquim & Carrieri, 2018).

Recent discussions, such as those by Joaquim and Carrieri (2018), Wanderley and Barros (2018), Costa e Silva (2019), and Carrieri and Correia (2020), endorse the historical contributions to organizational studies, and in doing so, they highlight the geographically localized knowledge that is produced outside the so-called global cities. In this sense, these authors urged Brazilian researchers to overcome the ahistorical character of management studies, by encouraging them to mitigate local dependence on foreign studies when reflecting on the subject. This line of reasoning justifies historical studies being conducted into non-business organizations, since the very choice for this study object distinguishes it from key studies in the field. Costa e Silva (2019) adds to this by stating that studies that address the historical approach to management are scarce, which points to the real need for advancing the particularities and procedures applied to the area by combining documentary sources, official historical reports, and oral accounts.

As for memories, the study objects reveal a diversity of themes and reflections. Whether individual or collective, memory is not a passive repository of facts; on the contrary, it is an incalculable cultural product (Guarinello, 2004). This position is also adopted by Neves (2010) and Joaquim and Carrieri (2018) who stress the constructive and reconstructive character of the meanings that constitute memory, and distance themselves from the objective notion that perceives it as a mere passive depository of facts, occurring in the present while addressing events and issues in the past.

Finally, this paper is framed by the historical approach, insofar as it does not regard history as linear, unique, and hegemonic. Instead, analysis of the narratives is heterogeneous, plural and multiple, while emphasizing the fact that those here portrayed always represent just a few among many possibilities, situated in a historical moment that influences the perception and the way the research is conducted. In this sense, we highlight the relationship

between history, memory, and knowledge, whose core is in the way in which the subjects ground their narratives in knowledge backgrounds that are specific to each reality, thus producing new ways of existing and resisting.

GENDER VIOLENCE AND REMEMBRANCES OF A POSSIBLE FUTURE

“The river that everything drags is known as violent, but nobody calls violent the margins that arrest him.” (Bertold Brecht)

Violence against women is present in the State, the media, institutions, culture, art, politics, the labor market, and in family relationships (Bandeira, 2014; Saffioti & Correa, 2001). It has different dimensions (psychological, physical, sexual, reproductive, and economic) and takes various forms, such as sexual harassment, rape, assault, threats, forced sterilization, and murder. (Teles & Melo, 2017). Interestingly, these multiple facets are not disassociated, but often overlap; for instance, it is not uncommon for economic violence to occur alongside psychological violence (Cardoso, 1997; Gregori, 1993).

This complexity reveals a form of oppression that has been ingrained in the formation of subjects throughout human trajectory, even if it has been transfigured by historical periods and geographic specificities (Lerner, 1986; Mohanty, 1984). Indeed, this has resulted in a dynamic in which women occupy positions of subjection and resistance by creating unexpected and sometimes collective means of disobedience (Narvaz & Koller, 2006). In this sense, although used as a backdrop, gender violence has always been present in various feminist currents and approaches, and this plural movement has sought to “denormalize” violent situations that have been naturalized by common sense (Segato, 2003; Pintos & Solís, 2002).

In the context of this study, it should be noted that the basis of the group here observed is so-called “Marxist feminism”, as the name of the movement that founded the TMWRC proclaims. Many female scholars have studied this strand that originated in the late 19th century and gained prominence in Brazil in the 1980s in the context of the country’s re-democratization (Pedro, Mello, & Oliveira, 2005). It was during this period that national public policies, such as women’s police stations, were implemented, triggering the establishment of state networks for tackling violence against women, such as the one currently in force in Minas Gerais (Martins, Cerqueira, & Matos, 2015; Santos & Izumino, 2005).

Brazilian authors, such as Heleieth Saffioti (1987, 2001, 2015) and Zuleika Alambert (2004), were pioneers in the development of Marxist feminism, and were influenced by the classic works of Alexandra Kollontai (1977) and Rosa Luxemburg (2002). Key figures, like Angela Davis (2016), Patricia Hill Collins (2017, 2019), and Nancy Fraser (2009), have recently stood out in the international scenario and sought to address gender inequality, and consequently violence against women, from a Marxist perspective, while pointing out that class struggle is paramount for tackling it.

Delving deeper into Marxism, Saffioti (2013, 2015) disputes the idea that economic liberalism can be a path for female emancipation through women entering the labor market. On the contrary, the author claims that women are the driving force of the capitalist production and accumulation system, since they are in charge of reproducing and caring for individuals in all spheres of life, although they often receive no remuneration at all (Arruzza, Bhattacharya, & Fraser, 2019).

Saffioti (1995) warns that this problem “knows no frontiers of social class, culture form, or degree of economic development [...] it is enforced at all stages of women’s lives by strangers or relatives/acquaintances, particularly

the latter” (p. 8). Gender violence is at the heart of the constitution of modern subjects and, even when violence is perpetrated by women, “they do not have, as a social category, a project for the domination-exploitation of men” (Saffioti & Correa, 2001, p. 116).

At the same time, authors such as Carneiro (2001) and Buck-Morss (2017) add that without the expropriation of the land of racialized individuals, and the erasure of their subjectivity through slavery, economic accumulation by the contemporary world’s capitalists would have been impossible. Particularly in Brazil, Carneiro (2001) draws attention to the fact that “the myth of racial democracy, by de-racializing through the apologetics of miscegenation” (p. 14), has concealed racial inequality, and allowed the material memories of slavery to be perpetually repeated. Along these same lines, Saffioti (1987) also demonstrated how “women, indigenous people, blacks, mulattoes, homosexuals, and bisexuals constitute groups that, by definition, cannot aspire to positions of command” (p. 95) and highlighted “the endemic character of gender violence” (p. 95).

Despite the advances achieved so far, the structural character of gender violence and women’s resistance throughout history have been overshadowed by the media outlets, which usually focus on scandalous events of explicit aggression (Pintos & Solís, 2002). From this perspective, any future project requires a form of feminism that touches the lives of peripheral, black, poor, lesbian, prostitute, transsexual, obese, elderly, Latin American, African, Eastern, and Global Southern women; in other words, those dissenting women who have not mastered the hegemonic language that is overvalued by those institutions that ensure visibility in society. Ultimately, as D’Alessandro (2017, our translation) claims, this movement does not depend only on women, but on the whole of society and nature, which has led to the statement: “if there’s a future ahead, it’s feminist” (p. 43).

METHODOLOGY: FOR WHAT (OR WHO) ARE THE METHODS?

“Some memories are omens.” (Lévy & Robins, 2019).

To introduce the different stories and memories of the TMWRC, we conducted participant observation (Serva & Jaime, 1995) and five in-depth interviews (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003). In addition to compiling the material that was made available to the group, the researchers’ participation in the Center’s activities allowed them to establish a closer relationship with the women, thus integrating both ways of approaching the experience in question. They joined the TMWRC’s activities in April 2018 when they collected photographic records that were later returned to the group and used illustratively in the research.

To overcome the notion that relates the political dimension exclusively to subjects who are members of, or engaged in social movements, different Center groups were investigated, namely coordinators, residents, interim residents, and other participants. However, this was not carried out on the same grounds. Even though these women integrate freely, some shelters are currently vulnerable or exposed, and therefore required us to consider certain ethical precautions. To avoid reproducing the patriarchal manner in which other institutions operate, we decided not to interview the women living in this situation directly, but to resort to their public discourse as disclosed via the social media or during open events.

According to Balasch and Montenegro (2003), narrative production is a methodology that emerges in critical social psychology, whose purpose is to produce texts between researchers and participants collectively. This occurs

in a specific “situation for which a series of sessions is scheduled and in which both parties speak and comment on aspects – previously agreed upon – regarding the phenomenon studied” (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003, p. 19, our translation). It is worth clarifying that during this stage no data or information analysis was carried out, as is typical of qualitative perspectives, which consider interpretations as possible ways of revealing a reality that hides between the lines of what is actually said.

As for the scope of action of the participation resulting from the research, it was quite diverse and included: (1) participation in the Center’s main everyday activities; (2) participation in the Center’s weekly studies on feminism and socialism; (3) recording and editing events, that is, producing potential material for publicizing the project; (4) a fundraising initiative with the university, carried out through the submission of extension projects that articulated the Center’s activities within the scope of the university extension; and (5) the organization of exchange activities, with coordinators being invited to participate in the academic environment by way of lectures.

The triangulation of participant observation tools, secondary data, and interviews generated a vast amount of material. The interviews followed the format of a simple conversation and were fully transcribed. Two public events were also recorded and transcribed to collect the discourses of other female research subjects who are members of the state network coping with violence against women. Table 1, which can be found after the references section, shows how the interviews were conducted. It describes the respondents, as well as their scope of action in organizing the project.

Table 1. Compiled material: building a research corpus

Type of Material	Fictitious Name	Area of Action	Date
Interview No. 1	Violeta Parra	Communication	Jul/2018
Interview No. 2	Hilda Hilst	Psychology	Jul/2018
Interview No. 3	Rosa Luxemburg	Social Care	Jul/2018
Interview No. 4	Margarida Alves	Sheltering	Jul/2018
Interview No. 5	Alexandra Kollontai	Law/Legal	Nov/2018
“Deconstructions” Event	Pagu	General	Nov/2017
“Tina Resists” Event	Alexandra Kollontai	Law/Legal	Jun/2018
	Cora Coralina	Former shelter resident	

The real names of the participants have been concealed. To identify them for the purposes of this study, each one was asked to point to a feminist figure who represented them. This procedure did not follow any form of prescribed methodology, but was used in a lighthearted manner to illustrate the connections between the memories and narratives revealed by the research. The narratives recalled by the subjects were considered to be parts of the same process, which, in turn, allowed them to revisit their life’s trajectories and the new temporalities to be explored by this research (Neves, 2010).

From this epistemological perspective, all research is perceived as a “narrative by which the researcher elaborates a comprehensive text on the phenomena they seek to account for” (Mayorga, 2013, p. 348). Going beyond objective data analysis, the research is designed from participation and listening to the words that are used for constructing a text that is anchored by different voices. The methodological challenge lies in searching

for ways to carry out this construction without submitting it to the authority of positivist interpretation, which tends to reduce events to an assumed causal relationship.

According to Foucault (1972), one possibility is not denying “the intrinsic intelligibility of confrontation” (p. 30) or avoiding “the random and open reality of this intelligibility” by not attributing a single original explanation to such events. In fact, Foucault (1996) stresses that we must not lose sight of the fact that discourse is always “a violence which we do to things” (p. 53). By adopting this knowledge conception as the basis of the “historical gaze”, continuous reflection on the insertion of the researcher in the field becomes more important than a list of data analysis procedures. Therefore, it is up to researchers to consider themselves as the “objects of continuous reflection”, and to recognize themselves as “part of society, rather than its antithesis or opposition” (Mayorga, 2013, p. 347).

The following sections organize these narratives by presenting some of the crucial moments and stories in the Center’s trajectory. To this end, the key themes were articulated to organize the women’s accounts in the light of history and memory theories. The results were organized into two sections, starting with the process that led to the creation of the Center, and its political disputes and interactions with the state government. Some of the accounts about the Center given during the survey were then retrieved to clarify the meanings of the experience, as well as other meanings that are present in the group’s everyday life. In addition to retrieving that part of the process that led to the creation of the Center, aspects concerning immersion in the field were also highlighted, such as the construction of new meanings for resisting and denaturalizing gender violence.

FROM THE OCCUPATION TO THE CENTER: MOVING MEMORIES

According to Bastos *et al.* (2017), government’s omission with regard to housing policies, especially since the 2000s, has strengthened the struggles for revolutionary forms of housing organization, such as urban occupation. The Tina Martins occupation is part of a larger scenario that has developed increasingly unexpected forms of mobilization. Margarida, who has been an active member of the Olga Benário Movement since it was founded, recalls how the initiative came about:

We are partners of other movements, such as the *Movimento de Luta nos Bairros, Vilas e Favelas* (“Movement for the Struggle in Neighborhoods, Villages, and Favelas”, MLB), which fights for housing and has mainly female members. We thought: “Look, let’s take the experience of this movement as an example and organize a women’s occupation, specifically for women, to treat and take care of women (Interview with Margarida).

There is, however, an aspect that distinguishes the Tina Martins occupation from other initiatives, which has placed it in a select group of innovative movements that are in a struggle in the urban space. The project claimed a place in order to meet demands for strengthening vulnerable populations, such as sheltering women at risk and preventing violence.

The Center’s initiative came about because of the “need to have means that could assist women who needed to leave a violent environment so they could rebuild their lives, which included creating conditions for them to go on living” (Interview – Margarida). The occupation began when some of the members of the Olga

Benário Movement occupied the cafeteria of a building that had not been used for over 10 years in downtown Belo Horizonte, and which used to house the UFMG School of Engineering.

Going deeper into the planning of the occupation, Pagu recalls gender violence incidents that occurred during the militant actions carried out by movements associated with the Olga Benário Movement. She explains that the fight against this form of violence goes beyond the institutional possibilities presented to women, thus awakening in the movement's members an interest in designing actions that could encompass the entire experience of women's resistance.

For instance, this was one of the reasons why we founded Tina Martins, after something that happened during one of the occupations. There was a woman who turned to us every time she suffered violence until it reached a point where we had to tell her: "Look, you have to turn him in." She got up courage, went down to the station, filed a police report, but when she got home, her partner stabbed her to death. So, this is the reality of most women. They have nowhere to go (extract from Pagu's speech at *Desconstruções* ["Deconstructions"]), an event held by NEOS-UFMG).

In the same speech, in a retrospective look at the occupation initiatives, Pagu recalls the "women's struggle against [Eduardo] Cunha"¹ in February 2016, which for her was a milestone in the context of extremely polarized social movements. In a context in which political struggles are fragmented, the agenda of the "women's struggle for life" (and therefore against domestic violence) emerged as a possibility for unifying the actions of social movements. As far as Margarida remembers, that was supposed to be "a point of convergence for all the divergences existing in the feminist movement, which had been discussing the March 8 street rally" (Interview with Margarida). The idea for the occupation also came up in 2013, with the participation of the Olga Benário Movement during the Eliana Silva urban occupation in Barreiro, Belo Horizonte, which also housed some of the Olga Benário groups.

During the negotiations with the state government, the main argument against the movement was that the Women's Referral Center would be housed in a building that, up until that moment in time, had been used as the parking lot for a military institution. The members of the movement also proved that no document provided for the beginning of the shelter's construction, or funds being received via a public bidding process before 2017, which would entail a wait of at least two years. Margarida remembers that the occupation was not intended to turn into a Referral Center like it is today; the initial plan was to use it merely as a way of complaining.

At first, we thought that the occupation was going to be just complaining, that the police would soon come and evict us, and beat the women, I mean, we thought it wouldn't last long. And we soon realized that we needed to stay because in the early hours of the morning women began showing up, asking us what the place was, telling us that they needed a place like that where they could get help. So, since we'd organized the occupation, we started welcoming these women. Then the partners, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, and activists from different backgrounds began to show up, you know? [People working] in the social movement area, to show solidarity (Interview with Margarida).

Emphasizing the urgency of the problem, the members of the Olga Benário Movement resorted to statistical data to argue why a place like Tina Martins was needed. Rosa presented clear data revealing the context of the Minas Gerais Network for Coping with Violence against Women, which indicated there were approximately 300 shelter requests per day, whereas only a meager 13 individuals were sheltered across the state. After several

¹ Former President of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil.

phases of negotiations, the government allowed the Center to occupy a listed building in downtown Belo Horizonte, which would be home to the project for two years.

There is currently a consensus among all participants regarding the slogan they created. Alexandra, the group's legal coordinator, and several other participants expressed their view on the situation as follows: "I think Tina Martins is like the lyrics to that song, which goes 'With the State, against the State and beyond the State'" (Interview with Alexandra). Nonetheless, a feeling of helplessness is frequently mentioned in the statements by the movement members, even though they often feel included in the State Network for Coping with Violence against Women. Rosa shows how she perceives the network, acknowledging that her responsibility goes beyond mediating the conflict involving the listed building:

The State of Minas Gerais has 853 municipalities, 52 women's referral centers and a public prosecutor's office that helps women who are the victims of domestic violence. [There is only] one prosecutor's office in the entire state, and very few DEAMS [*Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento à Mulher*, "Specialized Women's Police Stations"], I think there are 67 of them for the entire state. So, it's a policy that we struggle to... We've been struggling to expand our assistance for a while now, everything related to tackling violence against women.

Figure 1. Femicides in the state



Source: Center's outbuilding, photographed by the authors.

Margarida recalls participating in the negotiations with government representatives and understands that it is the duty of the State not only to cede the building (which was done but in unsanitary conditions), but also to make it habitable and ensure it has good infrastructure: "We were the ones who squatted in it; the government just ceded the building. We don't rely on any form of public investment." The recalled process converges to a historical and daily understanding of the practices developed by ordinary subjects, according to Carrieri *et al.* (2018). Along this line, Hilda remembers some frequent problems in the Center's routine, which were aggravated by the fact that the building is listed:

There are plumbing issues, and you can't have anyone fix them. So, sometimes we need to replace a shower, but the electrical system is no good. [...] We know that there are several infrastructure issues, but since this is an occupation and the building belongs to the government, you can't do anything because I think ... If there was goodwill, we would've already done a joint effort, but we can't do anything (Interview with Hilda).

It is paramount to delimit these boundaries, as the relationship of these women with the State is not only indirect, but objective, leading to situations of personal confrontation. The political experience of Casa Tina Martins, as perceived by its members' memories and accounts, can show ways of denaturalizing gender violence through political struggle activities and initiatives. This process is in line with Neves' (2010) guidelines and shows how memory can revisit past events that are reinterpreted by present interests.

PAST AND PRESENT IN THE ORGANIZATION OF NEW MEANINGS

Introducing the Casa Tina Martins organization from its narratives and memories is far from being a linear task; on the contrary, it is a process of reconstructing various narratives about the fight against gender violence. Although from that perspective it was possible to outline measures, notes, and maps, the Center and its foundations would be translated into discourse, the *loci* of enunciations, functions, spaces, and meanings, acquiring new forms of materialization in this academic space. Figure 2, which has been subtitled using Hilda's words, shows the Center's facade in dialogue with crocheted items, which illustrate the way it looked at the time of the research.

Figure 1. "This vast world that a Referral Center is"



Source: Center's facade, photographed by the authors.

But what is a referral center? We recall the question asked by one of the coordinators herself when telling us about her first steps: “It was something I always asked myself: is this a shelter, or is it a referral center?” (Interview with Hilda). The term “referral” has the function of introducing the Center as a form of additional guidance for women. From their everyday lives, the Center’s members show some of the shortcomings involved in its conception as a shelter, as a counterpoint to a referral center. Rosa explains that the priority of a referral institution is to assist women in the long run to envision future prospects for themselves. According to her, there has been reflection on

[...] what was possible to propose to these women as a future prospect, so as not only to protect them from violence but to reintroduce them back into society. Because violence often takes these women out, it pushes them even further into a private space, into centers and shelters (Interview with Rosa).

This perspective is in line with Saffioti’s (1987) theories on the structural character of gender violence, which is not limited to isolated incidents of verbal or physical aggression. This is why we need a form of resistance on multiple fronts that employs various organizational practices, such as a “sheltering schedule”, which refers to the time that each participant is willing to stay in the Center coordinating other actions and initiatives.

While this is how members organize themselves to ensure that at least one individual remains in the Center, which is open 24 hours a day, it also represents a possibility for organizational learning that welcomes new collaborators. Furthermore, this promotes ties and alignment and the consolidation of fundamental responsibilities for the continuity of the work carried out by the organization, as Alexandra reports in the following speech:

We have a vision, a well-defined direction about how we should defend this Center, what kind of policy we defend, so we must all be on the same page. [...] When you belong to a movement you understand the politics, you get more involved, you have a greater responsibility because you know what it means, [you understand] that this Center is only open because of Olga, it’s not independent [from the social movement]. When you have no ties with a political movement, you can just wake up and say: “Well, I’m not going, I don’t want this anymore, I’m done”, and then leave. But then what happens to our work? (Interview – Alexandra).

Other services and actions take place in parallel with the bureaucratic sheltering collaboration. Psychological, legal, or assistance services are carried out in a separate room that is adjacent to the administration sector. The organization of the sections is planned so that most public rooms, such as the lobby, the living room, and the outside building where public events are held, are decorated with photos depicting important historical and feminist female figures, such as Bárbara de Alencar and Pagu, as well as with symbols of collective actions against gender violence, such as the Latin American movement *Ni una menos*, and other feminist initiatives. Figure 3 shows some of the images that refer to important women throughout history, such as Espertirina Martins, a Brazilian activist after whom the Center was named.

Figure 2. Outbuilding walls



Source: Center's outbuilding, photographed by the authors.

The group is organized to take in women who have suffered violence in order to address the problem more effectively from a structural standpoint. Indeed, this perspective relates to all the women involved, as they have been the victims of gender violence themselves. This type of experience aims to overcome the bureaucratic methods normally adopted by formal institutions. Alexandra reports that the intake is done by listening to the women who come to the Center while trying to “understand what she needs, whether it is psychological, legal assistance, etc. Sometimes all she needs is to spend an afternoon here and to get some advice [...]” (Interview with Alexandra). Women are taken in on a daily basis, within an array of possibilities, in a manner that is not always guided by prescription, but based on respect for each participant’s space, which, in turn, allows for everyday coexistence.

Although we have no analytical intention to attribute a hidden meaning to such accounts, when we follow the perspective proposed by this paper’s methodology, we can look at the narratives of their organizational tactics, whose ultimate goal is to denaturalize gender violence. One of the group’s main strategies refers to the experience promoted by uninterrupted exposure to different voices and ways of living in the occupied environment.

The circulation and interaction of women with different profiles, poor, black, mothers, lesbians, young, elderly, white, peripheral, central, and educated, most of whom benefit from affirmative actions, is a unique opportunity to break with the current context, whose communication channels promote the problems of dominant groups as a universal social reality, as pointed out by [Pintos and Solís \(2002\)](#). [Saffioti \(1987\)](#) and [Fraser \(2009\)](#) demonstrated the imposition on women throughout history of fulfilling the task of social reproduction, while [Carneiro \(2001\)](#) and [Buck-Mors \(2017\)](#) highlighted the centrality of the oppression of racialized populations as the foundation of that same process. That said, another important aspect of the Center’s organization is the fact that most women sheltered by the organization are black.

On the other hand, the project’s coordinators and volunteers, mostly women from the lower classes, have found a unique opportunity in that space to exercise a form of collective reception along with potentially transforming social engagement. There is also a minority of upper-class volunteers who also discussed their own experiences

as victims of violence, and their awareness of the fact that every action or initiative for tackling violence is only possible when the structural dimension of gender inequality is embraced. Indeed, this corroborates Saffioti (1987) who affirms that gender violence is a society-wide problem.

Furthermore, history and memory are connected by retrieving the historical narratives of important female figures in Brazilian and world history, such as Olga Benário, Rosa Luxemburg, and Marielle Franco, who are introduced by way of everyday recollections in the organization of events for the general public. In parallel with other activities, such as providing shelter and organizing fairs, workshops, movie clubs, talks, and open classes, the Center promotes a recollection of political issues, which are not very evident in everyday life, such as democracy, dictatorship, immigration, racism, and health.

Figure 4 shows an example of this articulation of meanings, from the display of an old copy of *Lampião da Esquina*, a newspaper targeting homosexual readers that was published between 1978 and 1981 and had ties with the alternative press after the political opening that followed the Brazilian Military Dictatorship that seized power in Brazil in 1964 (Ferreira, 2012).

Figure 3. Exhibition of the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*



Source: "Tina Resists" event, photographed by the authors.

Finally, an organization such as Casa Tina Martins finds a promising interlocution with history in organizational studies into the memories of struggles against gender violence. Management studies have traditionally shied away from their social responsibility, even though the field has instrumentally resorted to human sciences as one of its primary organizational development tools, but neglected discussing central issues regarding women and society (Cappelle, Melo, Brito, & Brito, 2004). Resuming historical discussions on female subjects who were not the initial focus of studies conducted in the area is paramount for moving towards a form of historical and plural management (Carrieri & Correia, 2020).

FINAL REMARKS

This article analyzed an organization that aims to tackle gender-based violence. In doing so, it integrated the epistemology of history and memory, and gave a brief conceptual overview of gender in organizational studies. We relied on history and memory in organizational studies as a framework for addressing, in this specific case, an organization founded to help tackle violence against women, the “Tina Martins’ Women’s Referral Center”.

Going beyond the institutional conception of organizations as fixed entities that are endowed with a practical and objective purpose, we sought to shed light on other organizational meanings, such as the creation of alternative perspectives through the circulation of historical narratives of dissident subjects and, consequently, of social transformation. This paper debated, experienced, and assimilated the actions carried out by the female research subjects and aimed to show how they manage to articulate a form of feminism that goes beyond a select group of 1 % of women considered by theoretical or liberal feminism, by constantly retrieving narratives concerning women’s struggle against violence.

Through their everyday practices within the scope of an organization, the group members established a possibility for exercising their critical, current, and intersectional feminism. This academic space has enabled the reconstruction of these accounts through the emergence of recent memories, which were constructed during the interviews by the participant observation method. This procedural path does not require any kind of knowledge generalization, or the establishment of a truth that hides from actual experience. Instead of reaching a single conclusion, several impressions were woven together with the other members of the group, such as the difficulty of creating a horizontal relationship between all the Center’s participants due to the challenges involved in the autonomous maintenance of their everyday lives, and the different needs inherent in the participation of each group, which comprises residents, interim residents, coordinators, volunteers, etc.

It is also worth noting that participation in a social movement does not imply full emancipation or freedom, but refers to the adequacy of other coexistence systems, which, in turn, prompt discussion on the values ingrained in culture and the organization of life. Even though they point to situations in the past, the memories retrieved in this survey serve present interests, that is, situated at the moment when they are invoked, such as the challenges posed by problems that remain confined to the current time of recall. This is what makes memories so rich; they are not static. On the contrary, they are a changeable phenomenon, marked by lapses, forgetfulness, and highlights according to the rhythm of the narrative in the present, as explained by [Neves \(2010\)](#).

This research contributes theoretically to organizational studies by advancing an approach to organizations that are typically marginalized by mainstream administration. It also brings to the forefront female subjects who have been rendered invisible and silenced in a field of knowledge that has traditionally been dedicated to studying large (business) organizations, important individuals (those who hold the greatest power), and great stories (especially successful ones). Likewise, history and memory are enriched with the possibility of recording historical facts through plurality, thus helping reject those narratives that are intended to be unique and universal, which started with the decision to listen to those who have been constantly silenced. In this sense, there is not only one memory, but several, which are managed by the subjects and transform the process of remembering into a political, transformative, and intentional one. We suggest that future studies should address popular forms of organization based on collectivity, as well as the memories of groups that are ignored by government and remain outside the core discussions in management studies.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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