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GOVERNMENTAL AGENDA-SETTING TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Formação da agenda governamental de enfrentamento à violência contra a mulher

Formación de la agenda gubernamental para combatir la violencia contra las mujeres

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ABSTRACT

This article uses the document analysis method to examine the agenda-setting of the Brazilian federal government to combat violence against women in Brazil from 1988 to 2022. The findings highlight the significance of creating the Special Secretariat of Policies for Women and Law 11340/06 (Lei Maria da Penha) within the governmental agenda-setting to combat violence against women. Additionally, the study discusses the historical evolution and current state of the government's agenda-setting in relation to violence against women.

Keywords: governmental agenda-setting, combating violence against women, Maria da Penha Law, specialized police stations for women, Maria da Penha Patrols.

RESUMO

O artigo analisa a formação da agenda governamental federal de enfrentamento à violência contra a mulher no Brasil no período de 1988-2022. O procedimento metodológico desenvolvido foi a análise documental. Como resultado, o trabalho mostra a formação de uma agenda governamental federal de enfrentamento a violência contra a mulher, destacando a criação da Secretaria Especial de Políticas para Mulheres que implementou a Política Nacional de Enfrentamento à Violência contra a Mulher e a criação da Lei n. 11.340/06 – Lei Maria da Penha (LMP). Além disso, tenta-se discutir como foi e está sendo a agenda governamental de enfrentamento à violência contra a mulher pelos estados.

Palavras-chave: formação da agenda governamental federal, enfrentamento à violência contra a mulher, Lei Maria da Penha, Delegacias Especializadas da Mulher, Patrulhas Maria da Penha.

RESUMEN

El artículo analiza la formación de la agenda del Gobierno federal para combatir la violencia contra las mujeres en Brasil, en el período 1988-2022. El procedimiento metodológico desarrollado fue el análisis de documentos. Como resultado, el trabajo muestra la conformación de una agenda del Gobierno federal para combatir la violencia contra las mujeres, destacando la creación de la Secretaría Especial de Políticas para las Mujeres que implementó la Política Nacional de Combate a la Violencia contra las Mujeres y la creación de la Ley 11.340/06 – Ley María da Penha (LMP). Además, se intenta discutir cómo fue y está siendo la agenda gubernamental para el combate a la violencia contra las mujeres por parte de los estados.

Palabras clave: formación de la agenda del Gobierno federal, enfrentamiento de la violencia contra las mujeres, Ley María da Penha, Comisarías Especializadas para la Mujer, Patrullas María da Penha.

INTRODUCTION

The article analyzes the governmental agenda-setting process, emphasizing the involvement of the three branches of government in enacting laws to combat violence against women and the establishment of the Special Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM/PR) in 2003. This secretariat is affiliated with the Executive Office of the President and is responsible for implementing the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women.

The greatest achievement during this period was the creation of Law 11.340/06, commonly known as the Maria da Penha Law (LMP). The LMP produced results by mobilizing the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. In the judiciary, the resolutions of the National Council of Justice (CNJ) played a crucial role in the effective implementation of the LMP. The LMP was supported by subnational governments, which initiated actions to ensure its implementation. Various public security measures were established throughout the country, including specialized police stations for women (DEAMs), police patrols to deal with domestic violence (Patrulhas Maria da Penha), and the introduction of protective measures.

This research reveals that, despite the inclusion of combating violence against women in the Brazilian federal government's agenda through the establishment of SPM/PR and the implementation of LMP, along with its impacts at the state and local levels, Brazil still faces a significant challenge in eradicating violence against women.

There are important studies on gender and the agenda to combat violence against women, from the pioneering study by Farah (2004) to the most recent contribution by Romão and Martelli (2020). There are initiatives such as the Observatório das Margaridas, a page created by the National Confederation of Rural Workers, Farmers and Family Farmers (CONTAG) where the “Marcha das Margaridas” (March of the Daisies) takes place annually (<https://ww2.contag.org.br/tema/marcha-das-margaridas>).

The study attempts to show that the issue of combating violence against women has gained momentum, but with focused mobilization and support from various institutions and, even with moments of setbacks, the defense of the interests of combating violence against women has been consolidated in the country, from an institutional point of view. The contribution that the work intends to generate is to show the political trajectory of this government agenda and its effects on the area of public security in terms of combating violence against women. It demonstrates that public actions and policies have not reached Brazilian states equally when it comes to seeking to reduce violence against women, given that the actions of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches in relation to this agenda do not act in an aligned manner and, often, do not achieve the expected results for the protection of women.

This article is divided into six sections, including this introduction. Section 2 analyzes the concept of agenda-setting and its application in this study. Section 3 presents the methodology, followed by a section that examines the evolution of the federal government's agenda to combat violence against women. Section 5 focuses on the implementation of the policy at the state level, and Section 6 presents the final conclusions.

THE CONCEPT OF AGENDA-SETTING

According to [Capella \(2007\)](#), agenda studies have been consolidating in international literature since the 1970s. They were originally developed in the United States with the pioneering work of Cobb and Elder in 1972. The concept of the agenda identifies the public agenda as a systemic entity. In other words, it comprises a set of issues that receive attention from society, are understood as matters within the competence of government authorities and attract the attention of public opinion or a substantial portion of society, thereby necessitating concrete action from the state.

Not all issues attract the government's attention; therefore, not all the issues present on the systemic agenda will command government attention and find a place on the government agenda (institutional or formal agenda). The government agenda is composed of issues considered relevant by decision-makers ([Cobb & Elder, 1972](#)).

In agenda-setting processes, the first step in achieving an appropriate policy design is identifying the public problem ([Brasil & Capella, 2019](#)). Some problems persist over time, while others emerge suddenly due to societal dissatisfaction. In either case, when a problem is recognized as a political issue, it becomes part of the governmental agenda.

The perception of problems as public matters entails two stages. The first is the systemic agenda, where all issues that receive society's attention are perceived as problems or issues that governments and policymakers must address. The second stage refers to the governmental agenda, which is set based on the attention of policymakers and rulers and addresses the issues these actors consider important.

[Kingdon \(1984\)](#) introduced the concept of the decision agenda, which represents a limited number of themes, a subset of the issues found on the governmental agenda. These themes capture the attention of policymakers as public problems. They are matters these policymakers are in a position to address. [Kingdon's \(1995\)](#) multiple streams model comprises three decision-making streams: problem, policy, and political. They progress independently until a critical situation arises, creating the necessary conditions to open a window of opportunity. This, in turn, leads to changes in the agenda, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 – Kingdon's Multiple Streams

MULTIPLE STREAMS	
The problem stream	Seeks to interpret how problems are recognized and why only some of them, among a wide range of problems, occupy the government's agenda. This process can occur through three mechanisms: monitoring indicators, crisis events and situations, and feedback from government actions – Indicators and diagnosis
The policy stream	Aims to understand how ideas capable of solving certain problems are generated. Alternatives are generated by communities of experts, governmental or not, who share a concern about an area of interest. Ideas emerge, combine, recombine, and at the heart of this dynamic, some of them disappear, while others survive and prosper – Public Policies

(continue)

(conclusion)

Table 1 – Kingdon's Multiple Streams

MULTIPLE STREAMS	
The political stream	Involves political events considered powerful agenda-setters. Regardless of the recognition of a problem or the available alternatives, the political stream follows its own dynamics and rules – Forces and Interests

The model based on three streams – problems, policy, and political streams – exerts influence on governmental agenda-setting and assumes a degree of independence between these three elements. Thus, the model underscores the pivotal role of communities in developing ideas that policymakers can adopt. However, community activity alone is insufficient for an issue to be included on the government's agenda. The model highlights the importance of the convergence between proposals (generated by communities in the policy stream), the framing of problems (in the problem stream), and a favorable political context (in the political stream) (Capella, 2016; Kingdon, 1995).

The central issue is that agenda-setting is defined by a) priorities, b) the capability to act on a topic, and c) the process of prioritizing and filtering issues. According to Brasil and Jones (2020), it is essential to demonstrate that problems are social constructions and must be analyzed within a specific time and context. Cultural, temporal, and institutional differences are important variables for understanding the process of prioritizing issues in society.

What is considered a priority in one society may not become a subject of government action in another society for extended periods. Moreover, even within the same society, a temporal analysis can reveal how issues enter and exit the government's priority agenda, varying by decades or even depending on the political parties in power. These fluctuations make the agenda-setting process a fluid and dynamic phenomenon, characterized by prolonged periods of stability with incremental changes, punctuated by occasional ruptures and significant shifts, as described by Baumgartner and Jones (1993).

According to Baumgartner et al. (2011), the time interval within the agenda-setting process can assist in identifying the factors behind policy changes, whether ideological, transnational, partisan, or dynamic. Various actors, including activists, litigants, or constituents, can introduce items to the government's agenda. However, it is worth noting that items proposed by organized collective actors are more likely to make their way onto the public agenda (Wu et al., 2014).

Two elements are crucial in the context of agenda-setting: information and actors. Concerning information, interest groups within the political process employ information strategies to highlight aspects of the debate that support their viewpoints (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993, 2015). Actors play a pivotal role in shaping interactions within communities, including political entrepreneurs who influence policy formulation (Anderson, 2003; Capella, 2016).

Governmental genda

For Capella (2007) the governmental agenda is one of the stages of agenda-setting in a broader sense. The governmental agenda, counts on the authorities of the executive branch: the president,

governors, and mayors. They have a decisive influence on agenda-setting as they have some resources such as the publication of provisional measures (in the case of the president), the power of veto, and the appointment to important positions in ministries and secretariats. The legislative branch comprises senators, deputies, and councilors, responsible for producing laws and monitoring the executive. Parliamentarians have access to restricted information and extensive media coverage, contributing to certain issues being taken forward or not by public authorities. Political parties have great power, mainly through members who hold political positions and also through coalitions with other parties. Finally, interest groups organize and articulate themselves for a common interest, exerting pressure to achieve their objectives.

This study utilizes the analytical framework in Table 2 to analyze governmental agenda-setting to combat violence against women. It will employ indicators of problems and solutions while examining the political context, including the forces and interests that have influenced the government's agenda for this public policy over time.

Table 2 – Governmental Agenda-Setting

CONCEPTION	ELEMENTS	CHARACTERIZATION
Governmental Agenda-Setting	Federal government's agenda-setting	Problems – Indicators and diagnostics Policies – Public policies Political Context – Forces and interests
		Political System Judiciary Society

Breaking down the analytical argument further, a conceptual framework for analyzing policies to combat violence against women in Brazil is configured, with a specific focus on analyzing the federal government's agenda-setting. The evolution of the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women within the federal government's agenda can be observed (refer to Table 3).

Table 3 – Analytical Conceptual Framework

ANALYTICAL CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS	PROBLEM OBJECT	EMPIRICAL DIMENSIONS
Governmental Agenda-Setting	Federal government's agenda-setting	Evolution of the Formulation of the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research procedure involved documentary analysis. The period of analysis of the federal government's policy agenda to combat violence against women was from 1988 to 2022. It included bibliographic and documentary research related to the issue of violence against women in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, which contributed to the understanding of the public policy agenda on this matter throughout history.

The laws and policies addressing violence against women were analyzed within the timeframe of 1988 to 2022, encompassing all three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judiciary. The research involved an examination of official websites at both the federal and state levels and considered the presence of cross-sectional actions involving national and subnational entities aimed at protecting women who are victims of violence.

The empirical foundation for the documentary research included consultations of official public documents such as laws, decrees, government programs, resolutions, and ordinances. Additionally, we compiled a list of initiatives aimed at combating violence against women within the legislative and judicial spheres, focusing on understanding how states mirrored the agenda set by the federal government. Table 4 provides a summary of the research procedures.

Table 4 – Framework of Documental Research Procedures

DIMENSIONS	INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES
Federal government's agenda-setting	Information: Actions implemented at the executive, legislative, and judiciary levels. Federal government investments and transfers to states. Contracts and projects completed. Data Sources: Articles, thesis, and dissertations – Platform <i>Scielo</i>: 33 selected works; Documents: a. Letter of Brazilian Women to the Constituents; b. Speeches of the President; c. Programs of Government; d. Bills and passed laws, particularly Law 11340, August 07, 2006, <i>Lei Maria da Penha (Lei n. 11.340, 2006)</i>; e. National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women (Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres, 2011); f. Official reports and documents of the Secretary of Policies for Women of the Presidency; g. Memoranda of Conferences and Public Hearings of Women.

FORMULATION OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AGENDA TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (1988-2022)

Antecedents: From the 1970s to the 1988 Brazilian Constitution

The UNO declared 1975 as the “International Year of Women”. In Brazil, 1976 represented a milestone in domestic violence due to the murder of Angela Diniz by her boyfriend, Doca Street. This tragic incident led to a movement in the country with the slogan: “Those who love do not kill”. In the 1980s, the national campaign “Silence is an accomplice to violence” encouraged women to speak out and report abuse.

The National Council for Women’s Rights (CNDM) was created in 1985 during the “New Republic”. It was part of the Ministry of Justice and played a key role in coordinating stakeholders during the drafting of the Brazilian Constitution from 1987 to 1988. The CNDM drafted the “Letter of Brazilian Women to the Constituents”, which showcased a cross-party alliance defending women’s priorities – 120 days of maternity leave, gender equality and combating domestic violence.

National Constituent Assembly (1987-1988)

During the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) held between 1987 and 1988, several social rights and individual guarantees were incorporated into the Brazilian Constitution. This process had the active engagement of the population and several social movements. Women’s participation in the ANC was marked by the “lipstick lobby”, which included the 26 federal deputies elected at the time (5.3% of the National Congress). Its main objective was to combat discrimination against women. The women’s caucus within the National Congress incorporated the demands of women’s movements into its agenda, presenting 30 constitutional amendments related to women’s rights. These proposals addressed women’s rights issues, covering areas such as employment, health, discussions on violence against women and abortion.

The 1990s – Governments of Presidents Fernando Collor de Mello and Itamar Franco

During the government of Presidents Collor de Mello and Itamar Franco, CNDM experienced budget cuts and a decline in its influence as a consultative body. By that time, Brazil had already become a signatory to International Conventions on Women’s Rights, which recommended the establishment of an Institutional Policy Mechanism for Women in the country. Starting in the mid-1990s, various programs and services, primarily at the local government level, began to be gradually implemented. These included Women’s Rights Councils, Shelters, and Reference Centers. In 1998, the Ministry of Health issued a technical norm addressing the prevention and treatment of injuries resulting from sexual violence. Additionally, in 2003, health services were required to report domestic violence cases, marking a significant step in addressing this issue.

In 1994, the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women, also known as the Convention of Belém do Pará, was approved. The subsequent year saw the IV World Conference on Women, commonly referred to as the Beijing Conference. These international events inspired women's movements and feminist groups in Brazil, motivating them to organize and convey their positions to the international community. Women representatives from these movements actively participated in these events, and Brazil committed to aligning its policies with international guidelines.

Government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002)

In 1996, the National Program to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women was created to protect female victims of violence and promote agreements with states and municipalities in order to create conditions to address this issue.

Internationally, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched in 2000, proposing goals and targets to address the world's most pressing issues (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2010). The third goal on this list was to "promote gender equality and empower women" to eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education. During the UN Convention to discuss this MDG, Brazilian women were represented by the then Brazilian First Lady, Dr. Ruth Cardoso.

In the final year of his second term (1999-2002), President Cardoso established the Women's Secretariat under the Ministry of Justice. This secretariat designed the National Program to Combat Violence Against Women.

Government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010)

In 2003, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva established the Special Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM/PR). In 2010, under Law 12314, SPM/PR was elevated to the status of a Ministry, with all the corresponding prerogatives, advantages, and rights. Since its inception, SPM/PR's central role has been to formulate and coordinate policies for women while fostering connections with subnational entities and civil society.

SPM/PR organized three National Conferences on Women's Policies between 2004 and 2011, attended by women, civil society representatives, and federal, state, and local public authorities. During these conferences, three National Policy Plans for Women (PNPM) were created and published in 2004, 2008, and 2013. The federal government established actions, goals, and guidelines about women's rights in these plans. These encompassed efforts to combat violence, promote autonomy, ensure equality in the workplace, provide inclusive and non-sexist education, guarantee healthcare, and safeguard sexual and reproductive rights.

In the specific context of addressing violence, in 2005, SPM/PR led the effort to establish technical standards for operating programs and services combating violence against women in Brazil. Before this initiative, there were no national guidelines for their implementation, marking the beginning of a federative coordination process for this policy.

Law 10455/2002 amended Law 9099/1995 to require bail payment and the arrest of perpetrators of domestic violence. However, this set of laws did not initially provide a clear definition of what constituted domestic violence, making it challenging to determine the specific behaviors subject to the law's application. Subsequently, Law 10886/2004 introduced amendments to Article 129 of the Brazilian Penal Code (Decree-Law 2848/1940), which provides for the crime of bodily harm. Law 10886/2004 added §9 and §10 to Article 129 of the Penal Code in order to define and qualify a special category of domestic violence, guiding the implementation of Law 9099/1995.

Another significant milestone and turning point in the country regarding violence against women was the enactment of Law 11340/2006 ([Lei n. 11.340, 2006](#)), commonly known as *Lei Maria da Penha* (LMP). This law explicitly addresses domestic violence against women.

As a consequence of the new law, various programs and services were established to combat violence against women, particularly within the judicial system. Notable among these are the Specialized Public Defender Centers (NUDEM), Exclusive Prosecutor's Offices for Women, and specialized court divisions, including other dedicated courts established to adjudicate cases based on LMP.

In 2007, SPM/PR launched the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women. This document outlined essential concepts related to various forms of violence against women and defined the programs and services that constitute the service network. The specific actions were elaborated in the National Pact to Combat Violence against Women ([Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres, 2007](#)). The primary goal of the Pact was to facilitate the coordination and integration of a comprehensive, cross-sectoral national policy on this issue ([Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres, 2007](#)).

Government of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016)

President Dilma Rousseff, the first female president of Brazil, played a pivotal role in advancing the women's agenda through significant programs and initiatives. These included the “*Mulher, Viver sem Violência*” (Woman, Live Free of Violence) program, the establishment of the first “*Casa da Mulher Brasileira*” (Brazilian Women's House) providing specialized services for women who are victims of domestic violence, and the passage of the Law on Femicide ([Law n. 13.104/2015](#)). The femicide law categorizes qualified homicide as a heinous crime, imposing more severe penalties, ranging from 12 to 30 years in cases where the murder involves domestic and family violence, disregard, or discrimination against the victim's status as a woman.

In 2015, a year marked by the political crisis that ultimately led to the impeachment of President Rousseff, there was also a crisis in social participation and the implementation of the LMP. As part of a ministerial reform, the Secretariats of Policies for Women, Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality, and Human Rights were merged within the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality, and Human Rights. This restructuring process resulted in a reduction in the focus on gender policies in Brazil.

Government of President Michel Temer (2016–2018)

In 2016, during President Michel Temer's government, there was a noticeable regression in policies aimed at defending women's rights. This shift departed from the previous commitment to preserving LMP, as expressed by the Joint Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPMI) on Combating Violence Against Women held in 2013 in Congress. An indication of this shift can be seen in the fact that, between 2016 and 2019, only ten laws were passed out of the 236 bills presented by members of Congress.

Under Temer, the departments responsible for issues such as gender, race, and human rights lost their status of ministries linked to the Office of the President and a single ministry that encompassed all these matters was created. In 2017, the National Secretariat for Women's Policies (SNPM) was incorporated by the Ministry of Human Rights, and later on it was incorporated by the Office of the Chief of Staff. In 2018, another change in its structure took it back to the Ministry of Human Rights, where it remained until the end of President Temer's term. Temer's administration paid little attention to women's issues, but also due to the discontinuation of the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women. Discontinuity and ineffectiveness mark Temer's administration in terms of the reduced importance of policies for women, as well as the reduction of administrative capacities.

Even though the IV National Conference of Policies for Women took place, nothing that was discussed was reviewed or updated. The policies were discontinued by President Temer's successor from 2019 onwards.

Government of President Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019–2022)

President Jair Bolsonaro's government in 2019 was characterized by budget cuts and actions within the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights that were not aligned with the National Policy to Combat Violence Against Women. This approach represented a broader trend of regression and attempts to dismantle public policies across various sectors.

The administration of former President Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2022) was marked by far-right polarization in all matters. This took the form of a cultural war when a (false) moralistic crusade was developed regarding gender and sexuality issues. The term "gender ideology" was widely disseminated in manifestos and speeches both in the National Congress, especially by members of the so-called Biblical caucus, and by the Minister Damarens Alves of the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights (MMFDH) (*Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada [IPEA], 2019*). President Bolsonaro's administration was characterized by reinforcing anachronistic stereotypes that meant the dismantling of policies for women. In practice, this meant the dismantling of the National Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (ONDH), responsible for the Ligue 180 and Dial 100 hotlines – instruments for reporting violence against women and other human rights violations (*Tokarski et al., 2023*).

The creation of the National Family Secretariat and the National Family Observatory from 2019 onwards, in turn, went against the concept of family pluralism established by the 1988 Federal Constitution (*Biroli et al., 2020*). In concrete terms, the new arena to which

policies for women are moving can be seen through Decree No. 10,883/2021, which changed the structure of the MMFDH and replaced Decree No. 10,174/2019, which regulated the organization of the ministry until then. Basically, this new instrument redefines the actions of the SNPM, restricts, controls, and diminishes the role of women, treating them as submissive and worthy human beings only if they become mothers (Tavares & Alves, 2023).

Even after four years of reactionary management, this was not enough to dismantle the agenda to combat violence against women. With Bolsonaro's defeat in the 2022 election, President Lula da Silva's administration is resuming the agenda.

The Ratification of the Governmental Agenda by the Legislative and the Judiciary

The obligations of the Brazilian legislative branch include voting on laws on behalf of the people and monitoring the executive's actions. Table 5 presents the evolution of the government's agenda to combat violence against women in Brazil from the legislative perspective.

Table 5 – Evolution of the Legislation to Combat Violence Against Women

EVOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATION (1988-2020)	
1988	1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution – provides on the state's obligation to combat violence within family relations; provides on gender equality (Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, 1988).
1995	Law 9099 creates the Special Civil and Criminal Courts to deal with most domestic violence cases.
2006	Law 11340/2006 – Lei Maria da Penha (LMP). The bill was submitted to SPM/BR, discussed in hearings with the participation of civil society organizations, and sent to the Brazilian National Congress (Lei n. 11.340, 2006)
2010	Technical norms establishing the standards of specialized police stations for women (DEAMs) (Brasil, 2010)
2017	Law 13505/2017 – Provides for the right of women suffering from domestic and family violence to access specialized and continuous police and forensics services delivered, preferably by female civil servants.
2018	Law 13641/2018 – Qualifies the crime of non-compliance with urgent protective measures. Law 13772/2018 – Recognizes that the violation of a woman's intimacy is considered domestic and family violence and qualifies as a crime the unauthorized record of content with nude scenes or sexual or libidinous act of an intimate and private nature.

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(conclusion)

Table 5 – Evolution of the Legislation to Combat Violence Against Women

EVOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATION (1988-2020)	
2019	Law 13827/2019 – Authorizes the application of an urgent protective measure by the judicial or police authority. Law 13836/2019 – Makes it mandatory to inform about the condition of persons with disabilities of women victims of domestic or family aggression. Law 13871/2019 – Provides for the perpetrator's responsibility for costs related to health services carried out by the Brazilian National Health System (SUS) to domestic and family violence victims and expenses related to the security mechanisms involved in the case. Law 13880/2019 – Provides for the seizure of a firearm registered or in the perpetrator's possession in cases of domestic and family violence against women. Law 13882/2019 – Guarantees the enrollment of dependents of women victims of domestic and family violence in a basic education institution closest to their home. Law 13894/2019 – Provides for the jurisdiction of the Courts of Domestic and Family Violence Against Women to take action for divorce, separation, marriage annulment, or dissolution of a stable union in cases of violence.
2020	Law 13984/2020 – Establishes that the perpetrator must attend an education and rehabilitation center and submit to psychosocial support as urgent protective measure.

Source: Based on information from Chamber of Deputies (Brasil, 2024).

The judiciary branch sought to equip LMP to ensure its full implementation. Among the measures in this sense were the establishment of the resolutions of the National Council of Justice (CNJ), designed to offer support to women victims of domestic and family violence and punish their aggressors (see Table 6).

Table 6 – Evolution of the Legal Instruments to Combat Violence Against Women – National Council of Justice

2007	Law 11,441/2007 – Amends provisions of Law 5869, of January 11, 1973 – Code of Civil Procedure, enabling the carrying out of inventory, sharing, consensual separation and consensual divorce by administrative means. Recommendation 9/2007 – Recommends to the Courts of Justice the creation of Courts for Domestic and Family Violence Against Women and the adoption of other measures, provided for in Law 11340/2006 (Lei n. 11.340, 2006).
2010	Resolution 120/2010 – Amends provisions of Resolution 35/2007, which regulates the application of Law 11441/07 by notary and registration services.
2011	Resolution 128/2011 – Determines the creation of State Coordination for Women in Situation of Domestic and Family Violence within the scope of the Courts of Justice of the States and the Federal District.
2013	Resolution 179/2013 – Changes the wording of art. 12 of Resolution 35, of April 24, 2007, which regulates the application of Law 11441/2007 by notary and registration services.

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Table 6 – Evolution of the Legal Instruments to Combat Violence Against Women – National Council of Justice

2014	Ordinance 55/2014 – Appoint representatives for the Permanent Movement to Combat Domestic and Family Violence against Women.
2016	Resolution 220/2016 – Amends provisions of Resolution 35/2007 of the CNJ, to expressly consider the hypothesis of the virago spouse being pregnant or at least not being aware of this condition. Ordinance 54/2016 – Establishes a working group to develop studies aimed at amending Resolution 128/2011 of the CNJ, in compliance with the parameters of Restorative Justice.
2017	Ordinance 15/2017 – Establishes the National Judicial Policy to combat violence against Women in the judiciary and provides other measures.
2018	Technical Cooperation Term 43/2018 – Signed by the National Council of Justice, the National Council of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Human Rights, aiming at the creation and implementation of the National Risk Assessment Form for the prevention and confrontation of crimes committed in the context of domestic and family violence against women. Ordinance 164/2018 – Establishes a working group aimed at creating and implementing the National Risk Assessment and Life Protection Form – (FRIDA) model for preventing and combating crimes committed in the context of domestic and family violence against women. Ordinance 145/2018 – Appoints supervisor and Assistant Judge to monitor the National Judicial Policy to Combat Violence Against Women. Resolution 254/2018 – Establishes the National Judicial Policy to combat violence against women by the judiciary and provides other measures.
2020	Ordinance 262/2020 – Amends CNJ Ordinance 259/2020, which establishes a working group to prepare studies and proposals aimed at combating domestic and family violence against women. Ordinance 259/2020 – Establishes a working group to prepare studies and proposals aimed at combating domestic and family violence against women.

Source: Based on data from CNJ (2017, 2018, 2018.1; 2020).

The monitoring portal displays data obtained based on the provisions of Ordinance 15 (CNJ, 2017), which established the National Judicial Policy to Combat Violence Against Women implemented by the judiciary branch.

The online portal provides information on the locations of exclusive judicial divisions and the number of new, pending, dismissed and judged cases. In 2021, it showed 145 exclusive judicial divisions specializing in domestic violence in Brazil (Table 7).

Table 7 – Exclusive court divisions specialized in domestic violence (per Brazilian state)

STATE	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
São Paulo	09	13	16	22	22	28
Rio de Janeiro	11	11	11	11	11	11
Acre	01	01	02	02	01	01
Pará	04	04	04	04	04	04
Mato Grosso	04	05	04	04	04	04
Paraíba	02	02	02	02	02	02
Pernambuco	10	10	10	10	10	10
Alagoas	02	02	02	02	01	01
Amazonas	02	03	03	03	03	03
Piauí	01	01	01	01	01	01
Paraná	-	01	02	02	03	03
Amapá	02	02	02	02	02	02
Bahia	06	07	07	08	08	09
Ceará	02	02	02	02	03	03
Rio Grande do Norte	04	05	05	05	05	05
Rondônia	01	01	01	01	01	01
Roraima	01	02	02	02	02	02
Distrito Federal	16	16	16	16	16	15
Espírito Santo	05	06	06	06	06	06
Goiás	03	04	09	09	09	09
Rio Grande do Sul	09	09	09	09	09	10
Santa Catarina	01	01	01	01	01	01
Maranhão	02	03	03	03	03	03
Sergipe	01	01	01	01	01	01
Minas Gerais	04	04	04	05	04	04
Mato Grosso do Sul	03	03	03	03	03	03
Tocantins	03	03	03	03	03	03

Source: Based on data from [CNJ \(2023\)](#).

Despite the availability of exclusive services in court divisions specialized in domestic violence, the number of new cases has increased in Brazil in recent years, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 – Historical series of new cases of violence against women

YEAR	TOTAL
2016	422,718
2017	479,566
2018	518,361
2019	568,228
2020	558,971
2021	630,948

Source: Based on data from CNJ (2023).

The Brazilian justice system continues to face a challenge in confronting domestic violence as determined by law, due to the inadequacy and insufficiency of resources to respond to the growing number of cases of violence against women. As recorded by the CNJ in Table 9 of requests for urgent protective measures.

Table 9 – Historical series of protective measures

YEAR	TOTAL
2016	249,406
2017	301,319
2018	332,298
2019	396,729
2020	399,547
2021	438,688

Source: Based on data from CNJ (2023).

THE REFLECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT AGENDA TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE BRAZILIAN STATES

The implementation model of the Program to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women is based on guiding coordinated efforts between federal, state and local governments, as well as ministries and the Secretariat for Women's Policies. In this context, actions within the public

security sector at the state level have been identified that have contributed to the National Policy to Combat Violence against Women.

Three key actions are consistently observed across all 27 states of the federation: 1) the deployment of police patrols specifically trained to address domestic violence (*Patrulhas Maria da Penha*), 2) the establishment of specialized police stations for women (DEAMs), and 3) the provision of an emergency phone number for reporting domestic violence incidents (*Disque 180*).

In Bahia, the State Secretariat of Policies for Women annually carries out a project with a series of relevant actions, aiming for society to reflect on the violence suffered by women. The “Campaign 21 Days of Activism in Bahia,” or the campaign “UNA-SE for the End of Violence Against Women” are examples of these actions.

In Minas Gerais, the State Secretariat of Justice and Public Security coordinates a 24/7 monitoring system for individuals convicted under the *Lei Maria da Penha* (LMP). In this program, the perpetrators wear electronic tags, while the victims carry a mobile device similar to a cell phone. If the woman moves outside a designated security perimeter or the perpetrator approaches her, the state police is immediately notified. They respond by reaching the location of the perpetrator and simultaneously contacting the woman to ensure her safety.

In Goiás, the General Commander of the state police published Ordinance 17456/2023, which establishes measures to prevent, combat, and eradicate domestic and family violence against women. The ordinance makes it mandatory to establish specialized centers to serve women in all areas covered by police units.

The Public Security Secretariat of Mato Grosso created the Integrated Management Office (GGI) to be a space for permanent dialogue between the institutions of the criminal justice system and public security bodies. The GGI has working groups that present lines of action. One of these groups is focused on women’s protection.

The Secretariat of Health (SESAU) in the state of Alagoas has established a network of care for victims of sexual violence (RAVVS). This network combines various services under one roof, ensuring that victims have access to a multidisciplinary team for immediate medical, psychological, and social assistance. Additionally, victims can file an incident report to initiate investigations promptly. In Alagoas, State Law 8042/2018 has established the “Maria da Penha State Campaign,” celebrated every March in both public and private schools.

In Rio de Janeiro, the Violence Against Women Assistance Network provides social, psychological, and legal support, including the Marcia Lyra Integrated Women’s Assistance Center; Specialized Women’s Care Center Chiquinha Gonzaga; Casa da Mulher Carioca Dinah Coutinho; Integrated Center for Assistance to Low-income Women; Women’s Public Defender Center (NUDEM); CEJUVIDA - linked to the Court of Justice to ensure the safe and rapid referral of women victims of abuse after forensic examination.

In the Federal District, the State Secretariat of Public Security (SSP/DF) has the “Safer Woman” program in operation. Launched in 2021, the program includes several actions. Within the scope of the police of the Federal District, there is the Prevention Program Oriented to Domestic and Family Violence (PROVID)

In Pernambuco, the Integrated Academy of Social Defense (ACIDES/SDS) plays a crucial role in directing training initiatives for professionals in the field of public security. The agency trains the state's public security professionals across various government projects. Among these initiatives is the Specialized Assistance Course for Women Victims of Gender-Based Violence, designed to prepare security officials to effectively assist women who have experienced this form of violence.

Rio Grande do Sul launched a program involving the investigative police department based on three pillars: i. Actions to combat violence against women; ii. Prevention of violence against women; and iii. Female empowerment and professional training. Another noteworthy initiative is the Women's Aggressors Monitoring project, which involves the use of electronic tags on perpetrators to monitor compliance with urgent protective measures and ensure the safety of victims. Additionally, the state established the Interinstitutional Committee to Combat Violence against Women in 2020, bringing together various stakeholders, including the state's executive, legislative, and judiciary branches, 9 state secretariats, and 16 institutions at the local and state levels.

In São Paulo, some actions include: “*Bem-Me-Quer*” program, which offers specialized and integrated care for women, as well as children or teenagers, providing medical, psychological, and legal support; Single Service Protocol ([State Resolution SSP 02/2017](#)) - specific measures taken by state police, and the Technical-Scientific Superintendence to address incidents related to LMP; The operation of 10 specialized police stations for women in various municipalities of the state, providing services around the clock since January 2019; and the “*SOS Mulher*” app launched in 2019 by the state police. This app allows women under protective measures to request assistance when they find themselves in a risky situation.

In summary, the following milestones were mapped from 1988 to 2022: In 1988, Women's Charter and Promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution – Dignity of the Human Person and Gender Equality. In 1994 - Convention of Belém do Pará. In 1995, Law 9,099 creates Special Civil and Criminal Courts to deal with cases of domestic violence. In 1996, National Program to Prevent and Combat Violence Against Women. In 1998, Case 12,051 – Maria da Penha Fernandes at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In 2002, creation of the State Secretariat for Women's Rights (SEDIM). In 2003, Law 10,778/2003 – Compulsory notification of cases of domestic violence and the Special Secretariat for Policy for Women. In 2004, National Policy for Comprehensive Attention to Women's Health. In 2005, National Policy Plan for Women. In 2006, Law 11,340/2006 – Maria da Penha Law. In 2007, National Pact to Combat Violence against Women. In 2008, II National Policy Plan for women. In 2010, National Guidelines for sheltering women victims of violence and the technical standards for police stations specialized in assisting women (DEAMs). In 2011, Network for Combating Violence Against Women, National Policy for Combating Violence Against Women, and Resolution 128/2011 – Creation of State Coordinators for women in situations of domestic and family violence within the scope of the Courts of Justice of the States and the Federal District. In 2012, the creation of the Maria da Penha Patrol in Rio Grande do

Sul. In 2013, Review of the National Policy Plan for women and the “Woman, live without violence” Program. In 2015, Dial 180, Law 13,104/2013 - Feminicide Law, Installation of the 1st Brazilian Women’s House in Mato Grosso, Law 12,650 – Joana Maranhão Law regulates statutes of limitations for sexual abuse crimes. In 2016, National Registry of domestic violence. In 2017, Rede Brasil Mulher and the Observatory of Women against Violence (OMV). In 2018, National Policy System for women (SINAPOM), National Plan to Combat Domestic Violence (PNaViD), and the Sexual Harassment Law. In 2019, Safe and Protected Woman Program, Resumption of the implementation of the Brazilian Women’s Houses and the Save a Woman Project. In 2020, Joint Resolution No. 5/2020, which establishes the National Risk Assessment Form and the National Assistance System for women victims of violence and Law 14,022/2020 to combat violence against women during COVID-19. In 2021, Stalking Law 14,132, which criminalizes the conduct of stalking, Law 14,245 – Mariana Ferrer Law, which aims to prevent acts that threaten the physical and psychological integrity of the victim, and the National Plan to combat feminicide. In 2022, Law 14,330/2022 with the National Plan for Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to illustrate that the inclusion of the issue of “combating violence against women” in the Brazilian government’s agenda is the outcome of an extended advocacy process. It is the consequence of identifying problems, making decisions, and navigating political dynamics, creating a window of opportunity for the state to shape an agenda that aligns with the government’s objectives and broader political vision. This agenda also responds to the demands voiced by civil society through the women’s movement, all while addressing the international imperative for action on this issue.

The application of theoretical models to analyze the agenda-setting process in the Brazilian government has revealed a well-established federal government agenda. Furthermore, the analysis suggests the relevance of the alignment between the federal and state governments. It is worth noting that this study primarily concentrated on agenda-setting at the national level, and future research may delve deeper into the dynamics of this relationship between federal and state governments.

The approval of the Maria da Penha Law in 2006 marked a significant turning point in the development and formulation of public policies aimed at implementing the law and introducing new measures to protect women. This event triggered a substantial dynamic within the federal government’s agenda and at the state level, involving various internal and external actors in the process.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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