

ARTIGO

“THE INVOLVED”: FEMINICIDES OF ADOLESCENTS IN FORTALEZA IN 2018 IN THE LIGHT OF GENDER NECROPOLITICS

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ABSTRACT

This work examines, from the perspective of gender necropolitics, the femicides of girls and young women that took place in 2018 amid urban violence on the outskirts of Fortaleza. For this, initially, it seeks to understand the necropolitics of gender, especially its direct expression, which is femicide, highlighting the relationship between the occurrence of this crime with socioeconomic and oppression markers, such as gender, race, class, and with the biopatriarchal State structure. Then, it is intended to examine the factors that converge to the occurrence and the characteristics of the violent deaths of female adolescents that happened in peripheral territories of Fortaleza. For this work, which has a qualitative approach and a pure result, bibliographic research was carried out using official data made available by specialized institutes.

Keywords: Necropolitics. Gender necropolitics. Femicide. Urban violence in Fortaleza.

RESUMO

“AS ENVOLVIDAS”: FEMINICÍDIOS DE ADOLESCENTES EM FORTALEZA EM 2018 À LUZ DA NECROPOLÍTICA DE GÊNERO

Este trabalho examina, sob a óptica da necropolítica de gênero, os feminicídios de meninas e jovens, ocorridos em 2018, no bojo da violência urbana na periferia de Fortaleza. Para isso, inicialmente, busca-se compreender a necropolítica de gênero, sobretudo sua expressão direta, qual seja o feminicídio, evidenciando a relação entre a ocorrência desse crime com os marcadores socioeconômicos e de opressão, como gênero, raça e classe, e

com a estrutura de Estado biopatriarcalista. Em seguida, pretende-se examinar os fatores que confluem para a ocorrência e as características das mortes violentas de adolescentes do sexo feminino acontecidas em territórios periféricos de Fortaleza. Para este trabalho, que tem abordagem qualitativa e resultado puro, realiza-se pesquisa bibliográfica sobre o assunto, utilizando-se ainda de dados oficiais disponibilizados por institutos especializados.

Palavras-chave: Necropolítica. Necropolítica de gênero. Femicídio. Violência urbana em Fortaleza.

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INTRODUCTION

The present work analyzes, under the bias of gender necropolitics, the violent deaths of female adolescents that occurred in the context of urban violence on the outskirts of Fortaleza in 2018. Despite the Brazilian legal system, as a reaction combative in the face of the relevance and frequent repercussion of the cruel murders of women, has come to typify femicide with the advent of Law Nº 13.104/2015 (Araújo, 2021, p. 14), the alarming scenario verified in the most marginalized neighborhoods of the capital cearense.

In fact, the reorganization of the dynamics of urban violence in Ceará, based on the gangs, with the strengthening of the illicit drug and weapons market and the consequent migration of factions originating in the Southeast and North regions of the country, promoted greater victimization of women in the country. State (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 375).

From this point of view, it has been verified that, in the context of the outskirts of Ceará and the dispute between criminal organizations for illegal markets, female bodies, racialized and peripheral, become a stage of dispute, demonstration of ownership and manifestation of performative exercises hypermasculinized by members of criminal organizations. At this juncture, the monitoring of these deaths due to violent behavior and the erasure of traits considered to be typically feminine was observed (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 376-377).

Furthermore, the scenario in testilha is aggravated by the realization of criminalizing speeches by official State agents in the face of the occurrence of these murders, which reduce the commission of these crimes to the assumption of involvement of the victim with criminal acts and groups through the figure of the "involved" (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377).

This context implies the criminalization of these girls, the naturalization of their deaths and the lack of responsibility of the public power in the face of them, the lack of public commotion of society about the lives that were interrupted, and the mischaracterization of the typification of these murders as feminicides (Nielsson, 2020, p. 153; Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377).

In this way, it is motivated to study the proposed temporal and territorial cut in view that, according to the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, developed by the Cearense Committee for the Prevention of Homicides in Adolescence, among 2016 and 2018, there was a 322% increase in the murders of girls and women between 10 and 19 years old in Ceará and 417% in Fortaleza. Furthermore, in the capital of Ceará, the number of deaths among female adolescents in 2017 and 2018 increased by 90.32%, from 31 to 59 homicides (CCPHA, 2020, p. 26-27). Thus, Fortaleza's situation is even more alarming in this age group.

Therefore, the present work has the general objective of examining, from the perspective of gender necropolitics, the feminicides of girls and young women verified in 2018 amid the dynamics of urban violence in the marginalized neighborhoods of the capital of Ceará.

Among the specific objectives, in turn, we seek to understand the necropolitics of gender, especially its direct expression, namely femicide, highlighting the relationship between the occurrence of this crime with socioeconomic and oppressive markers, such as gender, race, and class, and with the structure of a biopatriarchal State. In addition, it is intended to examine the factors that, together, influence the occurrence and characteristics of violent deaths of female adolescents that occurred in peripheral territories of Fortaleza. Finally, we try to investigate the manifestation of gender necropolitics in these murders and their characterization as feminicides based on the analysis of cases in criminal proceedings.

Based on the above, the aim is to answer the following questions: 1. How does the biopatriarchal State exercise control and eliminate female, poor, and black bodies that are insubmissive to male rules for maximizing exploitation conditions? 2. What are the elements that, when analyzed together, allow concluding the contribution to the increase in homicides of adolescents, including girls, in Fortaleza? 3. How are these assassinations carried out? 4. Is it possible to verify the necropolitics of gender in the violent deaths of female adolescents amid urban violence on the outskirts of the capital of Ceará? 5. Should these be understood as feminicides?

Regarding methodology, the present research has a qualitative approach to the problem while dealing with non-measurable data that cannot be translated into quantifiable numbers since it seeks to analyze, in the light of gender necropolitics, the femicides of adolescents that occurred in Fortaleza in the year 2018.

Regarding technical procedures, a bibliographical analysis is carried out by examining already published materials (books, scientific articles, dissertations, among others) involving the topic addressed. It should be noted that this research presents as theoretical references the propositions and questions elaborated by Achille Mbembe, who coined the concept of necropolitics; the notions of gender necropolitics and femicide according to Montserrat Sagot and Rita Laura Segato; and Kimberlé Crenshaw's conception of intersectionality.

Still, during the technical procedure under discussion, official data provided by specialized institutes are used, especially by the Cearense Committee for the Prevention of Homicides in Adolescence (CCPHA, 2020) in its report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*.

Thus, the characterization of this research is verified as descriptive since it tries to discuss, in a detailed and meticulous way, the characteristics of the proposed phenomenon to be studied. Finally, regarding the use of the results obtained, this work seeks, from the immediate application of the hypotheses and conclusions reached, the deepening of knowledge regarding the object of the study, which can be classified as pure.

GENDER NECROPOLITICS

Gender necropolitics, a concept developed by Montserrat Sagot (2013, p. 1), can be understood as a manifestation of sovereignty that, while seeking to exercise control and instrumentalize human existence, generates the systematic death of women. In this sense, like the Mbembean conception, it promotes a hierarchy between lives worthy of being lived and those not.

This scenario, for Sagot (2013, p. 4), builds a regime of terror, with state complicity, which subjects the most vulnerable women in an attempt to control them and sentences some to death. In fact, according to the author, this regime of terror materializes from the constitution of a political scenario marked by discourses and practices that induce the lethality of feminized bodies, which are vulnerable to marginalization, instrumentalization, and even death (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377; Sagot, 2013, p. 4).

Sagot (2013, p. 6-7) understands that for the functioning of gender necropolitics, a confluence of certain factors is necessary. Initially, the existence of social norms that justify men's notion of domination over women is essential, manifested by the naturalization of the occurrence of gender violence and by the perception of aggressive and authoritarian male behavior as something positive.

Moreover, for the author, broad tolerance is fundamental in the face of the various forms of violence against feminized bodies, demonstrated, above all, by the high degree of impunity in the face of its most extreme manifestation, which is femicide. In this way, it understands that gender violence *"is not casual or cultural the result of a failed institutionalization, rather it is a structural component of the system"* expressed by the absence of political will to punish and face it (Sagot, 2013, p. 7).

With this, Sagot (2013, p. 7) points out that the state's complicity, based on inefficient responses and impunity that cause the naturalization and permissiveness of such violence, is an essential element for the functioning of this specific institutionalized death policy (Nielsson, 2020, p. 153).

Furthermore, it is important to point out that gender necropolitics does not act homogeneously on all women. In fact, to understand the scope of this phenomenon, it is necessary to analyze this violence and deaths from the perspective of social markers and oppression operated by biopatriarchalism (Nielsson, 2020, p. 163).

In fact, Kimberlé Crenshaw (2002, p. 177) understands that certain individuals experience greater vulnerability due to the association of multiple systems of subordination. In this context, the author establishes the concept of intersectionality, intending to understand the different forms of inequality and vulnerability based on overlapping different subordinations. Thus, Crenshaw (2002, p. 177) concludes that *"racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the positions"* to be occupied by each individual.

Indeed, despite its broad relevance for the structuring of social relations, gender, analyzed and understood individually, is not capable of justifying the most diverse manifestations of violence against women. Thus, an intersectional analysis, as proposed by Crenshaw (2002), allows us to understand that, depending on the position occupied by the female body at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression, women may be exposed to greater risk conditions, suffer different types of violence of gender and generate a distinct social and state reaction to its occurrence (Sagot, 2013, p. 6).

Under this bias, for Crenshaw (2002, p. 177), racialized women are often positioned at the intersection between race, gender, and class. In this sense, the biopatriarchal State uses these socioeconomic and oppressive markers to dispose of female bodies in the delimitation of legitimate subjects and unworthy subjects and, therefore, subject to institutional helplessness and death (Nielsson, 2020, p. 164). In this way, it promotes the placing of black and poor women as the main target of the necropolitical process of annihilation (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 380).

Therefore, given the direct relationship that exists between capital and the sacrifice of women (Segato, 2005, p. 265-266), to exercise control and eliminate feminized bodies that are insubmissive to the male rules of maximizing the conditions of exploitation, the biopatriarchal State uses gender necropolitics, either directly, "or constituting a scenario in which each man feels legitimized to 'eliminate' women who represent any form of insurgency" (Nielsson, 2020, p. 165-166).

Thus, the necropolitics of gender constitutes a scenario of continuous production of disposability of women, which, in a constant reiteration of the patterns of domination typical of modern, capitalist, and racist colonial States, affects poor and black bodies in a more hostile way and which has as expression direct the systematic practice of femicide (Nielsson, 2020, p. 165-166; Sagot, 2013, p. 4-5).

1.1 FEMICIDE AS A POLITICAL CRIME

Indeed, violence against women is an endemic social problem resulting from a patriarchal structure, which establishes gender relations based on inequality (Sagot, 2013, p. 2; Segato, 2018, p. 213). Based on this premise, Jane Caputi and Diana Russel (1992, p. 15), responsible for formulating the notion of femicide, understand this as the most extreme manifestation of a *continuum* of different forms of gender violence since it materializes when these result in death.

For Rita Laura Segato (2006, p. 3), the patriarchal system is marked by an inseparability between power and masculinity, which permeate the social environment through hatred and contempt for the female body and other attributes associated with femininity. In this context, especially in the presence of the biopatriarchal State in which the necropolitics of gender is manifested, "*less value is attributed to the life of women, women and there is a greater propensity to justify the crimes they suffer*" (Segato, 2006, p. 3).

Thus, Segato (2006, p. 3-4) understands that the authors' intention in coining the term femicide was to expose this form of violence as a manifestation of the control and punitive capacity of patriarchy over feminized bodies and, therefore, to emphasize their political dimension, since they are crimes that simultaneously seek to maintain and reproduce patriarchal power.

From this perspective, Segato (2005, p. 275) recognizes a fundamental difference between feminicides and other gender crimes committed in the domestic sphere against victims who have some relationship with the aggressor. For the author, the murders of women that occur in public spaces are used by the aggressor as a manifestation directed at the society that exercises power over feminized bodies, even outside the family environment.

Under this bias, according to Montserrat Sagot (2013, p. 02), femicide, as a lethal weapon for maintaining the subordination of female bodies, is the most serious form of violence against women. Indeed, the author analyzes this crime as the most dramatic expression of gender inequality since its occurrence demonstrates and communicates notions of domination, "*terror, social vulnerability, extermination and even impunity*" (Sagot, 2013, p. 3), typical elements of the scenario in which gender necropolitics operates.

Therefore, Sagot (2013), as proposed by Segato (2005), concludes that femicide is a crime of power. In addition to retaining, maintaining, and reproducing submission to biopatriarchal power (Nielsson, 2020, p. 161), the causes involved in this type of murder cannot be justified by the "*individual or 'pathological' characteristics of the aggressors, without a social status both of them victims as perpetrators*" (Sagot, 2013, p. 3).

Therefore, the coined concept of feminicide allows for conceiving its social and generalized character, as well as ruling out the possible justifications for its occurrence due to personal and private issues. In fact, it has an evident necropolitical character as it results from the structural relationships of power, domination, and privilege of men to the detriment of women, in which "the bodies of the murdered women become converted, in unreflection and a concrete manifestation of a profoundly unequal social and gender system" (Sagot, 2013, p. 3).

1.2 FEMIGENOCIDE: FEMINICIDE IN A FACTIONALIZED WORLD

In the context of a factionalized world, in which criminal organizations occupy the absence of the State, these start, directly or indirectly, to control and manage certain territorial reserves and seek to expand their influence and power. To this end, these collectives use female bodies, given their close relationship with the notion of territory, as a stage for dispute, registration of ownership, and the manifestation of hypermasculinized performative exercises (Segato, 2006, p. 6; Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 376-377).

Thus, Segato (2006), when analyzing the murders of 300 poor and racialized women over 11 years in *Ciudad Juárez*, Chihuahua, on the northern border of Mexico, concluded that the feminicides that occurred there are characterized by an intensification of the aforementioned horizontal axis. In this scenario, rival criminal factions are configured as the main interlocutors of the violent discourse of the aggressors. At the same time, the victims are consumed as disposable parts and secondary products of the process to satisfy the collective demand to expose their capacity for death and cruelty to other men (Segato, 2005, p. 265:273; Segato, 2006, p. 7).

Furthermore, Segato (2006, p. 7) verified that the feminicides that occurred in *Ciudad Juárez* had a relevant expressive dimension since to communicate their power and group cohesion, demonstrating the strength and ratifying their territorial dominance to rival organizations, they were characterized by a *modus operandi* marked by cruelty in which "the faction ¹ registers its speech in the kidnapped body, marked by collective torture, inseminated by the gang rape and eliminated at the end of the terrible ordeal"².

Still, amid her studies on the death of women in the Mexican city, the author also concluded that this new intensification of disputes between collectives is based on the systematic practice of femicides to destroy feminized bodies, typical of a necropolitical scenario of gender, without individualization of the reason for its occurrence or relationship between perpetrator and victim (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 376). Segato (2018, p. 217) proposed the terminology femigenocide for this type of femicide violence in the public sphere, which cannot be justified as aggression based on ties.

The author also points out that these crimes are marked by the absence of a personalized subject committed against a victim that is not personalized either, since they are directed at a specific type of woman, as a rule, permeated by race and class markers, and due to their belonging to that particular group to display and reassert their ability to control. The depersonalization of women, therefore, occurs due to the predominance of the category to which they belong to the detriment of their biography or personality. For Segato (2006, p. 10-11), "el procedimiento es el de eliminación con y por despersonalización".

¹ Rita Laura Segato (2006, p. 6) uses the term "fratría" to designate urban mafias, typical of a factionalized world, which, directly or indirectly, control and administer specific territorial parcels and dispute hegemony.

² My translation: [...] "the phrase inscribes its discourse on the kidnapped body, marked by collective torture, inseminated by group rape and eliminated at the end of the terrible ordeal".

Indeed, despite the similarity of this crime to genocide, it is not to be confused with the latter. This occurs because femicides, including those that occurred in the context of *Ciudad Juárez*, are based on misogyny as disrespect for the feminine. For Segato (2005, p. 279), these deaths are systematically and impersonally verified only because of the contempt for women's lives and the understanding that their only value is related to their availability for appropriation.

Therefore, it is concluded that throughout human history until the present day, wars continue to be perpetuated in which the bodies of girls and women are understood as territories that can be conquered. In this sense, one can see the objectification and objectification of these feminized bodies during disputes for hegemony between rival factions (Moura; Holanda, 2018, p. 45).

THE DEATHS OF FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN THE DYNAMICS OF URBAN VIOLENCE IN FORTALEZA

Faced with a dispute between criminal factions, there was a stark proportional increase in the number of girls murdered amid the dynamics of urban violence in the capital of Ceará with a typically femicide execution and meaning.

In fact, based on data from the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, it is possible to conclude that the homicide rates of girls between 10 and 19 years of age, despite having certain fluctuations, increase with each passing year to the point of putting the victimization of these teenagers in another stage. In 2017, according to the criterion established by the World Health Organization (WHO) of 10 homicides per 100 thousand inhabitants, the murder of girls in the State started to be considered an epidemic (CCPHA, 2020, p. 24-25).

However, it was in 2018 that the most brutal and cruel scenario for girls in the state was verified, in which 114 were victims of lethal violence. During this period, according to information provided by the Secretariat for Public Security and Social Defense (SSPDS-CE), there was an “11.98% reduction in the number of homicides in Ceará in the general population and a 20.42% reduction in homicides of people of the same sex male (aged 10 to 19)” (CCPHA, 2020, p. 26), while between 2017 and 2018 there was a 42.50% increase in murders of girls. This increase becomes even more significant when analyzed from the perspective of the time lapse between 2016 and 2018, which presents a variation of 322% (CCPHA, 2020, p. 26-27).

Furthermore, it is important to point out that, in Fortaleza, the growth in the number of murders that have girls between the ages of 10 and 19 as victims is alarming. In the period between 2016 and 2018, there was a 417% increase in female adolescent deaths. Examining the interval between 2017 and 2018, homicides of girls in the capital of Ceará increased by 90.32%, from 31 to 59 cases (CCPHA, 2020, p. 26-27). Therefore, this scenario demonstrates this research's motivation to study the temporal and territorial cut in testilha.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the exponential increase in the rates of violent, lethal, and intentional crimes against female adolescents “affects in a segmental way in the city: with greater intensity in certain regions and in certain bodies” (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 375). Given the above, it is necessary to understand who these victims are beyond the age group and gender they occupy, seeking an intersectional analysis.

2.1 WHO ARE THESE GIRLS?

According to the 2019 Atlas of Violence, between 2007 and 2017, there was a percentage increase of 286.8% concerning black women murdered in Ceará, while that of non-black women during the same period was 18.5% (Cerqueira et al., 2019). Therefore, inequality in the mortality of black and white people in the state is evident.

This context emphasizes race as a social marker that promotes greater vulnerability of black bodies, as it structures relationships based on their inferiority. It should be noted that, according to Mbembe (2018), in his studies on necropolitics, race is strictly related to death since the lives to be maintained are white lives, while, concomitantly, "worlds of death" for racialized bodies. Therefore, "black girls are therefore part of a human group whose bodies can be vilified, murdered and criminalized" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 42).

However, throughout the research to obtain data for the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, especially during the interviews with the families of teenage victims of homicide, it was observed "racist manifestations towards phenotypic traits of black girls" materialized in the disassociation of skin color presented by them and in the recognition of victimized girls as white or brown. In this sense, it was concluded that 62.30% of the girls were brown, 31.15% were white, and only 6.56% were identified as black. This scenario demonstrates a misrepresentation that continues to be reproduced and validated in official data and statistics research, which promotes the invisibility of the black population (CCPHA, 2020, p. 40-42).

Furthermore, it appears that the vast majority of cases of lethal violence against female adolescents occur in peripheral contexts of Fortaleza, far from the noble areas of the city. The territorialization of these deaths allows inferring the incidence not only of the race marker in these murders but also of class (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 375-376).

In fact, these are spaces marked by social precariousness and state action reduced to the ostensive and militarized behavior of the public security forces (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 375-376). In this sense, "they become places where bodies whose identity does not exist, devoid of dignity" and, therefore, subject to death and not subject to mourning (Moura; Holanda, 2022, p. 45).

Given all the above, at the present moment of the research, the aim is to understand the role of girls' bodies in the new dynamics of urban violence in Fortaleza.

2.2 THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THESE DEATHS AS FEMICIDES

In the context of the outskirts of the capital of Ceará, marked by the dispute between factions for illegal markets and territories, female bodies have been placed as fundamental in the schemes and the settling of accounts between rival collectives, with these girls being "'decreed', tortured and killed under accusation of 'cooperating' with enemies" (Paiva, 2019, p. 179). His murders, however, cannot be reduced to this scenario. Indeed, persecutions are common due to romantic and sexual involvements by adolescents with young people belonging to areas controlled by another faction (Paiva, 2019, p. 179).

In this context, such girls, according to the codes of the criminal collectives that operate in the State, are treated as "lunchboxes"³ and are targets of depersonalization and objectification by members of criminal organizations. Their deaths are ordered without there being objective evidence of any relationship. The mere "suspicion, dislike or desire for revenge for personal matters" is sufficient for its enactment (Paiva, 2019, p. 180).

Under this bias, it should be noted that these murders are characterized by the transformation of female, black, and peripheral bodies into "territory of dispute, inscription of possession and stage of hypermasculinized performative exercises by members of factions" (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 376) as will be narrated below.

Effectively, in cases where the girls were killed in the vicinity of their home, the *modus operandi* is usually the quick execution through repeated shots with a firearm followed by flight or the removal of the teenager to another location where the death will occur. However, when girls are murdered in other neighborhoods, it is possible to verify the use of ambushes. These, in turn, are characterized by a certain cruelty in their planning "since death is engineered to such an extent that entry and exit routes are established, as well as the conduct of adolescents" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 199).

Furthermore, another feature that stands out in these executions is the practice of torture. In this sense, according to Paiva (2019, p. 180), all criminal groups in the State use cruel behavior, "promoting scenes of torture and comprehensively circulating them". In fact, according to data from the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, 75% of the deaths monitored by the study had their executions published on social networks (CCPHA, 2020, p. 197). This is a common behavior of criminal groups so that these acts come to the knowledge of their enemies, "who, in patriarchal logic, would be the supposed 'owners' of the murdered young women" (Ferreira et al., 2020, p. 15).

These videos, in turn, show the cases in which the deaths of girls were not quick or exempt from vexation. In fact, they demonstrate situations in which the objective was to erase and tear apart all marks of femininity and the effective destruction of their bodies (CCPHA, 2020, p. 200; Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 378), typical of a gender necropolitical scenario.

Certainly, in the cases raised by the Ceará Forum of Women/AMB, the violent executions of adolescents are accompanied by various misogynistic behaviors such as shaving hair and eyebrows, removing breasts, and collective rape (Ferreira et al., 2020, p. 15).

Also common are "immobilization of lower and upper limbs, physical aggression with various objects, as well as the use of different shots" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 200), especially in the face and breasts (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 378). There are also cases in which victims are burned alive (CCPHA, 2020, p. 200) or dismembered "while they cry and beg for their lives" (Paiva, 2019, p. 180).

Furthermore, even though in 64.71% of the cases, the adolescent was aware of the identity of the person carrying out the crime, most of the murders were ordered by someone who, as a rule, was deprived of liberty (CCPHA, 2020, p. 201). This scenario, therefore, allows inferences due to the absence of the authorship motive and the relationship between the direct aggressor and the victim. It was configuring

³ According to Sousa, Nunes and Barros (2020, p. 378), the terms "mule" and "lunchbox" are used by criminal factions to refer to the most subordinate and disposable positions in the illicit narcotics market, which, as a rule, are occupied by female adolescents, racialized and peripheral.

itself as an impersonal crime whose aim is the destruction of feminized bodies as a way of displaying the ability to control (Segato, 2006, p. 10-11; Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 376).

In this sense, it is important to emphasize that "these deaths do not occur for the same reasons as the deaths of boys. The place of women in this context is that of an object, much more than a subject" (Ferreira *et al.*, 2020, p. 16). The murders of girls between the ages of 10 and 19 are not an end in themselves. Their bodies are used as disposable parts and secondary products to achieve the faction's demand to demonstrate their power of death and cruelty to other men (Moura; Holanda, 2022, p. 46; Segato, 2005, p. 273). Therefore, as seen by Segato (2006) in his studies on the feminicides that occurred in *Ciudad Juárez*, an intensification of the horizontal axis of dialogue in these types of violence can be seen.

Indeed, due to how they have been carried out, these murders are presented as a way of expressing power and strength in the face of rival criminal groups and reiterating their territorial domination (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377). According to Paiva (2019, p. 180), these behaviors by members of criminal factions to feminized bodies are, in fact, directed at their enemies as a way of expressing the evil they are capable of carrying out in disputes to achieve hegemony in the drug and arms market and to expand control over spaces in the periphery.

Given all the above, the deaths of these adolescents, despite occurring within a "complex web of armed violence," cannot be understood as mere homicides (Moura; Holanda, 2022, p. 46) since a sexist and patriarchal order permeates these dynamics (Ferreira *et al.*, 2020, p. 15).

For Segato (2005, p. 279), these are behaviors characterized by contempt for the feminine and the understanding that the only value in girls' lives is their willingness to appropriate "to prove their belonging to a group and attack the men who would protect them" (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 2). Characterizing, in this way, a typical femicide scenario.

Therefore, "the conflict between factions occupies a prominent position in explaining the death of girls" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 183) in the state capital. However, it is not limited to it. The reductionism of the context of war between rival criminal groups as a sufficient reason to justify the occurrence of feminicides of adolescents "leaves aside a game of relations and powers, as well as masks several elements that are central to the prevention" of such violence (CCPHA, 2020, p. 183).

CRIMINALIZING SPEECHES AND IMPUNITY

Initially, public demonstrations by agents stand out among the behaviors that aim to spread the "idea that these deaths are the exclusive product of the incidence of organized crime" (Moura; Holanda, 2022, p. 46). state security and justice systems. Often, these discourses have reduced these violent deaths to the assumption of involvement of victims in criminal acts and groups while reinforcing the thesis that "women have not died because they are women" (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377).

In this sense, in the current dynamics of urban violence in Fortaleza, the figure of the "involved" is used to frame feminized bodies of adolescents, racialized and inserted in the periphery of the city, promoting a criminalization of the lives that were interrupted (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377).

This scenario, in turn, stems from the implicit division of the population that is promoted by necropolitics between lives that are worth living and those that are not (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 200; Sagot, 2013, p. 1), "that is, depending on the victim, the fact that occurred can be classified as a 'tragedy' or 'reckoning'" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 204).

In this way, it is clear that "the binarism between 'citizen' and 'non-citizen/involved'" (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 201) is verified in the first official responses of the public power since they are commonly restricted to the statement that the girl was victimized due to her connection with drug trafficking and that an investigation of her criminal background will be carried out (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 4; Paiva, 2019, p. 173). Under this bias, there is the dissemination of a narrative that, at the same time, causes the victim to be blamed for her death and reinforces the State's lack of responsibility for this (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 4).

It should be noted that this phenomenon was also perceived by Rita Laura Segato (2005) during her studies on feminicides in *Ciudad Juárez*. According to the author, faced with the need to incriminate someone for the crimes that have occurred, as soon as a "misogynistic spiral" is created, the victim is responsible for the cruel behavior he has suffered. Thus, "the murdered women of *Ciudad Juárez* quickly become prostitutes, liars, party people, drug addicts" (Segato, 2005, p. 278).

Furthermore, these criminalizing official discourses have resulted in the mischaracterization of the typification of the murders of Ceará girls as femicides. Indeed, by justifying the deaths that occurred with the hypothetical involvement of adolescents in illicit drug trafficking or with criminal factions, the authorities have encouraged an erroneous perception of the effective amount of crimes pervaded by misogyny that take place in the state capital (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377; Segato, 2005, p. 268).

In this regard, Segato (2005, p. 268), who also verified this conduct in *Ciudad Juárez*⁴, understands this indistinct behavior in the face of these deaths as a *smoke-screen*. This "smokescreen," for the author, would aim to prevent the visualization of the particular and similar characteristics between these crimes, contributing to a scenario of permissiveness and naturalness.

In fact, these discriminatory positions taken by the Ceará authorities give rise to a context of naturalization of the deaths of girls in the dynamics of urban violence in Fortaleza and a lack of public commotion in society regarding the victims (Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 377; Nielsson, 2020, p. 156). This scenario of broad social tolerance, in turn, results in a cycle of impunity that manifests itself in the absence and inefficiency of appropriate state attitudes to confrontation (Sagot, 2013, p. 7).

According to data from the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, even though in 64.71% of the cases, the adolescent was aware of the identity of the executor of the crime and in 59%, there was a mastermind, their deaths rarely became the object of investigation (CCPHA, 2020, p. 201).

Effectively, in line with the results obtained from previous surveys by the Cearense Committee for the Prevention of Homicide in Adolescence, the State has rates of investigation of murders of adolescents "lower than the national averages, increasing the sense of injustice and the pain of the families of the victims" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 189). Especially mothers and grandmothers, when they seek public institutions

4 In the case of the Mexican city, according to studies by Segato (2005, p. 268), there was a reduction in the violent deaths of women, accompanied by cruel behavior, the notion of "crime with a sexual motive" on the part of the authorities and opinion makers.

to continue the investigation of the victimized girls, do not find adequate reception, "once again being vilified in their right to reparation and to an impartial and independent investigation of the deaths" (CCPHA, 2020, p. 16:203).

Therefore, this feedback loop promoted by public demonstrations by official State agents - composed of state complicity through inefficient responses and impunity and the naturalization and permissiveness of violence against girls - becomes fundamental for the functioning of gender necropolitics in Ceará territory (Sagot, 2013, p. 7; Nielsson, 2020, p. 153), as it conveys the "message that this violence is tolerated, which favors its perpetuation" (Nielsson, 2020, p. 165).

Indeed, the discourse of the "involved" not only results in a broad social tolerance in the face of the deaths of adolescents but also the criminalization of these girls. It is also noteworthy that this narrative reinforces the stigmatization of the peripheries and the acceptability of other forms of violence to which they are subjected, such as the process of the precariousness of their lives as black and poor girls (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 202; Sousa; Nunes; Barros, 2020, p. 378).

It is important to point out that one dimension of necropolitics manifests itself through the disabling and impracticability of lives caused by institutional abandonment and helplessness concerning certain existences, naturalizing these abject and illegitimate conditions to which they are subjected (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 2012; Mbembe, 2018, p. 71).

Under this bias, the scenario verified on the outskirts of Fortaleza is one of intentional forgetfulness characterized by the "absence, precariousness or insufficiency of public policies for adolescents and young people" (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 202; Moura; Holanda, 2022, p. 45). In fact, the difficult context of access to these policies is understood as one of the "main factors for the intensification of homicides" against the youth segment in the peripheral territories of the capital, including females, since it is in these regions of state omission that collective criminal cases are present and established (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 202-203).

Furthermore, based on the data provided by the Special Technical Note of the Center for the Defense of Children and Adolescents of the State of Ceará (CEDECA Ceará), it is concluded that, since 2012, there has been a reduction in real spending on policies for children and adolescents in Fortaleza. However, concomitantly, there is an increase in investments in overt security policies, marked by the militarization of the peripheries (Braz; Silva; Maciel, 2017; Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 203).

Effectively, in Ceará, the configuration of a public safety model characterized by a resurgence has been observed. In the capital, the commitment to this new policy materialized with the arming of the municipal guard and the establishment of "community protection cells" in peripheral neighborhoods (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 199).

However, despite the reductionism of the State's action in these spaces to the constant presence of the ostensive public security forces, the deaths of young people that occurred from conflicts between factions do not promote significant interventions by the public power (Paiva, 2019, p. 172). In reality, based on the erroneous perception that "murders and torture committed by criminals against criminals could be used for the social control of crime itself," the State allowed the peripheries to effectively become places controlled by criminal factions (Holanda *et al.*, 2018, p. 26), which contributes, as seen, to greater victimization of girls between 10 and 19 years old.

It should also be noted that the militarization of the outskirts of Fortaleza did not contribute to preventing the murders of these girls. In line with data from the report *Girls in Ceará: the life trajectory and vulnerability of adolescent victims of homicide*, 56.86% of the victims had already been threatened before dying, which demonstrates that their lives could have been spared with the adoption of the adequate public policies (CCPHA, 2020, p. 17:169).

Given this, it is inferred that the increase in the occurrence of deaths among adolescents, including females, in Fortaleza can also be attributed to the confluence of the following factors: the mistaken direction of State investments in public security policies based on ostensive policing and the militarization of peripheral spaces, added to a scenario of precariousness of public policies for adolescents and young people due to the criminalization of this social segment (Benício *et al.*, 2018, p. 192-204).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present work traced a line of reasoning that had begun with the study of the necropolitics of gender and femicide as its main manifestation, promoting the understanding of the meaning of this crime in a factionalized world, to analyze later the deaths of girls amid the dynamics of urban violence in the peripheral neighborhoods of Fortaleza.

This logic was outlined throughout the development of this research to reach the questions posed in the introduction, which were based on the specific objectives elaborated.

Indeed, the first question that was intended to be answered was about how the biopatriarchal State exercises control and eliminates female, poor, and black bodies that are insubmissive to the male rules of maximizing the conditions of exploitation.

To this end, the hypothesis initially raised considered that this State would promote a hierarchical arrangement of individuals in society between subjects that may or may not be eliminated and that femicide would be configured as one of the main techniques for this, with the incidence of race and class markers being evident in this distribution, since feminized, racialized and peripheralized bodies are the main targets of gender necropolitics.

Throughout the first chapter of this work, such information was ratified through the realization that the advent of neoliberalism brought a new way for the State to act on the population's life, intensifying the initial conception of Foucauldian biopolitics. In this way, the biopatriarchalist State, which is effective through articulations between capitalism and patriarchy, uses the control and management of bodies, especially female bodies, to achieve the ultimate goal of profit from the neoliberal social form.

In this sense, this State manifests its sovereignty through strategies to manage the death of existences that are no longer useful for production, based on socioeconomic markers and oppression. Under this bias, it is clear that the biopatriarchalist State presents, as one of its pillars of support, a policy of extermination directed at poor and racialized women, which is called gender necropolitics.

This continuous production of disposability of female bodies caused by the structure of the biopatriarchal State presents, in turn, femicide as a direct expression since this manifestation of gender violence provides the reproduction of patriarchal power and the reaffirmation of the subaltern place occupied by women.

Next, questions were examined regarding the factors that, together, influence the occurrence and characteristics of violent deaths of female adolescents that occurred in peripheral areas of Fortaleza. The answers to such questions were found in the second chapter of this research.

In fact, a causal link was observed between the intensification of conflicts between rival criminal groups for hegemony in the most marginalized neighborhoods of the capital of Ceará and the objectification and use of female bodies. Effectively, girls between the ages of 10 and 19, mostly brown and living in the periphery, have their bodies transformed into disputed territory, their deaths being marked by violent and misogynistic behavior to promote the tearing apart of all their marks of femininity and to manifest power and strength and to reiterate the territorial domain of a certain faction before other men.

In the end, however, it was conceived that the exponential increase in the murders of these teenagers could not be understood as a mere effect of the reordering of the dynamics of urban violence in Ceará promoted by the migration, strengthening, and expansion of the power of criminal factions. In fact, it was attested that the State of Ceará plays a fundamental role in maintaining the occurrence of these deaths.

This behavior is verified through public demonstrations by state security and justice system agents who reduce the violent deaths of girls to the assumption of involvement of victims with criminal acts and groups, using the figure of the "involved" to frame bodies of feminized adolescents, racialized and inserted in the context of the periphery of the capital.

This scenario leads to the criminalization of these girls and, consequently, the naturalization of their deaths and the removal of responsibility from the public power with them. In addition, there was the creation, in the face of this broad social tolerance in the face of these cruel crimes, of a cycle of impunity that materialized in the absence or lack of efficiency of adequate state responses. In fact, the practice of increasing investment in overt public security policies was observed, marked by the militarization of the peripheries, concomitantly with the precariousness and insufficiency of social policies for adolescents.

Finally, the last questions that were intended to be addressed concerned the verification of gender necropolitics in these violent deaths of female adolescents during urban violence in the marginalized neighborhoods of the capital of Ceará and the understanding of these as feminicides.

Nevertheless, these episodes still manifested undeniable misogyny, understood as an aversion to the feminine, which would allow their typifications as femicides. However, despite the femicide context, the public authorities, through the Civil Police, the Judiciary, or the Public Prosecutor's Office, promoted the classification of these behaviors as mere homicides, simple or qualified for a basic reason. This scenario contributes to an erroneous perception of the effective amount of crimes pervaded by misogyny that take place in the state capital.

In addition, not infrequently, there has been evidence of a lack of speed on the part of the State in investigating the authorship, motivation, and circumstances of these crimes, as well as an attempt to criminalize the victims by relating them to criminal acts and groups without there being any evidence of these facts in the case file. These state behaviors corroborate naturalization and a lack of social commotion in the face of these femicides for the perpetuation of a cycle of impunity for these deaths, as well as being fundamental for the functioning of gender necropolitics.

Given all the above, the specific objectives proposed for this work were achieved.

It is concluded, therefore, from the theoretical aspects dealt with in the previous chapters and the samples brought to the work, that the biopatriarchalist State uses socioeconomic markers and oppression to dispose of female bodies in the delimitation of legitimate subjects and unworthy subjects and, therefore, subject to institutional abandonment and death. In this sense, based on the perception that girls, poor and racialized, occupy a subordinate place, criminal factions use their bodies, through the systematic practice of feminicides, to assert their power and strength before other men. This scenario, in turn, is perceived on the outskirts of the capital of Ceará, which also has fundamental behaviors on the part of the State for the maintenance of gender necropolitics in the dynamics of urban violence.

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"The involved": feminicides of adolescents in Fortaleza in 2018 in the light of gender necropolitics

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