

Gender and public policy: an overview of academic research in Brazil (1983- 2015)

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Abstract

Public policy for gender equality arose in Brazil in the 1980s. It has gained relevance since 2003, due to the institutionalization of the Secretariat of Policies for Women. However, it does not mean that there is a consolidated research agenda on gender and public policy themes in the country. This article aims to investigate how those themes have been incorporated, in an articulated manner, by academic research in Brazil. To do this, 349 articles available on the SCIELO and SPELL platforms between 1983 and 2015 were analyzed. From this analysis, a heterogeneous set of studies was identified, classified according to a typology built from the standards of incorporation of gender and public policy issues. Each type analysis took also into consideration: distribution of authorship; knowledge areas and the journals where the articles were published; themes and the population segments studied; and methodological approaches applied. It is argued that there is not a constituted research field on that subject, but rather points of convergence between the gender studies and the public policy field. This study aims to contribute to the development of a research agenda which articulates those two fields, and to assist other research based on different periods and data sources, through the methodology developed.

Keywords: Gender. Public policy. Gender public policy. Bibliographic analysis.

Gênero e política pública: panorama da produção acadêmica no Brasil (1983-2015)

Resumo

Políticas públicas com recorte de gênero, iniciadas no Brasil na década de 1980, ganharam maior centralidade com a criação da Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres (SPM) no Governo Federal, em 2003. Isso não significa, contudo, que exista uma agenda de pesquisa consolidada sobre gênero e política pública no país. O objetivo deste estudo foi entender como essas temáticas têm sido incorporadas, de modo articulado, por pesquisas acadêmicas no Brasil. Para tanto, foram analisados 349 artigos científicos disponíveis nos sistemas de indexação SciELO e SPELL entre 1983 e 2015. A partir da pesquisa, mapeou-se um conjunto heterogêneo de estudos, classificado e analisado segundo uma tipologia elaborada com base nos padrões de incorporação das temáticas gênero e política pública. Na análise de cada tipo, investigaram-se ainda: distribuição de autoria; áreas do conhecimento e periódicos de publicação; temas e segmentos populacionais abordados; e abordagem metodológica empregada. Argumenta-se que não há, no Brasil, um campo de estudos sobre gênero e política pública, mas pontos de convergência entre os estudos de gênero e os de política pública. Com este artigo, espera-se contribuir para o desenvolvimento de pesquisas que articulem os dois campos e subsidiar, por meio da metodologia desenvolvida, estudos com outro recorte temporal e em outras bases bibliográficas.

Palavras-chave: Gênero. Política pública. Política pública de gênero. Análise bibliográfica.

Género y Política Pública: panorama de la producción académica en Brasil (1983-2015)

Resumen

Las políticas públicas con perspectiva de género, que empezaron en Brasil en la década de 1980, se volvieron más relevantes desde 2003 con la creación, en el Gobierno Federal, de la Secretaría de Políticas para las Mujeres. Sin embargo, esto no significa que exista en el país una agenda consolidada de investigación acerca de los temas de género y política pública. El objetivo de este estudio es conocer cómo la articulación de estos dos temas ha sido incorporada por la investigación académica en Brasil. Para ello, se analizaron 349 artículos científicos publicados en SCIELO y SPELL entre 1983 y 2015. Se encontró un conjunto heterogéneo de estudios, clasificados y analizados según una tipología elaborada que siguió patrones identificados de incorporación de las temáticas de género y política pública. En el análisis de cada tipología, se investigaron también: distribución de la autoría; áreas de conocimiento y publicaciones; temas y segmentos poblacionales abordados; y enfoques metodológicos empleados. Se concluye que en Brasil no hay un campo de investigación sobre género y política pública, sino puntos convergentes entre dos campos distintos, el de estudios de género y el de política pública. Con este estudio se espera contribuir con la definición de agendas de investigación que vinculen los dos campos y, a través de la metodología propuesta, apoyar otras investigaciones períodos de tiempo y bases bibliográficas diferentes a los aquí estudiados.

Palabras clave: Género. Política pública. Política pública de género. Análisis bibliográfico.

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INTRODUCTION

Public policies for gender equality emerged in Brazil in the 1980s, in the context of the country's redemocratization and (re)emergence of social movements. In 1983, the State Council on the Status of Women was created, and in 1985 the first Police Station for the Defense of Women, both in the state of São Paulo (FARAH, 2004). At the federal level, the Program for Integral Attention to Women's Health was also established in 1983, and in 1985, the National Council for Women's Rights was created (FARAH, 2004; SORJ, 2008). The Federal Constitution of 1988 provided for equality and non-discrimination between women and men, including a set of specific protections, such as labor and social security rights (BRASIL, 1988).

The incorporation of the gender issue into the Brazilian government agenda occurred in response to the actions of feminist and women's movements and under the influence of international organizations. This process was not linear, resulting in a growing demand for the creation of institutional policy mechanisms for women at the national and subnational levels. International pressures resulting from treaties and conferences, such as the 1995 Beijing International Conference on Women, were added. In order to respond to these demands, the Secretary for Policies for Women (SPM) was established in 2003 by the Federal Government (BANDEIRA, 2005; PAPA, 2012).

This was the beginning of the restructuring of gender public policies. Following the Beijing guidelines, the SPM has adopted gender mainstreaming. This strategy aims at the reorganization of policies, sectors and governmental routines, for the commitment to gender equality (BANDEIRA, 2005; PAPA, 2012). Based on gender mainstreaming, the National Policy for Women (BRASIL, 2004) was developed, consisting of plans and conferences and the prediction of similar institutional mechanisms at the subnational level. From 2003 to 2015, three national plans were published, composed of governmental initiatives to be carried out in each quadrennial (BRASIL, 2004; 2008; 2013).

This sequence of events was based on a policy network (RHODES, 2006), built around the gender issue and formed by governmental actors and civil society, who participated actively in the formulation of policies and plans for women. And although this network is also composed of researchers and members of epistemic communities (HASS, 1992), there are still no systematic surveys on an articulated incorporation of the themes of gender and public policy by academic research in Brazil. In this context, this study questions whether there would be, at the national level, an institutionalization, even if embryonic, of a new field that would have public policy and gender as object.

The institutionalization of a scientific field requires a) the delimitation of a specific object, distinct from that approached by other fields; b) establishing a common narrative, that allows the debate of ideas and the construction of an identity among the members of the field; and c) material support, such as journals, institutions and control of strategic resources (FORJAZ, 1997; OSPINA BOZZI, 1998; MELO, 1999; FARAH, 2016a). Disputes and conflicts permeate this process, both in the delimitation of the field and in the definition of the monopoly of scientific authority among the actors of the field itself, "inseparably defined as technical capacity and social power" (BOURDIEU, 1983, p. 122). The delimitation of a common object or theme involves, in turn, the often conflicting coexistence of different conceptual definitions and theoretical approaches.

Based on this concept, this article presents an exploratory research covering an overview of the national academic production on gender *and* public policy. The study carried out qualitative analysis on the patterns of incorporation of these themes into scientific articles made available in the SciELO and SPELL indexing systems from 1983 to 2015. From this research, a heterogeneous set of studies was identified, classified into four categories incorporating the analyzed themes. The overview included analyses carried out, in each category, of distribution of authorship; knowledge areas and journals of publication; themes and segments of the population researched; and methodological approaches employed.

This article is structured in six sections. In addition to this introduction, the second and third sections contextualize the emergence and consolidation of the fields of gender studies and public policy, highlighting the Brazilian context. The fourth section contains the methodology, and the fifth section presents the results, organized according to the proposed categories. The last section presents the final considerations about the profile of the production on gender and public policy in the country.

GENDER STUDIES

The development of the concept of gender is embedded in the history of feminism. At the end of the nineteenth century, in Western capitalist countries, demonstrations of women who fought for their rights erupted, especially related to suffrage (LOURO, 1997). In the context of organizing socialist movements, women emphasized the links between gender and class oppression. From the 1960s, feminist movements started to demand a broad set of social changes, especially in Western Europe and the United States (PINTO, 2010). It was in this scenario of political and intellectual effervescence, that the concept of gender was built. Since then, it has been redefined, following the dynamics of the transformations of the feminist movement (LOURO, 1997; HARAWAY, 2004).

These discussions gained ground in Brazil a few years later, in the context of a resurgence of feminist and women's movements, of struggle against dictatorship and later redemocratization (COSTA, 1992; MACHADO, 1992; LOURO, 1997). Initially called "women's studies", the studies developed in the 1970s focused on women as empirical subjects (MACHADO, 1992), and aimed at providing visibility to their experiences – such as those related to work, violence and abortion – as well as at vocalizing the feminist critical contributions in the academy, albeit in an insulated way (LOURO, 1997).

In the following decade, the subject started to spread in scientific events in different areas, and research centers on the subject were implemented in universities (COSTA, 1992). In 1990, the seminar "Studies on Women in Brazil: Evaluation and Perspectives" organized by the Carlos Chagas Foundation, was the main "milestone in the transition from women's studies to the gender study and in the reflection on this field of knowledge" (MACHADO, 1992, p. 10).

At that moment, the concept of gender assumes the primordial function of denaturalizing sexual difference and feminine submission, evidencing that this dynamic is inscribed in social and historical relations of power (SCOTT, 1995; MATOS, 2008). This objective is connected to the search for scientific legitimacy of the production of the field (LOURO, 1997), as well as to questioning scientific paradigms. The neutrality and objectivity of knowledge are problematized and another way of doing science is proposed, anchored in analytical categories unstable and complex and endowed with critical reflexivity (HARDING, 1993; MATOS, 2008). Thus, gender studies aimed at overcoming the dilemma of insulation through the constitution of a field where the expansion of disciplines and the epistemological assumption of interdisciplinarity converge (MACHADO, 1992).

Since then, this field has been consolidating in the country, including the creation of academic journals focused on the theme, such as *Estudos Feministas* and *Cadernos Pagu* (LOURO, 1997), and the organization of scientific events, such as the seminars *Fazendo Gênero* and *Desfazendo Gênero*. In this context, multiple approaches started to stress the boundaries of the field. Contributions, such as those coming from the studies about the sexual division of labor and from the feminist economy, highlighted the importance of these perspectives to the critic and transformation of projects for society, giving a central role for sustainability of human life and to care (SILVEIRA and TITO, 2008). On the other hand, intersectional feminism questioned the concept of gender in order to connect it with other systems of differentiation and subordination, such as racial, ethnic, class and sexual orientation (LOURO, 1997; CRENSHAW, 2002).

However, this interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue has not been established uniformly and it is possible to differentiate "gender theories" from the establishment of linkages between "theories and gender". In the first case, there is the conceptual and methodological restructuring of scientific research (MATOS, 2008), pointing out the patriarchal foundations that relate knowledge and power, questioning the separation between subject and object and denouncing that the "universal subject" of science is, in truth, male, heterosexual and white (HARDING, 1993). In the second, the contributions of gender studies, although useful, are limited to an auxiliary line to the ongoing theoretical and empirical development. This has resulted in the appropriation of the concepts of the field in a de-politicized way by different disciplines, contributing to the naturalization of gender relations (HARDING, 1993; MATOS, 2008).

In this context, and in view of the growing importance that claims for rights and state intervention to overcome inequalities have gained in the agenda of feminist and women's movements in the last decades (SORJ, 2008), it is important to question what the relationship between gender studies and public policy studies is.

FIELD OF PUBLIC POLICY

The first studies on public policies were developed in the USA in the 1950s in the areas of Political Science and Public Administration. The objective was to understand the functioning of public policies, with the purpose of subsidizing the decision-making process and increasing the effectiveness of governmental action, contributing to solve public problems (PACHECO, 2003; FARAH, 2011; COELHO and NICOLINI, 2014). The institutionalization of this field of study and education occurred in that country in the 1960s, under the influence of the “public policy analysis movement”, aimed at overcoming the separation between politics and administration that until then characterized the field of public administration (FARAH, 2011).

In Brazil, public policy studies emerged in the context of the national-developmentalism of the 1960s, under the influence of the United States. Through connections between institutions of the two countries (FARAH, 2011), the intention was to broaden the reflections on the “state in action” (O’DONNEL, 1989). The first studies on “government policies” were carried out by the Brazilian School of Public Administration, of the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* (FGV), in the mid-1960s (FARAH, 2013). However, this process was interrupted during the regime of dictatorship, and systematic studies on public policies restarted only years later with redemocratization (FARAH, 2016b).

This does not mean that state action has ceased to be analyzed, but academic productions focused on the critical analysis of sectorial policies (such as policies on education and health), without giving rise to a field of public policy studies (MELO, 1999). This scenario began to change in the 1980s, with the redemocratization and reconfiguration of the role of the state, marked by decentralization, social participation and expansion of the notion of public (FARAH, 2011).

The challenges of this process set a research agenda concentrated around public policy studies. That moment was the beginning of the institutionalization of the field of public policies, under the leadership of Political Science (MELO, 1999). It is worth mentioning the creation of the Working Group on Public Policies of the National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Social Sciences (Anpocs) and of the Center of Studies in Public Policies of the State University of Campinas (Unicamp – São Paulo). In Public Administration, surveys were gradually resumed, growing significantly in the late 1990s (FARAH, 2011). This process was accompanied by the creation of subdivisions at the National Meeting of Postgraduate and Research in Administration and by the establishment of specific meetings, such as the National Meeting of Public Administration and Government, in which public policy became a prominent issue (FADUL, COELHO, COSTA et al., 2014).

Since the 2000s, there has been a boom in the academic production of public policies, as well as the creation of courses that include training in the subject in several areas of knowledge (FARAH, 2016b). This led to a (re)institutionalization of the field, in a markedly interdisciplinary way (MARQUES and FARIA, 2013). This process is still underway, including the redefinition of the boundaries of the field and of its object of study, as well as of the theoretical and methodological approaches.

The expansion of academic production occurred in different ways. Firstly, it is possible to observe studies focused on the public policy process, using as reference specific concepts and theories from the field of public policies as they were developed in the USA and, from there, in other countries. This production was concentrated in social sciences, especially in political science, and in public administration, and it was disseminated in events of these areas, as well as in journals, such as the *Revista de Administração Pública* (FARAH, 2016b).

Second, there is a sectoral production, focused on the analysis of specific policies, such as health and education, that is found in disciplines directly related to these specific policies and published in journals related to them (FARAH, 2016b). Finally, production has grown in the context of the institutionalization of a new field in Brazil – the field of public affairs – that connects education and research in public policies with education in public and social management (FADUL, COELHO, COSTA et al., 2014). In this case, the dissemination of knowledge occurs both in journals already consolidated in the area of public administration and in new journals, such as the journal *Temas em Administração Pública* (FARAH, 2016a).

Studies on the field of public policy point out, however, that research in the area presents low theoretical density, as well as thematic dispersion and institutional fragmentation (MELO, 1999; FARAH, 2013). The same weaknesses were pointed out in public administration, emphasizing the preponderance of normative-prescriptive approaches (SOUZA, 1998; PACHECO, 2003). More recently, however, some advances have been made in the development of theoretical and analytical contributions in Brazil on public policy (FARIA, 2012).

Against this backdrop, the question is: how have public policy studies addressed the issue of gender? From the analysis of the research agenda and the public and governmental agendas in the 2000s, Farah (2004) emphasizes that gender issues were still little explored in the field of public policy. Since then, some efforts have been made to establish some sort of communication among the areas, such as the studies on gender mainstreaming (BANDEIRA, 2005; PAPA, 2012). However, there are no systematic studies on how these themes have been connected by national research. In this sense, this study sought to verify if there is a field of gender public policy (MATOS, 2008), in which theories and concepts of these fields are intersected and incorporated in a connected way, or if there are different fields, with some points of confluence between public policy and gender.

METHODOLOGY

Scientific articles made available in the SciELO and SPELL indexing systems were analyzed. SciELO shows academic journals from different areas of knowledge (SCIELO, 2016), whereas SPELL exclusively works with journals of Business Administration, Public Administration, Accounting and Tourism (SPELL, 2016). The period analyzed was from 1983 to 2015, with 1983 as reference because it was the year of implementation of the first gender policies and institutions in Brazil (FARAH, 2004; BANDEIRA, 2005). In SciELO, the research was limited to the areas of Human Sciences, Applied Social Sciences and Health Sciences, which concentrated the majority of studies on public policies in the years 2000 (FARAH, 2016b). Additionally, to map the national production on the theme, the survey on the platform was restricted to the “*Brasil*” collection.

In both systems, the study did not use a specific item to conduct the search (such as title, abstract or keywords). The articles were mapped using search expressions, by looking for expressions anywhere in the text. The search expressions of each field of knowledge are presented in Box 1, using combinations in pairs (e.g., “gender” + “public policy”) and, non-combined expressions (e.g., gender mainstreaming). The survey was conducted in 2016-2017 and resulted in 420 articles.

Box 1

Search Expressions

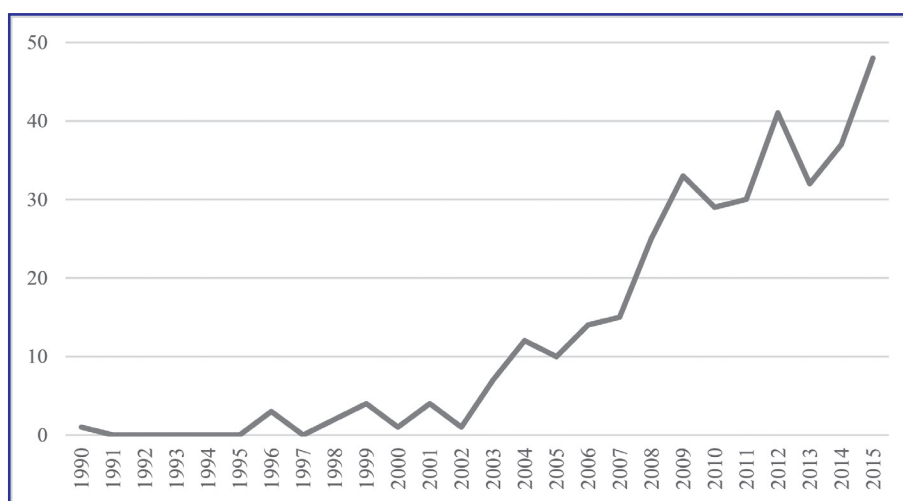
Type	Gender Studies	Field of Public Policies
Combined expressions	Gender Woman/women Feminism/feminisms Feminist/feminists	Public policy/policies Social policy/policies Transversality (mainstreaming) Intersectoriality Public administration Public management Government management Governmental policy/policies Government policy/policies Public action Affirmative action/actions
Non-combined expressions	<i>Gender mainstreaming</i> Gender policy/policies Gender public policy/policies Policy/policies for woman/women Public policy/policies for woman/women	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The use of a wide range of expressions, coupled with the non-delimitation of items (such as title, abstract) for the search in the text, brought possibilities and challenges for this study. On the one hand, this broadened the scope of the survey, allowing the identification of articles that, while not addressing gender and public policy in a central way, contributed to the themes. On the other hand, it resulted in the inclusion of articles that did not discuss the themes in research. This occurred in cases where the terms “public policy” (or “public policies”), “gender” or “woman” (or “women”) were used in isolation; or in which there was polysemy of the terms, such as the use of “gender” with the sense of group of biological species or as a linguistic genre. These cases were excluded from the study, as were book reviews.

The final corpus included 349 articles, distributed over the years of publication as shown in Graph 1. The growth of production is highlighted, especially after 2002. This indicates that the valorization of the discussions on gender and public policy in government has been accompanied by the increase of academic interest on the theme. It is observed, however, that the corpus constitutes only 0.15% of the total number of articles published in the systems in the period, with approximately 90% of the corpus found in SciELO and 10% in SPELL.

Graph 1
Distribution of the articles analyzed



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Another implication of the survey was the access to a heterogeneous set of works, with variations in the way they incorporated the themes “gender” and “public policy”. From the qualitative analysis of the texts it was possible to identify regular features, which were organized in typology forming four categories, based on how the themes were incorporated in the publications. In each one of the categories, the research observed: distribution among areas of knowledge; journals with more articles published; distribution of authorship; themes and segments of population studied; and methodological approaches used (theoretical or theoretical-empirical article and, in the second case, whether quantitative, qualitative or both). The articles collected in SPELL were categorized in the area of Applied Social Sciences and in SciELO, when was the case, in more than one area.

In order to identify the themes and segments of the population, the references adopted were the research agenda and the governmental and societal agendas as identified by Farah (2004), as well as the axes of action of the National Plan of Policy for Women (2013-2015) (BRASIL, 2013). Based on the analysis of the data, the theme “migrants and immigrants” was included, and the issue of health was explored in two categories, “health, sexual and reproductive rights” and “health”, the latter including articles dealing with subjects such as mental health, use and abuse of drugs and nutrition, among others. In order to understand the interfaces between the issues discussed, each work was associated with up to two themes and/or segments of population, presented in Box 2.

Box 2

Themes and segments of population studied in the articles analyzed

Themes	Culture, communication and media Sustainable development and land right Education Sports and leisure Citizen participation in power and decision-making spaces Health Health, sexual and reproductive rights Productive and reproductive work and poverty Gender mainstreaming and policy management Violence
Segments of population	Age and generational issues Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (LGBT ¹) Migrants and immigrants People with disabilities Race and ethnicity

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

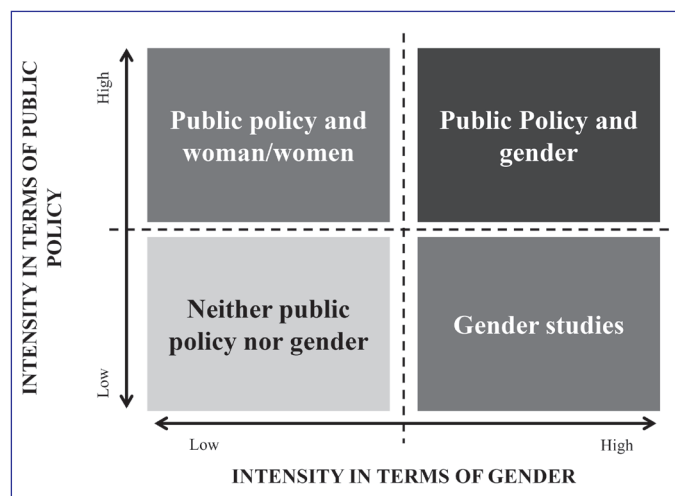
From the analysis of these elements it was possible to elaborate the four proposed categories, discussed below.

CATEGORIES TO ANALYZE RESEARCH ON GENDER AND PUBLIC POLICY

Four categories were elaborated considering the intensity of the incorporation and the intersections between gender and public policy (see Figure 1)

Figure 1

Categories to analyze research on gender and public policy



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

¹The acronym LGBT was chosen because it is the most used in Brazil. However, we recognize there are multiple designations in use that encompass other representations, which are equally legitimate in building the movement's identity.

In the “public policy” axis, articles that presented a definition for the concept, supported or not by bibliographical references, and/or those that analyzed a specific public policy were considered high intensity. The articles of low intensity, on the other hand, marginally addressed the public policy issue, justifying the study from its importance for the development of governmental actions and/or recommending the creation or revision of policies.

In the “gender” axis, articles that discussed the concept and/or adopted feminist critical perspectives for theoretical discussion or data analysis, reflecting on issues such as “sexual and reproductive rights”, “sexual division of labor”, and “violence and gender” were considered high intensity. Considered low intensity were those related to the incorporation of gender or sex as variables for data disaggregation and/or as result found in the research, not linking the term to gender debate.

The categories are analyzed below.

Category 1: public policy and gender

In the first category, the incorporation of the public policy and gender themes is based, simultaneously, on the conceptual discussion of ‘public policy’ or in the ‘analysis of a policy’; and in the conceptual discussion on ‘gender’ or in the adoption of critical feminist perspectives for analysis. This was the category with more articles (154), published in 53 journals, by 303 authors. The articles are distributed as follows: Human Science (44%); Applied Social Sciences (22%); Health Sciences (20%); and articles related to more than one area (14%).

The structuring axis was the feminist criticism, questioning the inequalities between men and women and the feminine submission. To that end, 56 articles mobilized different concepts of gender. There were recurring notions that highlight the social, historical and relational dimensions of the concept; notions that link it to sexual diversity and to forms of oppression; and that problematize the binarism between sex and gender. Other concepts have also been employed, such as the “sexual division of labor”, “sexual and reproductive rights” and “gender violence”, as well as feminism itself, referring to the multiplicity of themes and theoretical disputes that are part of the field of gender studies. In addition, the variable “gender” was, as a rule, incorporated into the methodological design of the research or considered central to the analysis of results, making the empirical category “woman/women” visible.

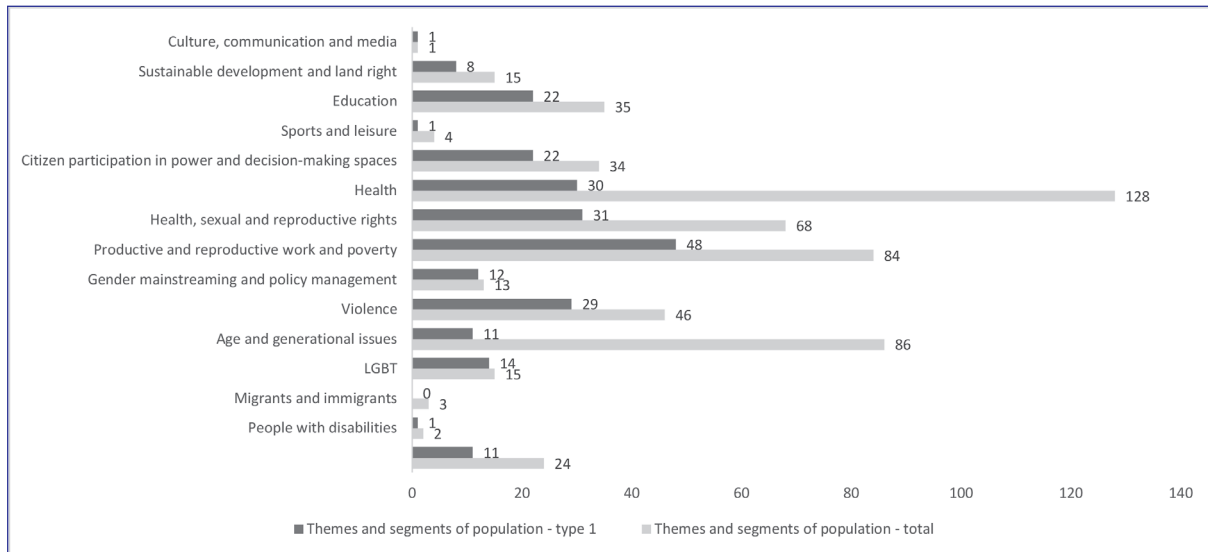
It was possible to observe in this category a first form of incorporation of the contributions of gender studies, in which this concept (or another associated to the feminist approach) is central (MATOS, 2008). Usually this was not accompanied by the theoretical discussion about public policy, with only 14 articles explaining the concept employed, and few used other concepts related to the field, such as “agenda”, “social policies” or “affirmative actions”. Some articles were identified that dealt with the conceptual specificities of public policies for women or gender public policies, especially among those who discussed gender mainstreaming or these policies’ management.

Thus, the empirical analysis of state actions prevailed in the public policy axis, to the detriment of the theoretical and conceptual discussion, reinforcing the limited appropriation of theoretical frameworks and analytical approaches by researches in this field (FARAH, 2013). The delimitation of public policies studied has varied, and in some cases it has been chosen to focus on a policy, program or action, such as the *Bolsa Família* Program (conditioned cash transfer program in Brazil), the Family Health Strategy or the Program Pro-Gender and Race Equity. In other cases, the studies focused on laws that establish policies in the area, such as the Maria da Penha Act (establishes provisions for cases of domestic violence) or maternity and paternity leave. There were also analyzes of public policy sectors, such as policies on health or social assistance.

Regarding the themes, “productive and reproductive work and poverty” and “health” were most frequently addressed, mainly in articulation with discussions on “sexual and reproductive rights”, as shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2

Frequency of themes and segments of population in category 1 in comparison to the total



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Regarding the theme “productive and reproductive work and poverty”, there were studies on affirmative action at work, sexual division of labor, inclusion and anti-poverty policies and prostitution. The conception of work employed was not limited to waged work, and covered unwaged domestic work and care. The most explored relation was the theme “citizen participation in power and decision-making spaces”, discussing women in leadership positions and female empowerment. There is also a dialogue with the theme of “education”, focusing on training, especially of black women, for the labor market and the relationship between female autonomy and the provision of early childhood education; with “sustainable development and land rights”, highlighting the role of women in the countryside, fishing and extractivism; and with “age and generational issues”, with emphasis on the care of the elderly and children.

On the subject of “health, sexual and reproductive rights”, the main focus of the studies was on abortion and contraception and on sexually transmitted diseases, with emphasis on the spread and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Also, articles on sexuality, with studies that question the pathological approach of health policies for transsexuals. In the topic of health, women’s health stands out, along with prevention and the fight against cancer, men’s health and mental health. The strong connection between the themes “health” and “violence” is highlighted, and interfaces between policies in these areas are addressed. Finally, in the studies on “violence”, reflections on gender and domestic violence stand out.

The main methodological approach was qualitative (68% of the articles), followed by theoretical (18%), qualitative and quantitative (7%) and quantitative (7%). Articles in this category were published in 53 journals, of which 30 journals submitted only one study in this category during the period researched. Box 3 lists the journals with the highest number of articles in this category.

Box 3

Journals with more than five publications in category 1, per number of articles

Journal	Number of articles
<i>Estudos Feministas</i>	29
<i>Ciência e Saúde Coletiva</i>	10
<i>Revista de Administração Pública</i>	9
<i>Revista Katálysis</i>	7
<i>Cadernos Pagu</i>	6
<i>Physis: Revista de Saúde Coletiva</i>	6

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Among the journals with more than five articles, the field of gender studies stands out, with articles from the journals *Estudos Feministas* (29) and *Cadernos Pagu* (6). In the field of public policies, in turn, the *Revista de Administração Pública*, stands out with nine articles in the period. Other journals associated with the field of public administration are also present, although with fewer articles, such as the *Revista do Serviço Público* (4), and the *Cadernos Gestão Pública e Cidadania* (3). Finally, there is an expressive occurrence of journals in the area of health, which, as seen, is one of the areas in which academic production about a sectorial policy stands out.

In relation to the authors, of the 303 authors, 28 have more than one published article of this category, and the author with the highest number had five publications in the period studied.

Category 2: public policy and woman/women

In the second category, the discussion on public policy is emphasized in relation to gender. These are articles that address theoretically or empirically governmental actions, including gender or sex as a variable for data disaggregation or as an empirical category. It was the third category in number of articles (54), published in 33 journals, by 164 authors. The majority of studies are in Health Sciences (41%), followed by Applied Social Sciences (26%) and Human Sciences (20%).

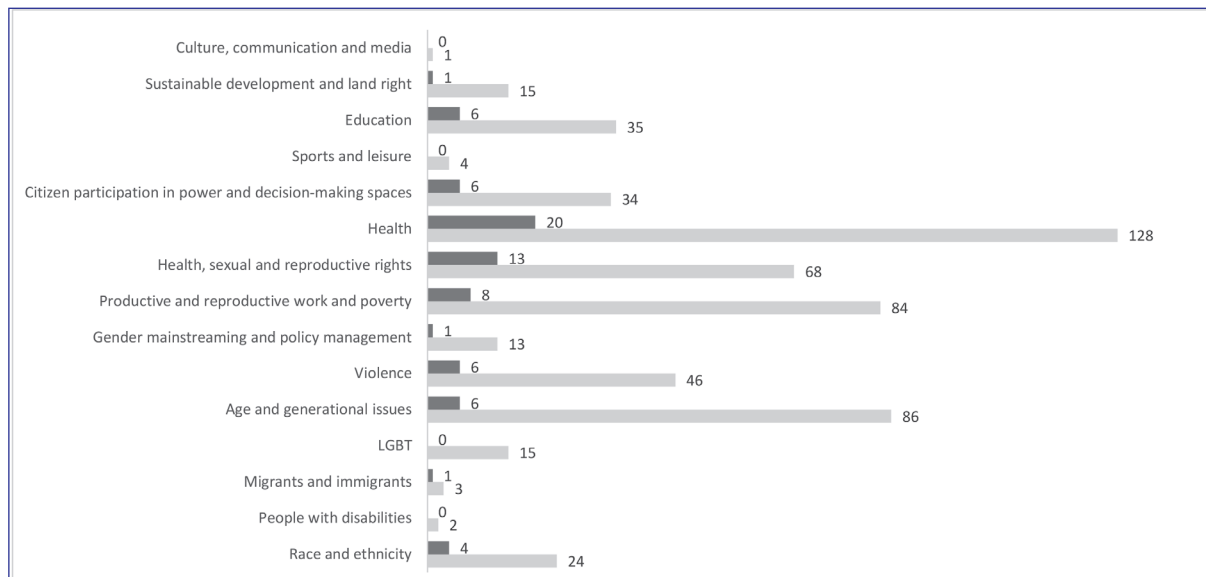
Articles of this kind also privilege the empirical analysis of the “state in action” (O’DONNEL, 1989), focusing on specific government policies, programs or actions. As in the previous category, in general, there is no theoretical discussion on the theme, and only two articles explicitly used the concept of public policy. However, other concepts of the field of public administration appeared, as in the discussions on administrative reform or institutionalized spaces of social participation.

Gender is incorporated as a variable to be analyzed, sometimes as a research finding, contributing to understand how the differences between women and men interact with the phenomena studied or how certain phenomena or policies affect the lives of women. The feminist critical perspective is not present, predominating a look at specificities of the feminine, often taken in a naturalized way (MATOS, 2008) and not relational, which justifies the nomenclature attributed to this category: public policy and women.

The qualitative approach was employed in 46% of the articles and the quantitative in 37%, with recurrent recommendations for improvement in policies, programs or services for women. Discussions on health were the most addressed (Graph 3).

Graph 3

Frequency of themes and segments of population in category 2 in comparison to the total



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

These studies mainly discussed women’s health, with emphasis on studies on mental health and maternal and child health. There are also studies on labor relations and the fight against poverty, although in a smaller amount than in category 1. On the other hand, themes such as LGBT (addressed especially in categories 1 and 3) and “people with disabilities” are absent. However, the presence of other segments of the population stands out, such as in the articles addressing affirmative action for the black population or policies for youth.

Of the 33 journals identified, only one had more than five publications. There is a predominance of journals in the area of health, which reflects the greater presence of this theme in this category, with emphasis on the *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, with seven publications, and the journal *Saúde e Sociedade*, with four. Among the 164 authors, six have two articles in this category.

Category 3: gender studies

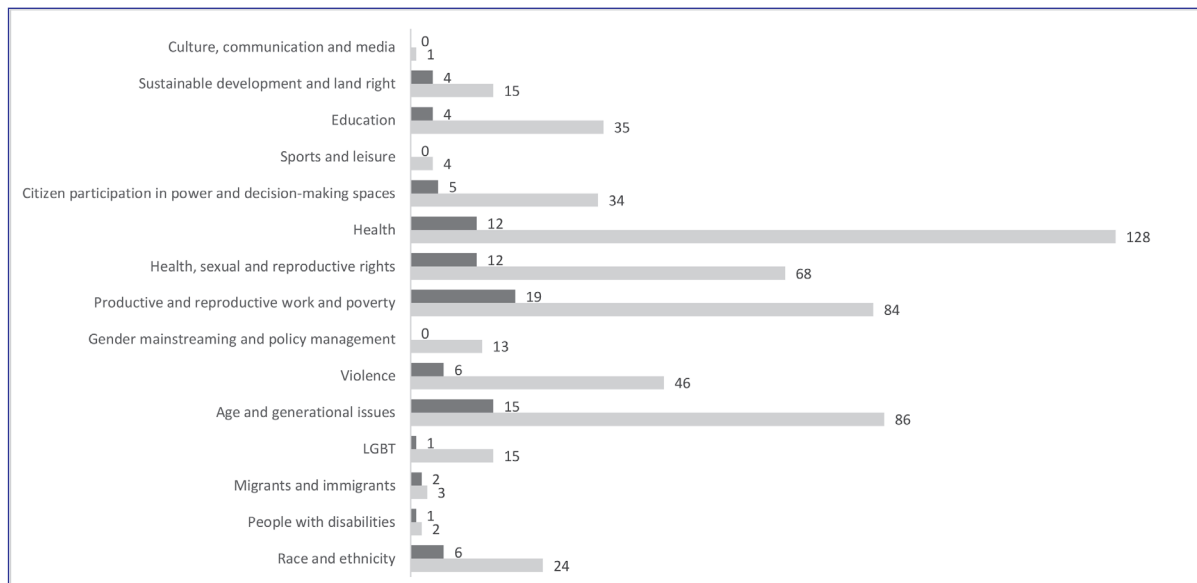
In this category, identification with gender studies is central, while discussions on public policy are marginal. The articles discuss the concept of gender or take a critical feminist approach, highlighting the participation of feminist and women’s movements in the processes of social change. The articles are limited, however, to justify the study from its importance for the development of public policies or to indicate that the results can contribute to the (re)elaboration of them. Thus, the articles are similar to category 1, when incorporating contributions of the gender studies to the core research (MATOS, 2008); but, on the other hand, they are similar to category 4, by demanding the reflections carried out in the research to be considered for the redefinition of the course of the state action.

This category contains 52 articles, published in 33 journals, by 130 authors, which makes it the smallest in number of articles. The majority of studies are concentrated in Health Sciences (42%), followed by Human Sciences (35%), Applied Social Sciences (13%) and articles related to more than one area (10%). Only three authors have more than one article and one journal has more than five articles of this category. Among the most frequent journals are *Estudos Feministas* (6) and health-related ones, such as *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, *Revista Latino Americana de Enfermagem* and *Ciência e Saúde Coletiva* (three articles each).

The theoretical discussion about gender is present in 22 articles. The critical feminist perspective was adopted mainly for discussions related to labor issues, followed by “age and generational issues” and others related to “health” (Graph 4).

Graph 4

Frequency of themes and segments of population in category 3 in comparison to the total



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

As in category 1, qualitative studies predominated (46%), followed by quantitative (23%), theoretical (21%) and mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches (10%).

Category 4: neither public policy nor gender

Finally, in the fourth category are the articles that touch both public policy and gender discussions. The gender axis includes cases whose data were disaggregated by gender/sex in which the research identified that the phenomenon particularly affected women. There was, however, no problematization from a critical feminist approach. On the public policy axis, there are studies that are justified by their importance for the development of government actions and that include recommendations for revision or implementation of policies to deal with the issue addressed.

There are 89 articles in this category, published in 40 journals, by 355 authors, being the second largest category. It is worth noting the concentration of studies in Health Sciences (78%), much higher than Human Sciences (8%), Applied Social Sciences (6%) or belonging to more than one area (9%); 18 authors published more than one article in this category, and the three researchers with the most publications have three articles each. Associated with the high recurrence of articles in the Health Sciences, there is a greater concentration of journals in this area, especially the *Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia* and the *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, with 16 and 14 articles, respectively (Box 4).

Box 4

Journals with more than five publications, per number of articles

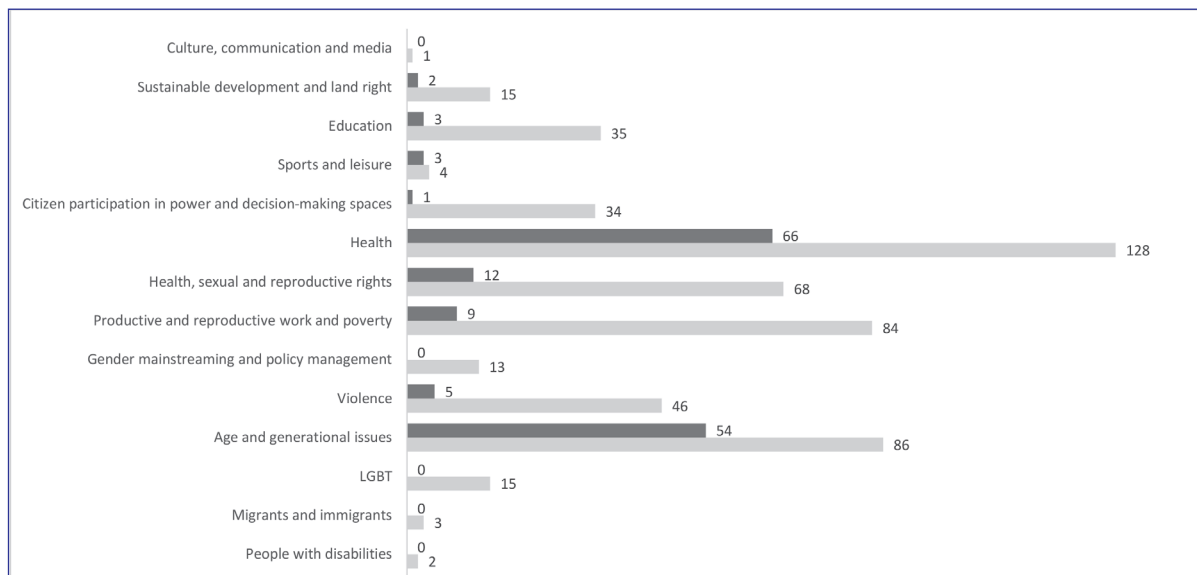
Journal	Number of articles
<i>Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia</i>	16
<i>Cadernos de Saúde Pública</i>	14
<i>Ciência e Saúde Coletiva</i>	6

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Likewise, the theme “health” was the most cited, followed by “age and generational issues”, as illustrated in Graph 5. Noteworthy were the studies on the health of the elderly, women and maternal and child health, which seek to understand how certain phenomena behave in relation to these variables, as well as studies on drug use and abuse.

Graph 5

Frequency of themes and segments of population in category 4 in comparison to the total



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The quantitative approach predominates (85%), and the statistical studies on sociodemographic phenomena are the structuring axis of this category. There is no incorporation of feminist perspectives (MATOS, 2008), gender being treated as a synonym of sex and employed to understand the differences between women and men, especially in relation to other specificities, such as age. In these articles, a binary view of the gender relation prevails, and the biological factors of this differentiation are emphasized.

This marginality is also present in the public policy axis, in which the normative-prescriptive perspective is dominant (PACHECO, 2003). In the research carried out in the articles classified in this category, it is recommended to use the results in order to reformulate policies, establish agenda on public problems or specifying alternatives to solve them. In this category, it was not observed the use of the concept of public policy neither of other concepts of the field.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, we sought to analyze the articulated incorporation of gender and public policy in academic research. From the analysis of 349 articles, a heterogeneous set of works was identified, classified according to a typology based on the way this incorporation takes place.

In the category “public policy and gender”, critical references from the field of gender studies are mobilized in order to produce studies *about* public policies, most of them adopting a qualitative approach. Analysis about the “State-in-action” prevails, in which the theoretical and methodological potentialities of the field of public policy are little explored. Publications with this profile have gained space, especially in journals dedicated to gender issues, such as *Estudos Feministas* and *Cadernos Pagu*. The field of public policy is also present in this category, although to a lesser extent, with publications found in journals such as the *Revista de Administração Pública*, *Revista do Serviço Público* and the *Cadernos de Gestão Pública e Cidadania*. The same is observed in the health field.

Feminist criticism also constituted the structuring axis of the category “gender studies”, adopted to understand several social phenomena. As for the public policy approach, it is marginal and limited to evidence how data or issues discussed are important for planning the state action. In the category “public policies and women” this relationship is reversed, i.e., the analysis of public policies is central and the contributions from gender studies are secondary. In this context, the differences between women and men appear as something naturalized and not as a consequence of social relations problematized from the feminist perspective. As in the first category, empirical articles predominate, with little theoretical density in the treatment of public policies.

Finally, in the category “neither public policy nor gender”, the two themes are not directly addressed. In this case, the analysis of sociodemographic and epidemiological phenomena predominates, mainly in the area of health, seeking to raise awareness of the state regarding the public problems. There is a large presence of quantitative research, published in journals on health, such as the *Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia* and the *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*. The analysis is restricted to the incorporation of sex (sometimes designated as “gender”) as a variable for disaggregation and data analysis, using in a peripheral way the terms gender and public policy.

The analysis of the categories reveals approximations and distances between fields of knowledge, reaffirming the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies and public policy. In category 1, there is evidence of an ongoing interpenetration between these fields, centered on the feminist analysis of the state actions, especially in the areas of health and labor. The way in which the themes are developed shows that it is not possible, yet, to speak of a field (or subfield) of public policies of gender, in which theories and concepts are intersected and incorporated in an articulated way. This is reinforced by the great dispersion of journals and authors in this category. A potential embryo of this (sub)field can be found in the articles on gender mainstreaming, in which references of these fields are articulated, resulting in shared ideas, although not without conflict, on a common object: gender public policies.

The different approaches in categories 2 and 3 reflect, in turn, a distance between fields. On the one hand, category 2 characteristics allow to affirm that these works, as well as those of category 1, are part of the public policy field, presenting its prevailing theoretical and methodological weaknesses. In this case, there is a secondary incorporation of gender as an empirical category by studies of public policy. On the other hand, the focus on the criticism towards inequalities between women and men and the predominance of journals dedicated to this discussion in the category 3 indicates the link between these studies and the field of gender studies. Therefore, there is a secondary incorporation of public policy by gender studies, limited to a normative-prescriptive approach. Category 4 marginally approaches both themes, integrating the field of sociodemographic and epidemiological studies.

In this scenario, a first research agenda to be explored refers to the integration between theoretical and methodological frameworks of public policy and gender studies. This could contribute to the analysis and improvement of public policies for women and gender equality. Gender studies can support the field of public administration by reviewing epistemological and methodological perspectives and by offering critical reflection on the phenomena analyzed. In contrast, public policy studies can contribute to theoretical and analytical approaches that help to describe and explain changes in the contemporary state and its relation to society (FREDERICKSON, 1999). The two fields have common denominators that enable this approximation, and interdisciplinarity is one of the most important.

Another possible contribution of the approximation between the two fields would be the development of public policy studies in a perspective that intersects systems of differentiation (CRENSHAW, 2002). In this sense, dimensions such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, among others, could play a central role in discussing the specificities of population segments for understanding and reformulating policies. The predominance of articles with this focus on category 1 indicates the potential of this approach for the production of critical and feminist works. Finally, it is important to open space for these discussions in journals in the field of public policy and public administration, promoting the development of studies on gender and public policy.

This study sought to reflect on approximations and distances between two interdisciplinary scientific fields, and may inspire studies on these or other topics that use international data bases and theses and dissertations collections. As for the limitations, we highlight the fact that the search expressions are grounded on concepts that are dated, produced in specific historical contexts and that the research of the academic production was restricted to journals made available in the indicated data bases. It did not cover other academic production, such as those published in books and annals of events as well as the non-academic productions, which are very important for knowledge production on public policy and gender. This leaves room for new studies, including research using quantitative methodologies.

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