



Intentionalities of women who decide to denounce situations of violence*

Intencionalidades de mulheres que decidem denunciar situações de violência

Intencionalidades de mujeres que deciden denunciar situaciones de violencia

Leticia Becker Vieira¹, Stela Maris de Mello Padoin², Ivis Emília de Souza Oliveira³, Cristiane Cardoso de Paula⁴

ABSTRACT

Objective: To understand the “motives for” the woman who performs the action to denounce her living in situations of violence. **Methods:** A study using a qualitative method, based on the social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz, by means of interviews with 13 women who reported partner violence in police stations in a city of Southern Brazil. **Results:** The action to denounce signified, for the women interviewed, ending the situation that she did neither accepted nor wanted any more. They desired to separate themselves from their partners, to have peace, to resume their plans and their lives. They expressed the desire to break the cycle of violence. **Final considerations:** These women who denounced the situation of violence felt free to expose their motivations, perspectives and health care needs. Capturing their intentionalities permits the construction of a professional action beyond the biological aspect that proposes to apprehend the social reality and the conditions involved in this phenomenon.

Keywords: Women’s health; Nursing care; Violence against women

RESUMO

Objetivo: Aprender os “motivos para” da mulher que realiza a ação de denunciar seu vivido em situação de violência. **Métodos:** Estudo de abordagem qualitativa, fundamentada na fenomenologia social de Alfred Schütz por meio de entrevista com 13 mulheres que denunciaram violência do companheiro em Delegacias de um município do Sul brasileiro. **Resultados:** A ação de denunciar significou para as mulheres entrevistadas acabar com a situação que não aceitam nem aguentam mais. Desejam separar-se do companheiro, ter paz, retomar seus planos e suas vidas. Expressam o desejo de romper com o ciclo de violência. **Considerações finais:** Essas mulheres que denunciaram a situação de violência, sentiram-se livres para expor suas motivações, perspectivas e necessidades assistenciais. Captar suas intencionalidades permite a construção de uma ação profissional para além do aspecto biológico que se propõe a apreender a realidade social e os condicionantes envolvidos nesse fenômeno.

Descritores: Saúde da mulher; Cuidados de enfermagem; Violência contra a mulher

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Aprender los “motivos para” de la mujer que realiza la acción de denunciar su vivencia en situación de violencia. **Métodos:** Estudio de abordaje cualitativo, fundamentado en la fenomenología social de Alfred Schütz por medio de entrevista a 13 mujeres que denunciaron violencia del compañero en Comisarias de un municipio del Sur brasileño. **Resultados:** La acción de denunciar significó para las mujeres entrevistadas acabar con la situación que no aceptan ni aguantan más. Desean separarse del compañero, tener paz, retomar sus planes y sus vidas. Expresan su deseo de romper con el ciclo de violencia. **Consideraciones finales:** Las mujeres que denunciaron la situación de violencia se sintieron libres para exponer sus motivaciones, perspectivas y necesidades asistenciales. Captar sus intencionalidades permite la construcción de una acción profesional más allá del aspecto biológico que se propone a aprender la realidad social y los condicionantes involucrados en ese fenómeno.

Descriptorios: Salud de la mujer; Atención de enfermería; Violencia contra la mujer

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¹ Doing Post Graduate Studies (Doctorate) at the Anna Nery School of Nursing, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ – Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil. CNPq Scholarship holder.

² Doctor of Nursing Practice. Professor of the Department of Nursing, Center of Health Sciences. Federal University of Santa Maria – Santa Maria – RS – Brazil.

³ Doctor of Nursing Practice. Full Professor of Obstetric Nursing of the Department of Mother and Child Nursing at the Anna Nery School of Nursing, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ – Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil.

⁴ Doctor of Nursing Practice. Professor of the Department of Nursing, Center of Health Sciences. Federal University of Santa Maria. Santa Maria – RS – Brazil.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a complex, multi-causal phenomenon that affects (all) social, institutional and age groups. Its complexity is related to the intertwining of sociocultural, psychological, behavioral, relational, and economic aspects. Its multi-causality refers to the fact that the actions and acts involve the intention to harm, subtract, under-estimate, subjugate and even injure. It also involves the relationship of power, whether in the physical, economic, political, social and even intellectual instance. These aspect, individually or superimposed upon one another, implicate different situations of women's vulnerability to violence.

Questions about the context of inequalities, such as fomenting violence, have been perceived since the second half of the twentieth century. This was when human rights and justice gained fame as a result of public policies and the work of non governmental organizations. The Feminist Movement was an important landmark and the driving force behind discussions, conquests and confronting violence against women⁽¹⁻³⁾.

The Ministry of Health (MH) in 2004, as a result of advancements in the discussions on the problem approached, drew up the National Policy of Full Attention to Women's Health. This incorporates the perspective of gender, integrality and health promotion in the actions of confronting violence⁽⁴⁾. In the wake of political conquests, the Country adopted a legal instrument for the prevention of violence and protection of women, Law No. 11,340/2006, denominated "Maria da Penha"; which represents an important landmark in the effectuation of the policy for women⁽⁵⁾. It broadens access to justice and reduces impunity. For this purpose, it has to go through disclosure and dissemination of the need for cultural change, so that violence against women can be eradicated.

Research conducted in all the regions of Brazil, with a population of 2,002 women, in the age-range from 16 years or over, pointed out the reasons that led to women not denouncing their partner and continue in the relationship. In this study it was shown that 24% of the women heard attributed it to the lack of economic conditions for living without their partner; 23% emphasized their concern about their children. The third reason draws attention due to its seriousness, 17% of the interviewees believed that women do not abandon the aggressor because they were afraid of being killed⁽⁶⁾.

Therefore, the subject assumes not only epidemiologic, but also social importance, because it brings to light the question of violence in the field of relationships⁽⁷⁾. In addition, it has a significant effect on the quality of life and health of the persons involved. In this context, the purpose of the National Policy of Confronting Violence against Women, of 2008, is to

establish actions, based on the concept of confrontation and a network of attendance by intersectoral means⁽⁸⁾.

Therefore, in order to implement public policies, health professionals, particularly in the field of nursing, must create the space for interlocution with a view to social transformation, thereby broadening their understanding about the complexity of violence.

In order to enable professional practices in health and nursing to be instruments that contribute to the social emancipation of women, the development of egalitarian social relations and recognition of the differences must be fomented⁽⁹⁾. This denotes the possibility of health care that considers the health-disease process as being dynamic and related to the meanings of the phenomena. Moreover, this includes the need for transformation of defended and accepted hegemonic values and customs, mediated by an attitude of denaturalization.

Therefore, when recognizing not only the process that involves violence and the possibility of denouncing the situation experienced, in addition to seeking support and health services, one considers the life the woman lives. In this sense, one sought to answer the **research question**: Which are the "reasons for" a woman to take the action of denouncing the life she lives in a situation of violence?

In this manner, when the woman experiences the process of denouncing violence in her intentional action, she has "reasons to" act. Understanding and interpreting human action only becomes possible when the person's "reasons for" are revealed; better said, his/her motivations⁽¹⁰⁾. Therefore, the object of the study was the significance attributed by women to the action of denouncing the life they led in situations of violence, anchored to a subject and social dimension of the phenomenon. The aim of this study was to apprehend the "reasons for" a woman who takes the action of denouncing the life she lives in a situation of violence.

When envisioning the health services as part of a support network, and the health and nursing professionals as co-responsible parties in the process of confrontation, the aim of the present study was to provide support for the actions of nursing professionals to approximate themselves to the context of their experience, create possibility to promote space for dialogue and listening when faced with more familial and less anonymous relationships.

METHODS

This study was a research with a qualitative approach, based on the Social Phenomenology of Alfred Schütz⁽¹⁰⁾.

The participants were 13 women who denounced the violence of their partner to an agency specialized

in attendance to victims of violence. Interviews were held with participants between the ages of 18 and 59 years, who had filed an official record of violence at the Police Department for Women (PDW) and the Police Department for Prompt Attendance (PDPA) of a municipality in the interior of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), Brazil. The interviews were held at the mentioned Police Departments, in a room made available by the service in order to guarantee privacy. The women were randomly accepted, after accepting and being available to participate in the research after making the denunciation.

Data collection occurred between March and April, 2010, by means of interviews lasting a mean time of 22 minutes, the guideline being a script that contemplated the bibliographic situation of the instrument with the guiding question: "What did you have in mind when you denounced the violence?" The phenomenological interview provided the opportunity to relate her experienced with regard to the theme in question, revealing the significance of her action. For Schütz the persons explains her "reason for", her intentionality by means of communication⁽¹¹⁾.

The number of participants was not predetermined, and the field stage was developed concomitantly with the analysis. However, it showed the number of interviews necessary for responding to the objective of the study. Therefore, this stage was concluded in view of the sufficiency of meanings expressed in the women's declarations⁽¹²⁾.

For the analysis, the following steps described by the studios of Social Phenomenology were developed⁽¹³⁻¹⁵⁾: Listening to the content of the interviews recorded; transcription; Reading of the full texts; grouping the statements by affinity (common ideas); capture of the "reasons for", by means of cuts of the statements that answered the research questions; re-reading the full text, in order to confirm that these ideas (concrete categories of the experience) expressed the "reasons for" the act of denunciation; identifying the relationships of categories with one another, arriving at the type of the action. Thus, the essence was represented, which is common to this social group, as a typical characteristic of a group that experiences a certain situation⁽¹⁶⁾. Interpretation of the results was based on the theoretical concepts of the Social Phenomenology of Alfred Schütz⁽¹⁰⁾.

The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Maria, Process No. 23081.015518/2009-66. The participants signed a Term of Free and Informed Consent, which guarantees secrecy and anonymity, in accordance with Resolution No.196/96 of the National Health Council, which concerns ethics in research with human beings. The women's declarations were identified with fictitious names of flowers chosen by the women themselves.

RESULTS

The age-range of the women interviewed was between 18 and 49 years. The number of children they had ranged from one to 8, with a mean of 2.38 children. As regards marital status, four declared they were married and nine lived with a partner. Ten said they worked, two did not work and one was a housewife. Schooling showed that eight women had incomplete primary schooling, three had incomplete higher education, one had incomplete high schooling, and one had completed higher education. In the bibliographic situation, as regards violence, they reported having denounced their partners from one to five times.

Analysis enabled the construction of three categories, which emerged from the concrete experience of the women who denounced having lived with violence, allowing their intentionalities to be apprehended:

- put an end to a situation she does not accept and cannot stand any longer

The women have in mind putting an end to a situation, express the relationship with their partner as unbearable, without conviviality, a disturbance and that there is no going back. The partner with whom she has a relationship makes use of alcohol and drugs, is jealous and betrays her. This context leads to a woman no longer wishing to share the same time and space in the social relationship with her partner.

[...] No way! Its too much, the situation is too much... This way it just won't do! I will be very sincere, I used to accept it, now I don't accept it anymore. (White Lily)

[...] My entire pregnancy was hell! After my pregnancy it went on being hell, and only got worse. He got more aggressive by the day. More violent, showing his bad side more and more [...] I couldn't take it any more, he was more aggressive every day. (Rose).

- desires peace and to resume her plans and life

The intentionality of denouncing the violence committed by their partners is centered on the wish to have peace and resume their lives and plans, such as: studying, having the right to work, sleep, relate to friends and family, choose clothes and get on with her life and coordinate it.

[...] he doesn't respect my job, because I have the right to work, I have the right to sleep! I have the right to be in peace, you know? I don't even have this anymore, peace! So, there is no reason why I can't rest, have a bath, sleep restfully, go out! I want peace! (Rose).

I hope to improve my life, he, as soon as he leaves me in peace, he can live his life. That is why I want to do this to see if he gets on with his life, so I can get on with mine. (Orchid)

- separate from her partner

They expressed the intention of separating from their partner, with the hope that he would keep away from the home, that he should fulfill his role as father to the children.

I hope that our situation will become better, because I don't want to live with him anymore! I want things to be resolved! Resolved with each going their own way! Me living my life with my daughter, and him far away [...] All I want is for us to separate! (Lisianthus)

I want to separate from him! If our life was not good up to now, there is no point in me staying with him! (Tulip)

DISCUSSION

The intentionality of women, when they denounced the life of violence they lived, was based on the possibility of putting an end to a relational situation established with a partner they “no longer accepted and could not stand any longer”. This reason expresses refusal of a relationship that they consider unbearable, which represents discomfort to them, and in this moment, without any possibility of resuming the conjugal relationship. In this sense, the social world in which a man is born and has to find his way is experienced by him as a fine network of social relationships⁽¹⁰⁾. The women exposed the impossibility of sustaining this social relationship established with their partner.

When they describe the relationship with the partner, they demarcate a good relationship in the beginning, but over time, some of the partner's actions make social living together difficult. They exemplified this by mentioning the partner's use of drugs and alcohol, jealousy, and extramarital relationships. In addition, they mentioned physical, verbal and psychological aggressions, forced sexual relations and threats of death.

The situation of violence generates fear, suffering and submission in women, and sometimes the desire to put an end to their own lives. They also revealed that love for their partner ends, and they are filled with displeasure, there is no longer any dialogue, and they are constantly reminded of the situation of violence experienced in their lives.

When analyzing this social relationship of women in situations of violence, it was verified that living is conviviality and understanding that the world is not only having a biological body, neurophysiological and chemical structures. But understanding that in living human life there are other aspects, such as: Human relationships, sharing of ideas, emotions and feelings⁽¹¹⁾. These lead women to denounce the life of violence they live in the hope of putting an end to a situation they no longer accept and cannot stand any longer.

When revealing her for denouncing, the woman demonstrated that it would establish a separation which

means a relationship of anonymity with her partner. We experience the world of life, according to the degree of familiarity and anonymity. The relationship of familiarity is lived through the form of “we/us” and allows apprehension of the other, as unique in his/her individuality. So that the more anonymous the relationship is, the further away will be the uniqueness and individuality of my “other half” and very few aspects will be considered relevant to the problem I wish to deal with or resolve⁽¹⁰⁾. In this sense the relationship of anonymity of the woman and her partner is established, seeing that there is no relationship of familiarity with him, in the form of “we/us”.

The women said that the action of denouncing the partner for the aggression goes through the decision to break with the customs and habit that she does not accept any longer and that cause her suffering. The meanings attributed to the world emerge from day-to-day experience, as presuppositions that form part of the sociocultural inheritance transmitted to members of an internal group in an educational process, accepted without judgments, functioning as a code of interpretation and guidance⁽¹⁰⁾. The, when interpreting the world from common sense, one apprehends that for centuries violence against women was reduced to the intimacy of the home. This situation still is a form of authority with full and absolute dominion of the man, accepted and legitimated by society, in such a manner that it configures as a naturalized attitude⁽¹⁰⁾.

The women of this study, based on their day-to-day experience of violence, there began to question the knowledge of common sense, which typifies cultural patterns of groups, as a product of society and that all accept as a matter of course⁽¹⁰⁾. They assume a posture of breaking with the typical formula of perceiving the relationship with the partner, rupturing this natural attitude. They then begin to plan the denunciation of violence based on their consciousness of themselves, as a pragmatic reason with regard to the world, constituting a way of dealing with the impositions of customs and laws.

The natural attitude is a posture that recognizes the objective facts, conditions for the actions, according to the objects around them, the wish and the interactions of others they have to cooperate or deal with and the impositions of the laws. This posture is essentially pragmatic, above all utilitarian, and supposedly realistic⁽¹⁰⁾. Therefore, when planning to put an end to the situation of violence, they break with the natural attitude and denounce this experience they have lived through. One apprehends that the action depends on great efforts of reflection, and it is the result of received and pre-reflective knowledge. So that the natural attitude is opposed to reflection and to transcendental reduction⁽¹¹⁾.

In her intentional action to denounce violence, the woman's expectation is the **desire to have peace and**

resume her plans and life. This makes the reason for the action evident, which is the intention to realize a project with the intention of attaining a goal⁽¹⁰⁾. They expose the need to get on with their lives, to be able to enjoy their freedom, be free of the relationship and prohibitions imposed by the partner, seeking and desiring peace for their lives in the scenario in their world of day-to-day life.

One of the forms of overcoming the problems of inter-subjectivity is by means of exchanging points of view. To do this, it is necessary to recognize that each subject occupies a certain place in society. In this sense, the idealization of agreements, or realization of congruence of the systems of relationships seeks to rescue the inter-subjective character⁽¹⁰⁾.

It was apprehended that in the inter-subjective relationship with the partner there was a lack of exchange of point of view. The women said they had the right to work, to feed themselves, to sleep and rest and to relate to family members, friends and neighbors. In addition, they had the right to live and enjoy their freedom, of which they were frequently deprived by the partner's threats. They revealed the need for the partner to respect them in their choices. They affirmed the need to: Rescue their plans, return to religion and frequent church(?); studies and relationship with their families, and stop being submissive.

Another issue pointed out by the women was demarcation of public space for men, they play football, frequent bars at night, go out to enjoy themselves and to work. Whereas the woman is delegated to the space of the home, the private place, care of the house and children, providing the partner with food and comfort. Situated in one and the same surrounding environment, the points of view of each of them are not interchanged. Thus, the man is biographically situated in the world of life, in this situation, exposes the place that the man and woman occupy in society, in addition to the roles they perform and their positions⁽¹¹⁾.

It is understood that the woman acts in relation to the situation of violence, according to the meaning she learned throughout her existence. The living and experiences accumulated along the course of life are denominated baggage, or stock of knowledge in hand, which is available to the individual from the legacy of her ancestors and her own life experiences that characterize the biographic situation, thereby enabling her interpretation of the world⁽¹⁰⁾.

Thus, the stock of women's knowledge reveals the roles still played by men and women in society. Caring for the image of a family, responsibility for the home, being deprived of activities that men may realize are still reinforced by social groups, such as designations of women. Thus reinforcing the social nature of knowledge which, when we receive a certain view of the world

– knowledge in forms accepted by the groups – through our parents, teachers and older persons, we are receiving a series of typifications and modes of typification. These are the customs and habits, typical manners of behaving, the way in which we learned socially to play masculine and feminine roles.

The organization of the social world constitutes the social reality of the persons who live in it. The world is not simply physical, but sociocultural. So that hierarchies of superiority and subordination, leader and follower, those who are in power and those who are subjugated are found everywhere⁽¹⁰⁾.

In the present study, the cognitive scenario of the world in the women's lives, social interpretation in the relations established with their partner is mediated by the hierarchy of superiority, subordination and power, granted to men by historical, social and cultural questions. The legitimization of this knowledge in common has served for centuries as a typical formula of society, to perceive the man as superior in relations with women, as a socially approved rule.

The typification plays an important role in the understanding of the other and in social interaction⁽¹¹⁾. It was perceived that the woman included in her world of daily life receives knowledge about the customs and habits accepted in her social group; in the same way that her partner receives this knowledge, and has a view of the world that was transmitted to him and that is accepted by the group. One envisages that situations of submission and oppression of women are visions in the world still accepted in social groups, typifying the roles to be played by men and women, reflecting on the naturalization of situations of violence against women.

Schütz's theoretical reference allowed an understanding of the social relationships in which its actors assume the world as presupposed, rooted in common sense, providing the foundation for the discussion pointed out in this study. The customs of internal groups, which are socially accepted as good and correct forms of confronting things and people, are seen as presuppositions because they have proved to be efficient up to now, and have been socially accepted and seen as facts that dispense with explanations or justifications. Therefore, the customs constitute the social heritage that is transmitted to children that are born and grow up within the group⁽¹⁰⁾.

In the set of this concrete category of life lived, it was identified that the women received a social inheritance, a system of customs in which they established patterns. But this interpretation of the social world makes them accept violent situations, inequality of choices and rights, because they are socially approved.

Therefore, when they plan and carry out the denunciation, the women are backed by legislation that prohibits violence and begin to question this situation,

no longer accepting it as a presupposition, Resulting in breaking up the face to face relation with their partner and expressing the desire to no longer share a story that was being constructed in common.

When denouncing the life of violence they had lived, they have in view the intention to **separate from their partner**, that he keeps away from the home, and that there is no longer day to day living together, that they get on with their lives separately. They reveal the need for the partner to assume his paternal responsibility towards his children, and not withdraw from them.

It is understood that starting from the project/reason for separating from her partner, the woman expects to no longer establish a face to face relationship with him and no longer wishes to share time and common space with him⁽¹⁰⁾. Once the relationship of familiarity, permeated with confidence, friendship and love is no longer established, anonymity sets in.

Therefore, a problem has been established to be solved, based on the thoughts and objectives to be attained in the actions. Thus our interest at hand encourages thinking, projecting and acting mediated by the intrinsic relevances, which are results of our chosen interests, established by our spontaneous decision⁽¹⁰⁾. In this study it was apprehended that women, supported by their interests in hand, project separation from their partner, an object to be attained by the denouncement of the life of violence lived, deconstructing the imaginary marriage and conjugal relationship. As they no longer wish to have a relationship of “we/us” with their partner, and there is no longer any interchange of points of view, expectations are fomented with the relationship of separating from the partner.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The women's social relationships established with the partner were shown to be interlocked in questions of inequality between men and women. This cultural construction, transmitted by social heritage, reproduces habits and customs of oppression, submission and hierarchy. In this context, being socially accepted, justifies and favors acts of violence.

When revealing the expectation of putting an end to the situation of violence that they do not accept and cannot stand any longer, women express their desire to break this cycle. From their point of view in their singularity and subjectivity, they feel free to expose issue

about their lives and established relationships, showing themselves to be protagonists of their stories.

In this sense it is necessary to believe that the women may become subject of their own lives and overcome the relationships of subordination and oppression which condition them to this type of violence. The search for more egalitarian and respected social relationships configures as a mediator of social and cultural transformation.

The women revealed the desire to resume their lives, in order to live in peace, expressing the desire to exercise their citizenship and human rights, as the right to life, liberty and personal safety, to be equal with dignity without distinction of sex or any other condition. This stimulates us to think how much women still need to battle for their social emancipation and be recognized as citizens with rights.

This causes the creation/effectuation of public policies to emerge, which act in the sense of transforming social relationship, incorporating the idea that Women's Rights are Human Rights. This refers to overcoming natural attitudes, in the sense of questioning this social knowledge that has been inherited and produced, which leads to such unequal relationships between men and women, which culminate in violent acts.

Therefore, when capturing the intentionality of the women that denounce the life of violence they lived, proceeds to say that nursing, by performing its professional action together with women, needs to apprehend their social reality and the conditioning factors involved in the phenomenon, beyond its biological aspect. In order for professionals to be more than mere interventionists in physical complaints, they must assume the position of agents of health promotion and prevention of aggravations, integrating a network of services.

It is also pointed out that there is an urgent need for studies that focus on women's requirements for assistance, based on the context of their living and relationship conditions, with the purpose of developing care directed towards their health needs. Thus, an endeavor was made to point out possible perspectives of public policies directed toward Brazilian women, with focus on health promotion, through appreciating the subjective and social dimensions, with a view to apprehending the concrete life lived in order to guide assistential actions, and thereby contribute to nursing care that strengthens the social emancipation of women and encourages/supports the breakdown of naturalized attitudes with regard to violence.

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