Gender mainstreaming in public policies in Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2021)

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The article investigates the institutional conditions for gender mainstreaming in policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population in the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Norte (RN), regarding their (dis)connection with the Federal Government, from 2003 to 2021. Based on documents and interviews, we carried out process-tracing of the institutional conditions of these policies (entities and mechanisms) in RN, considering three coordination levels (intersectoral, participatory, and federative). The results indicate that the structuring of institutional conditions was marked by a combination of advances and discontinuities of which the ideological orientation of governments was the decisive factor. We did not identify a federative system of gender mainstreaming characterized by collaborative and dialogic dynamics between federative entities. When present, federative coordination favoured a top-down approach, mainly through induction. These findings point to the potential and limits of institutional conditions for gender mainstreaming in a sustainable fashion.

Keywords: gender mainstreaming; public policy; institutional conditions; process tracing; Rio Grande do Norte.

Transversalidade de gênero em políticas públicas no Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2021)

O artigo investiga as condições institucionais para a transversalidade de gênero em políticas para mulheres e população LGBTQIA+ no Estado do Rio Grande do Norte (RN), em suas desarticulações com o Governo Federal, no período de 2003 a 2021. Para isso, realizamos um *process tracing* das condições institucionais (instâncias e mecanismos) no Rio Grande do Norte, com base em documentos e entrevistas, considerando três níveis de articulação da transversalidade de gênero (intersetorial; participativa e federativa). Os resultados indicam que a estruturação de condições institucionais combinou avanços e descontinuidades, cuja trajetória teve na orientação ideológica dos governos fator decisivo. Não identificamos um sistema federativo de transversalidade de gênero, caracterizado por dinâmicas colaborativas e dialógicas entre entes federativos. Quando existente, a articulação federativa aproximou-se de um padrão *top-down,* por meio, principalmente, da indução. Esses achados apontam potencialidades e limites das condições institucionais para a transversalidade de gênero de forma perene.

Palavras-chave: transversalidade de gênero; política pública; condições institucionais; *process tracing*; Rio Grande do Norte.

Transversalidad de género en las políticas públicas de Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2021)

El artículo investiga las condiciones institucionales para la transversalidad de género en las políticas para las mujeres y LGBTQIA+ en el Estado de Rio Grande do Norte (RN), en su (des)articulación con el Gobierno Federal, de 2003 a 2021. Para ello, realizamos un *process tracing* de las condiciones institucionales de las políticas (instancias y mecanismos) en RN, a partir de documentos y entrevistas, considerando tres niveles de articulación (intersectorial, participativo y federativo). Los resultados sugieren que la estructuración de las condiciones institucionales estuvo marcada por una combinación de avances y discontinuidades, cuya trayectoria tuvo un factor determinante en la orientación ideológica de los gobiernos. No identificamos un sistema federal de transversalidad de género, con dinámicas colaborativas y dialógicas entre las entidades federativas. Cuando existió, la articulación federativa se acercó a un patrón *top down*, principalmente a través de la inducción. Estos hallazgos apuntan potencialidades y límites de las condiciones institucionales para la perennidad de la transversalidad de género.

Palabras clave: transversalidad de género; política pública; condiciones institucionales; *process tracing*; Rio Grande do Norte.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Demands from feminists and the LGBTQIA+ community for public policies and rights face resistance from conservative groups and also drift into patriarchal traditions based on institutions, including state organizations (Bandeira, 2005; Marcondes, 2019). Left-wing/progressive governments tend to be more receptive to these agendas, although in a limited, ambiguous, and contradictory manner (Trevisan, 2018). This occurred under Workers' Party (PT) management at the federal level (2003-2016), in which policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community adopted gender mainstreaming as a strategy (Bandeira, 2005; Walby, 2005).

Based on Marcondes (2019) and Marcondes and Farah (2020), we understand gender mainstreaming in public policies as a process of incorporating new perspectives to redirect public actions towards the political agenda of feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements. According to the authors, this process infers the structuring of institutional conditions (governmental entities and mechanisms) to both manage policies and democratize them. They label this process as intersectoral coordination and participative coordination, respectively. In a federative state, such as Brazil, another coordination should also be considered: the federative. The latter encompasses the dynamic of mainstreaming between national and subnational bodies.

Drawing on this theoretical approach, we aim to investigate the institutional conditions for gender mainstreaming in policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population[1] in Rio Grande do Norte (RN) (2003-2021), considering the three gender mainstreaming coordination levels (intersectoral, participative, and federative). Through process tracing (Collier, 2011; Mahoney, 2012), based on document analysis and interviews, we have reconstructed the course of institutional conditions in Rio Grande do Norte regarding the national policy process.

The article is divided into six parts, including the introduction. The second and third sections cover the theoretical framework and methodology, respectively. The fourth part presents an analysis of institutional conditions at the federal level, while we focus on Rio Grande do Norte (RN) in the fifth section. In the last section, we discuss the results and highlight the research contributions and limitations.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Brazil, gender mainstreaming was mainly adopted as a strategy to structure policies for women, in alignment with the IV World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) (Bandeira, 2005; Walby, 2005). This reflects the beginnings of gender theories and practices spearheaded by feminist movements, which focused on the situation of women, with the objective of politicizing and denaturalizing

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[1] There are multiple uses of the abbreviation, which has a dynamic construction (see Facchini, 2020). In this article, we give preference to LGBTQIA+ and, in some cases, opt to maintain the abbreviation used in the data consulted.

female oppression (Piscitelli, 2002; Scott, 1995). However, the dynamicity of gender theories and practices repositioned their meanings, with the decisive contribution of LGBTQIA+ movements and, specifically, transsexual people (Aguião, 2017; Butler, 2003). New gender theories and practices denounced binarism and the universal desires of previous approaches, advocating an understanding of the relation of gender in its contradictory totality, which includes the nodes of the sex/gender/desire matrix (Aguião, 2017; Butler, 2003; Piscitelli, 2002). With the expansion of gender meanings, the idea of gender mainstreaming was expanded in such a way that it could be mobilized by policies for the LGBTQIA+ community.

As a concept, mainstreaming can be understood as a process of incorporating gender equality perspectives into public actions, to redirect them towards the feminist movements and the LGBTQIA+ community's agendas (Bandeira, 2005; Marcondes & Farah, 2020; Walby, 2005). The mainstreaming process is shaped by the dynamic of negotiation and conflicts between subjects (governmental and non-governmental), which take place in certain political contexts and require institutional conditions to be managed and democratized. According to Marcondes (2019), these institutional conditions include entities (e.g., women's policy entities [OPMs] and councils) and mechanisms (e.g., plans).

We can draw on Gramsci's metaphor of the war of position to understand that institutional conditions are structured as part of a dispute for hegemony, through which the positions achieved are, simultaneously, points to defend and also to attack. Consequently, the establishment of institutional conditions is necessary, but not sufficient, to achieve a commitment to gender equality (Farah, 2004). An OPM may not influence public policies, for example.

According to Marcondes (2019) and Marcondes and Farah (2020), the structuring of institutional conditions involves different levels. It involves integration between government sectors and the state-society relation, which we call intersectoral and participative coordination levels, respectively, in this article. In countries such as Brazil, we should also consider a third type of coordination (federative). Federative architecture is structured in every social policy, to facilitate the autonomy of federal entities and government coordination (Costa & Palotti, 2011). The different institutional capacities to manage subnational entities constitute important elements to facilitate public policy processes and to innovate and provide feedback for the decision-making flow of policies. They may take on new configurations, due to the interactions between the subjects involved and the objective conditions of resources (e.g., human, financial, and material).

In relation to mainstreaming, based on Marcondes, Diniz, and Farah (2018), federative coordination may involve what we call vertical federative mainstreaming. It includes the federal government promoting the establishment of policy organisms at subnational levels, the preparation of plans, and the establishment of entities and mechanisms for social participation. Its vertical nature derives from the federal government's mechanisms to encourage subnational entities (Arretche, 2004; Costa & Palotti, 2011), in a top-down perspective of federative coordination. Other federative mainstreaming arrangements are also possible, such as those in which collaboration and cooperation prevail between the federative entities, in a dialogical manner, which we call the federative mainstreaming system.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This qualitative research explores and describes the phenomenon (Sampieri, Collado, & Lucio, 2006), with the objective of developing the idea of gender mainstreaming through the subnational context, and analysing policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population.

Although gender may refer to both, the trajectories of institutionalizing the two policies are different, with policy for women being older, more established, and has been studied further. The combined analysis of both contributes to understanding gender mainstreaming theories and practices.

Mainstreaming innovations in state policies have been under-investigated, particularly mediation between the national and sub-national levels. An advance in the analysis of state realities enables us to not only expand our knowledge of intersectoral and participative coordination levels but also clarifies the aspect which is more marginalized in mainstreaming practices and theories: federative coordination. In addition, conjunctural changes in national and subnational policy challenge the institutionalization of policies, particularly those with more recent trajectories, such as policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ movement. This occurred in Brazil following the 2016 coup, which ousted Dilma Rousseff (PT) from the Presidency of the Republic, followed by the election of Jair Bolsonaro.

Considering these aspects, we chose to analyse the case of Rio Grande do Norte, and its coordination with the federal government during the period 2003 to 2021, due to the mosaic of political realities found over time, which make the case relevant to the objective of this article. This methodological approach enables conjunctural elements to be included, which facilitates an appreciation of the effects of systoles and diastoles that national changes produce at the subnational level, considering political-institutional preferences and contexts with distinct biases at both levels, as can be observed in Box 1.

BOX 1   **SNAPSHOT BY THE TIME OF THE ANALYSIS AND A POLITICAL MAP: SUMMARY**

Period	Federal Government	Political Orientation	State Government	Political Orientation
2003-2010	Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (PT)	Left-wing	Wilma de Farias (Brazilian Socialist Party – PSB)	Centre-Left
2011-2014	Dilma Rousseff (PT)	Left-wing	Rosalba Ciarlini (Democrats – DEM)	Right-wing
2015-2016			Robinson Faria (Social Democratic Party – PSD)	Centre-Left/ Right-wing*
2016-2018	Michel Temer (Brazilian Democratic Movement – MDB)	Right-wing		
2019-	Jair Bolsonaro (Liberal Party -PL**)	Extreme Right-wing	Fátima Bezerra (PT)	Left-wing

Notes: *Robinson Faria's management began as a centre-left coalition (between the PT and PCdoB), aligned with federal PT management at the time. After 2016, he moved to the right, realigning with the orientation of the federal government (Michel Temer). **Bolsonaro was elected by the Liberal Social Party (PSL) and, after breaking away from it, was not associated with a political party. He joined the PL in 2021.
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We draw on process tracing, due to the challenges inherent to the investigation of institutional conditions. This is a method to analyse within-case trajectories, with descriptions of sequences, continuities, and ruptures, which enable phenomena to be described, or explained (Collier, 2011; Mahoney, 2012). Our approach analyses the trajectory of institutional changeovers and changes, mediated by distinct political-ideological biases in the federal and the Rio Grande do Norte governments.

The data source mainly comprised official documents and data (normative acts and plans, such as the three Multi-annual Plans of Rio Grande do Norte [PPA]; Static/IBGE). We also used interviews to triangulate the data and for more in-depth analyses. The semi-structured interviews were held between 2020 and 2021, based on a script of guiding questions. The interviews were recorded, with prior permission, transcribed, and then reported. Their use for our research was authorized, and the terms of identification were negotiated since we opted to maintain anonymity. The profile of the people interviewed is described below:

BOX 2　　PROFILE OF THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Identification	Description
E.1	Black cis woman. Former manager of the State Sub-Secretariat of Policies for Women and linked to Rio Grande do Norte feminist movements.
E.2	White trans woman. Manager of the Coordination for Sexual Diversity and Gender (CODIS/Rio Grande do Norte) and linked to grass-roots movements.
E.3	White cis woman. Militant from the Leila Diniz Feminist Movement (Rio Grande do Norte).
E.4	Black cis woman. Parliamentarian, former manager of State Policy for Young People, and linked to feminist movements.
E.5	White cis woman. A councilwoman linked to feminist movements.
E.6	Cis man (opted to not identify race/colour). A civil servant who had worked at SDH/PR (2007-2014).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The analysis of institutional conditions for gender mainstreaming focused on federative, intersectoral, and participative coordination in Rio Grande do Norte, on account of the national context. Thus, we consider the three coordination levels in the data collection and analysis (Box 3), as well as indicators and parameters from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Gender Equality Observatory (Comissão Econômica para a América Latina e o Caribe [Cepal], 2021), National System to Promote Racial Equality (SINAPIR) (Secretaria de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial, 2015) and Marcondes (2019) as references.

Coordination level	Aspects observed
Intersectoral	Fully operational gender mainstreaming management initiatives; hierarchical level of policy bodies; budget for programmes/projects and own management team and mechanisms; intersectoral coordination strategies; integration between initiatives ("management ecosystem").
Participative	Fully operational management democratization initiatives (continuous or periodic); an initiative to establish its own federative entity, or response to demands from others (e.g., holding state conference); parity or majority participation by civil society; degree of effective advocacy on gender mainstreaming management; integration between initiatives ("participation ecosystem").
Federative	Federative coordination authorities and mechanisms; incentives to encourage or mimic the structuring of gender mainstreaming management and/or democratization of management at the subnational level.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

4. CONTEXTUALIZATION: NATIONAL GENDER MAINSTREAMING

4.1. Background

The National Council of Women's Rights (CNDM), established in 1985, was a milestone in institutional conditions for mainstreaming policies for women (Carvalho, 2018). The CNDM promoted female demands during the preparation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, but lost its structure in the early 1990s, and only regained importance during the 1995 Beijing Conference (Fernandes, 2004; Pimenta, 2010). The State Department of Women's Rights (SEDIM) in the Ministry of Justice was established at the end of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government in 2002, although it was only partially activated (Pimenta, 2010).

In turn, the LGBTQIA+ population was added to the Brazilian public agenda in the 1980s with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, although there had been demands by the community for actions to depathologize (what was called) homosexuality, and to fight discrimination since re-democratization (Facchini, 2020; Irineu, 2014; Mello, Avelar, & Maroja, 2012). Attention to the needs of this community was progressively coordinated with human rights policies, particularly by the National Human Rights Programme (PNDH). According to Facchini (2020), for the first time, the term "homosexual" was adopted in federal government documents beyond HIV/AIDS issues. In effect, in its first two editions, the PNDH mentions the importance of protecting homosexuals, and tackling violence against them (Ministério da Justiça, 1996), besides embracing actions to guarantee GLBTT rights (Ministério da Justiça, 2002).

However, social participation entities for the LGBTQIA+ community were not established. In 2001, the Ministry of Justice, State Department of Human Rights (SDH) National Council to Combat Discrimination (CNCD) had been introduced (Decreto nº 3.952, de 4 de outubro de 2001), with its focus on discrimination in general. Civil society seats were mainly allocated to the black community, with no mention of the LGBTQIA+ population (Pompeu & Motter, 2020).

To summarize claims for women and LGBTQIA+ policies were now incorporated into the Brazilian political debate with the federal PT governments, and initiatives of policies that addressed them were registered. However, supporting institutional conditions were fragile, especially in policy for the LGBTQIA+ population, and the trajectory of the two policies did not connect.

4.2. PT Governments (2003-2015)

The Department of Policies for Women (SPM) was established during the Lula (PT) government in 2003, with a ministerial statute linked to the Presidency, later becoming a ministry. Its objective was to coordinate, formulate, implement, and monitor policies for women. The CNDM was linked to it, in order to guarantee participation by social movements, with the majority of the seats allocated to civil society, although the chairperson was from the SPM (Carvalho, 2018).

The National Plans for Policies for Women (PNPMs) became central to the structure of gender mainstreaming management (Bandeira, 2005). There were three plans (I PNPM [2004]; II PNPM [2008] and PNPM 2013-2015 [2013]) which supported actions, objectives, and goals related to the multiple dimensions of inequalities, such as violence; economic inequality, education, health, and sexual and reproductive rights. It is important to highlight that the policy, plan, and SPM focused on women, and not gender relations as a whole, which was a position adopted as a tactic by feminist and women's movements (Godinho, 2004).

Mainstreaming management set out in the PNPM was attributed to the SPM, in partnership with the Plan Coordination and Monitoring Committee, formed by government entities, subnational women's policy entities, international organisms, and CNDM representatives (Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres [SNPM], 2004, 2008, and 2013). The PNPM and committee represented intersectoral arrangements, with social participation, connecting gender mainstreaming management, and democratization. Editions of the PNPMs arose from National Conferences on Policies for Women (CNPM) resolutions (SNPM, 2004, 2008, and 2013). However, the 4th CNPM was held at the same time as the 2016 coup, which prevented the results from having any influence on public policies.

Federalized mainstreaming became consolidated with the II PNPM. In the evaluation of the I PNPM, "the establishment of state and municipal government organisms to coordinate and manage policies for women" was highlighted as an advance (SNPM, 2008, p. 23), and "the non-existence of women's policy entities in countless state governments and the majority of municipal governments" as a challenge (SNPM, 2008, p. 23). The II PNPM envisioned the establishment and strengthening of OPMs in plans in states and municipalities, and the Nacional OPM Forum, coordinated by the SPM, to disseminate best practices and coordinate joint actions. Strengthening the forum became a PNPM 2013-2015 priority (SNPM, 2013).

In order to encourage federalized mainstreaming, the SPM supported the establishment of OPMs and the preparation of plans, via technical assistance and informational material. Thus, it took on a federative dimension as one of the three gender mainstreaming bases, together with gender mainstreaming management, participation, and social control (SNPM, 2013). At the 4th CNPM, in 2016, structuring a National System of Policies for Women was discussed, such as SINAPIR and the Unified Health System (SUS).

Policy advances were registered for the LGBQTIA+ population during the first Lula government (Trevisan, 2018), with the establishment of the Brazil without Homophobia Programme (2004) at the Presidency of the Republic, Department of Human Rights (SDH/PR), in partnership with movement leaders (Aguião, 2017; Facchini 2020). The intersectoral coordination included actions to fight discrimination and the promotion of citizenship for the LGBTQIA+ population, which were assigned a budget and executive team (Irineu, 2014; Mello et al., 2012). The CNCD was reformulated in 2005 and started to include representation of the GLBT segment (Decreto nº 5.397 de 22 de março de 2005; Pompeu & Motter, 2020).

The institutionalization of LGBTQIA+ policies was boosted in 2008, when the I National GLBTT Conference was held (Aguião, 2017; Facchini 2020). Another result was the release of a National Plan to Promote LGBT Citizenship and Human Rights in 2009 (Aguião, 2017; Mello et al., 2012; Trevisan, 2018). It included the introduction and establishment of General Coordination to Promote LGBT Human Rights at SDH/PR, which resulted in an increased budget and team (Irineu, 2014), and the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group, supported by a Technical Committee (Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos [SEDH], 2009a). PNDH-3 was released in 2009 (SEDH, 2009b), which included actions for transvestites and transsexuals, among other initiatives (Mello et al., 2012).

The CNCD was restructured in 2010, and linked to policy to fight discrimination, and promote and defend LGBT rights (Decreto Estadual nº 7.388, de 2010; Pompeu & Motter, 2020). The CNCD/LGBT, with equal participation by the government and civil society, gave a voice to the movement, contributing towards advances in policies for this population (Aguião, 2017; Mello et al., 2012). The CNCD was fundamental in leading the actualization of the second and third conferences (Pompeu & Motter, 2020), which were held in 2011 and 2016, respectively (Aguião, 2017; Facchini 2020; Irineu, 2014).

In turn, the National Plan identified the need to establish an institutional network that involved the three federative levels, in order to implement policies (SEDH, 2009a). Therefore, federative cooperation was established to promote citizenship and defend human rights to "coordinate and encourage the establishment of LGBT policy coordination structures, within state, municipal and district domains" (SEDH, 2009a, p. 37). In addition, there were efforts to establish a National System to Promote Rights and Tackle Violence against LGBT, which aimed to encourage and support the installation of LGBT councils and coordinating entities at different federative levels, and to promote dialogue between the three powers, among other objectives (Portaria nº 766, de 3 de julho de 2013). Thus, federative coordination was on the policy structuring agenda, although it was not fully actualized.

LGBTQIA+ policy advances were also achieved during the Dilma governments, mainly for judicial decisions – as in the case of marriage between people of the same sex and the adoption of children (Facchini 2020; Trevisan, 2018) –, under resistance from conservative sectors. As Facchini (2020) and Trevisan (2018) observe, feminist and LGBTQIA+ agendas achieved questionable advances and fragmented results, being recurrently used as a bargaining chip in PT government negotiations with Neo-Pentecostal leaders and other conservative political forces. This took place in 2011, during the Dilma government when the School Without Homophobia programme was accused of promoting a "gay kit", which led the president to cancel the distribution of educational material against homophobia (Trevisan, 2018).

Figure 1 summarizes the description of the trajectory of the two policies at the national level.

FIGURE 1   **GENDER POLICIES: MAIN MILESTONES (FEDERAL GOVERNMENT – 2003/2016)**
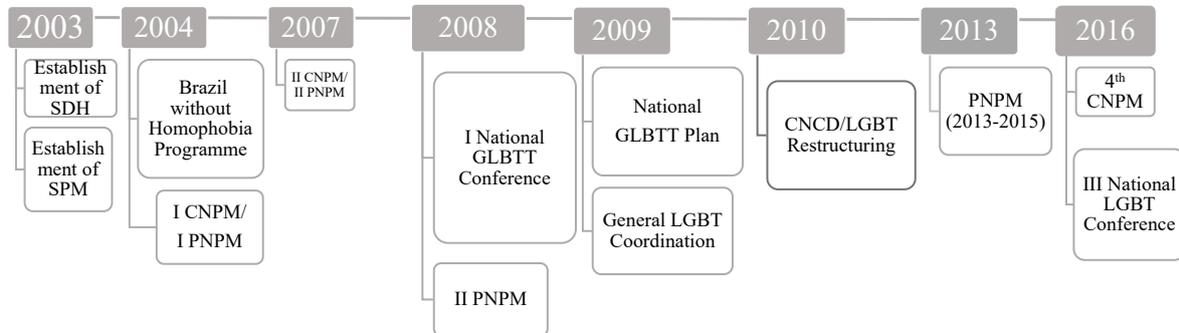
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The trajectory of policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community was not integrated and also experienced different levels of institutionalization, with policy for women being the most prominent during the period analysed, since it had a prior structuring history. Policy for the LGBTQIA+ population faced an additional challenge: as Facchini (2020) observes, although the international political environment had been more open to the agenda since the 1990s, there were no treaties or international directive conventions on the topic, as in policy for women, as interviewee E.6 confirmed. Furthermore, Brazil without Homophobia and the National Plan for the LGBTQIA+ population achieved very few practical results, unlike initiatives such as the Maria da Penha Law (Brazil's federal law against gender-based violence).

4.3. Current day (2016-)

Institutional conditions for policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community experienced alterations during Dilma's second term. The SPM was dissolved as an autonomous body in 2015, becoming part of the Ministry for Women, Racial Equality, and Human Rights (Marcondes et al., 2018). Following the coup and start of the Temer government, successive changes took place in the organizational design of the SPM, and the National Department for Policies for Women was re-established at the Presidency of the Republic Government Secretariat in 2017 (Marcondes et al., 2018). In this context, the CNDM experienced the collective resignation of civil society representation (SOS Corpo, 2016).

Although the Temer government did not take on the commitment to gender equality as a significant political agenda, there were a number of initiatives in this area. This was the case of the National Pact to Tackle LGBT Violence, established in 2018, with the objective of coordinating and integrating actions to tackle the violence which affects this population, through federative collaboration (Pomeu & Motter, 2020).

In turn, the Bolsonaro government was positioned in opposition to the feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements' demands (Facchini, 2020). However, institutional conditions for mainstreaming were not completely dissolved, although they were depleted and altered. The Ministry for Women, the Family, and Human Rights was established, guided by the concept of the traditional family. The CNDM, established by law, was not dissolved but became headed by the conservative National Department for Policies for Women.

Thus, "deinstitutionalization" took place through stripping. The CNCD/LGBT councils were included in the list of closures in the early days of the Bolsonaro government (Decreto nº 9.759, de 11 de abril de 2019). Their later re-establishment did not make reference to the LGBTQIA+ community (Decreto nº 9.883, de 27 de junho de 2019). Its composition was also reduced, formed by the Ministry for Women, the Family, and Human Rights for the government, and only included three members of civil society. Since 2010, its composition had included 15 participants from each segment (government and civil society). Finally, further conferences for policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population, which had been fundamental to legitimize and structure the respective policies, have not been held.

The CNCD situation demonstrated the institutional fragility of LGBTQIA+ policy. It is illustrative that the National Plan was not established by decree (Mello et al., 2012), not being included in the PNPM, and the National System to Promote Rights and Tackle LGBT Violence was edited by a directive.

5. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN RIO GRANDE DO NORTE (2011-2021)

5.1. Wilma de Faria (2003-2010)

Management by the PSDB governor represented advances in policies for women, although the governor's relation with feminist movements had been historically marked by tension (Fernandes, 2004). State Coordination for Policies for Women (CEPAM), at the State Department of Work, Justice, and Citizenship (SEJUC) was established in 2007, to coordinate policies for women (Lei complementar nº 340, de 31 de janeiro de 2007), with the announcement of the II State Conference (Decreto nº 21.054, de 06 de março de 2009). The State Plan for Policies for Women (2009-2013) was prepared in 2009.

The majority of the framework for the II PNPM was reproduced at the II State Conference and in the State Plan. It was a case of electing gender mainstreaming as a strategy, and other inequalities (racism, lesbophobia, and generational issues) (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2009), indicating a mirroring of the federal experience within the state. The State Council for Women's Rights (CEDM), with the majority formed by members of civil society (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2012), took part in the preparation of the State Plan, and became responsible for its monitoring, together with the preparatory committee, as highlighted by interviewee E.1, and also corresponds with the national experience. However, circulation of the plan was restricted (the document is not available on the internet).

LGBTQIA+ policies in Rio Grande do Norte were limited to episodic actions which did not directly depend on State Executive Power. This was the case for the prospect of penalties for violence and discriminatory practices against homosexuals, bisexuals, or transgender people (Lei nº 9.036, 29 de novembro de 2007).

5.2. Rosalba Ciarlini (2011-2014)

The Rosalba Ciarlini (DEM) government started with the first Dilma government when institutional conditions to mainstream policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community at the federal level had advanced. Estadic (IBGE, 2012) reveals that there were no alterations to the formal structures of mainstreaming policies for women and democratization under Rosalba's management. However, interviewee E.1 – a council member in the previous management – advises that:

> We had the material to structure all of the coordination office, computers, desks, a car, and everything. At the time, the federal government provided the material, and we only needed to write a project and send it. And we prepared the project. When we were able to receive it […] So, then […] Wilma lost the government, and another person came who was in the opposition and did not provide any continuity at all. I believe that it did not continue with any of the policies. It became that usual way of the coordination office doing something here and there; one-off things.

The State Plan for Policies for Women did not direct preparation of the PPA (2012-2015), although it is mentioned as a reference in the justification for the Female Citizenship Programme in the PPA, which acknowledged the need to establish actions to eliminate discrimination and inequalities as a result of the plan's existence (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2012).

However, the programme was limited to initiatives addressed at women, with a focus on violence, vulnerability, and discrimination (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2012), being out of step with the complexity of the state plan.

In the PPA (2012-2015), the actions focused on knowledge production and dissemination, with a much more limited scope than the state plan. The plan had a budget of BRL 900,000, with BRL 500,000 of this originating from the federal government. The state plan, which was in effect until 2013, was not updated. Similar effects were felt in social participation:

> Actually, channels for dialogue with the social movement were not established during the Rosalba government; there was no opening for dialogue, construction, and proposition. It was also a time when we identified a change. Because in each management we had the public budget as a reference to know what was taking place with the resource […] And, in the Rosalba government, this was not transparent, so we had great difficulties because the format changes under every management […] (E.3).

As another interviewee (E.5) confirms, this was also on account of the feminist movement being in opposition to the government:

> So, under the Rosalba government, I confess to you that I don't even remember there being a coordination office […] Because we did not even establish a relationship with this government; we, in the movement were very sure that we were in opposition to this government, unlike the situation in professor Fátima's government, for example. We are not in the opposition; we challenge the government, we criticize and create dialogue […].

We did not identify any advances in LGBTQIA+ policy. The topic was marginally included in the PPA: one of the programmes envisaged the awareness-raising of people, and the guarantee of the right to citizenship, including homosexuals (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2012). However, none of the actions specifically focus on the LGBTQIA+ community.

To summarize, we observed that policies for women experienced reversals during this period. With Wilma de Faria, gender mainstreaming management was characterized by the existence of coordination dependent on a department, which had specific instruments (plans), and a team and budget structure

existed, although this was fragile. There was a tendency towards institutionalization, which was not materialized in the following period. CEPAM, dependent on SEDUC, had weaknesses with structure and budget (restricted to one-off actions, such as campaigns and training), which depended on federal contributions. The democratization of management was equally fragile. There was the embryo of a participative ecosystem during the Wilma government, in which conferences and councils coordinated with gender mainstreaming management, such as the experience of the plan. However, the entities were subsequently retained but there was a disconnection between them and management.

State conferences and the council did not have an influence on the PPA during the period. Therefore, the effects of federal induction in the state domain did not occur, except for a fragile initiative through federal resources (e.g., PPA). We were not able to confirm any highlights for the LGBTQIA+ population; inexistent political-institutional conditions remained.

5.3. Robinson Faria (2015-2018)

Initially, the Robinson Faria government was aligned with the second Dilma Rousseff PT government, which had effects on policies for women. The Special Department for Public Policies for Women (SPM/RN) was established in 2015, which replaced the coordination, and was directed by the PT. CEDM was reformulated and established by law, becoming known as the State Council for Women's Rights (CEDIM), maintaining the majority of seats for civil society (Lei complementar nº 602, de 07 de agosto de 2017).

The main alteration to LGBTQIA+ policies took place in 2017. The SEJUC Coordination Office for Human Rights and the Defence of Minorities (CODEM), which had existed since 1999, with responsibility for policies to promote human rights and tackle discrimination and intolerance, specifically adopted the mission of acting in the defence of rights and coordinating policies for homeless people, LGBTQIA+, immigrants, and the elderly. CODEM linked its activities to the State Committee to Combat LGBTPhobia and State Committee to Accompany the Policy to Promote and Defend LGBT rights and took on responsibility for the conference, and preparation of the State Plan for Policies for the LGBT Population (Decreto nº 27.622, de 18 de dezembro de 2017).

The State Committee to Combat LGBTPhobia was formalized in 2017, as a result of the state committing to the National Pact to Tackle LGBTphobic Violence (Decreto nº 26.598, de 26 de janeiro de 2017). However, according to interviewee E.2, "it never operated; there were no meetings […] it was only established to fulfil a national decision." In addition, although the establishment of a State LGBT Council had been considered during his government, this objective was not achieved.

The approaches of both policies were diverse in the PPA (2016-2019), which envisaged mainstream agendas and included policies for women, but not the LGBTQI+ community (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2016). A specific thematic programme (Promotion and Autonomy of Women) was structured on six objectives, with an emphasis on tackling violence and inequality in the world of work, having received approximately BRL 5 million in resources (BRL 2.3 million from the federal government) (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2016). "Snapshots" in the inequality of women were envisaged, as they were known at the time, through an "interface with inequalities of class, race/ethnicity, generation, and sexual orientation, among others" (p. 641), including LBT women. The execution was assigned to SEJUC, and not SPM/RN. However, it appeared in the programme's actions and objectives, including references to the strength of the women's policy entity (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2016).

A thematic programme was not envisaged in LGBTQIA+ policy but, instead, specific actions and objectives, especially policies for women, human rights, and health. Some of the initiatives to strengthen institutional conditions were seen as a goal during the preparation of the State Plan (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2016), which were not fulfilled in the end. With the coup involving President Dilma, the governor was close to the group which favoured her dismissal, and this resulted in a break from the Rio Grande do Norte left-wing.

The government gradually migrated to the right in the following years, as reported by interviewees E.2, E.3, and E.4. Thus, the policies under analysis lost ground. For example, implementation of the PPA was discontinued in the national context. Interviewee E.4 advises: "I remember that a seminar on women was still held, but there was no longer a policy in the previous format."

We identified an erratic trajectory during this period. In the beginning, there was a return to the structuring process for institutional conditions for policy for women, with the effects of vertical mainstreaming. Advances were minimal (or inexistent) in LGBTQIA+ policies, with no specific agenda, and CODEM had limited responsibility to take part in the area. In addition, various other objectives were unsuccessful, such as the establishment of a council, and preparation of a plan. The political context prevented this course of action for both policies. However, reflections of federative gender mainstreaming remained, such as the establishment of the State Committee to Combat LGBTphobia, exclusively in its formal aspect.

5.4. Fátima Bezerra (2019-)

In the same election in which Jair Bolsonaro arrived in the federal government, which represented a swing to the extreme right, Fátima Bezerra (PT) was elected governor of Rio Grande do Norte. Therefore, management was in opposition to the federal government but aligned with the legacy of previous PT governments (Lula and Dilma).

In the first months of government, Fátima conducted an administrative reform, establishing a State Department of Women, Young People, Racial Equality, and Human Rights (SEMJIDH) (Lei complementar nº 649, de 10 de maio de 2019). SEMJIDH is a type of mainstreaming umbrella, with a broad scope of activity (women, people with various sexual orientations and gender identities, black and indigenous populations, children, adolescents, and young people, etc.). It is an arrangement similar to the one adopted in the second Dilma government: a merger of cross-sectional portfolios into a single body.

The Sub-Secretariat of Policies for Women was established at SEMJIDH. There was a return of the daily council meetings here, as interviewee E.1 observes. However, we did not identify proposals to prepare a plan or structure a coordination and monitoring committee, which does not guarantee the effective development of institutional conditions to achieve the mainstreaming desired, as interviewee E.5 highlighted. According to the respondent, "a little of what took place in the federal government; as there was no team to establish a committee in each department; a committee of women; this would have had a leg in the Department of Women" may have taken place. Therefore the "leg" would have been the way of enabling intersectoral coordination, implementing the successful federal government experience in Rio Grande do Norte.

In effect, according to interviewee E.5, "compared to the last Rosalba and Robinson governments, there was even an advance, mainly on the topic of violence." However, she also added, "there was a misunderstanding that policy for women should remain marginalized."

The Coordination Office for Sexual and Gender Diversity (CODIS) was also established at SEMJIDH, linked to the Sub-Secretariat to Promote and Defend Human Rights. CODIS was a milestone in the institutionalization of these policies since as interviewee E.2 observes:

> […] We did not have an office in public administration that took care of LGBT public policy. What we had was a coordination office for human rights and minorities and this office followed-up a number of LGBT issues. But actually, we did not have this coordination office, no central follow-up or the production of LGBT public policy […] so, the coordination office was established in response to this process, the vacancy which existed, this non-existence within the state […].

Having been established in 2019, and with the majority of its existence marked by the pandemic, the process of organizing a team, budget and infrastructure is recent and became slower, as interviewee E.2 reports: "In 2020, we had planning and started work on it, but this was affected by the pandemic."

Despite these difficulties, important innovations took place. The naming of CODIS expresses an update on the debate on gender/LGBTQIA+ categories, in relation to the process of institutionalizing federal policy. That is because, as interviewee E.2 highlights: "[…] at the time, there was this debate by the LGBT coordination but, when I arrived, made this debate on sexual and gender diversity by understanding that the debate is much broader, that the small print is always getting bigger, and expressions of identity are always in dispute."

Structuring institutional conditions also involved the dimension of democratization. The State Council of Public Policies for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals in the state was established in 2021 (Lei nº 10.850, de 20 de janeiro de 2021). Seats were reserved by expressions of gender and sexualities (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and intersex people), with 50% of these reservations for black, indigenous, "quilombola", and Roma people, in addition to territorial distribution (Decreto n° 30.384, de 26 de fevereiro de 2021).

As in previous governments, there is an asymmetry between the institutional conditions of the two policies, with greater institutionalization of policy for women. However, advances were made in LGBTQI+ policy and, also a greater approximation between them, in a milestone for mainstreaming gender in public policies, which is demonstrated in the analysis of both in the PPA. The strategy of organizing "mainstream agendas" is reproduced here, as in the previous state PPA. They "cluster policies which serve specific audiences executed by each body" (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2020, p. 407). As in the previous edition, women are included, but it also addresses the LGBTQIA+ population.

Diversity is a connecting idea for programmes in the PPA (Governo do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, 2020). Linked to the Equality in Diversity agenda, programmes such as Equality in Diversity: Women and "Equality in Diversity: LGBT population" are envisaged. The main emphasis of the first programmes is on actions focused on violence and work, highlighting rural women, although there are other "cross-sections". The second focuses on public policies for the LGBT community, including instruments of social participation for the population. As interviewee E.2 explains, implementation of the PPA adds up to a strategy of focusing less on preparing a plan and more on structuring a policy, by developing a normative-legal framework of LGBTQIA+ policy ("[…] So, before the plan, we thought about establishing a state policy. This policy would be the result of these three years of management").

Therefore, in this third government, there are indications of strengthening the institutional

conditions of mainstreaming in progress, a more structured sub-secretariat for women, and a coordination office in formation (which includes a team and infrastructure) for the LGBTQIA+ population. On the other hand, in policy for women, there is no evidence of structuring new entities and mechanisms to strengthen institutional conditions, which we observe in LGBQTIA+ policy.

With regards to the federative dimension of mainstreaming, we identified a special situation. There is no federal government encouragement for gender mainstreaming processes but, instead, gender "unmainstreaming". Thus, the state experience connects in an anachronistic way to the federal experience of previous PT governments, reflecting and updating encouragement that had been promoted in the past and resonates in the present. This results not from federative induction but from political-ideological orientation from the Lula/Dilma and Fátima governments (all from the PT), which identify more with the progressive/left-wing domain.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gender mainstreaming comprises a process of disputing the hegemony of public action. Therefore, it is important for institutional conditions to be developed, so that this process is facilitated, although their existence does not guarantee the effective incorporation of gender equality perspectives in public policies. In addition, discontinuities and contradictions may occur during this trajectory, which compromise institutional sustainability. Figure 2 is provided below, in order for us to discuss the main results demonstrated for the two policies analysed in Rio Grande do Norte, and to enable analytical and critical reflection on the summarized data.

FIGURE 2   GENDER POLICIES: MAIN MILESTONES (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE – 2007/2021)

Year	Milestone
2007	• Establishment of the State Conference on Policies for Women (CEPAM)
2008	• State LGBT Conference
2009	• State Plan for Policies for Women
2015	• Special Department for Women's Policies • Reformulation of CEDIM
2017	• Restructuring of CODEM
2018	• State LGBT Committee
2019	• Establishment of SEMJIDH/Sub-Secretariat of Policies for Women • Establishment of CODIS
2021	• State Council for LGBT Public Policies

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In our analysis of the trajectory of policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population in Rio Grande do Norte (2011-2021), in view of the federal experience, we observe that during the Wilma management there was a greater alignment between federal and state governments in relation to policies for women. There was also evidence of encouragement and mimicry of national experiences (e.g., the state plan which reproduced the national one). Therefore, we denote traces of what we call vertical mainstreaming during this period. However, this did not take place with LGBTQIA+ policy, which did not reproduce the federal advances.

During the Rosalba government, in opposition to the PT, there was a political misalignment, with discontinuity of the mainstreaming process. However, traces of vertical mainstreaming in policy for women were maintained (e.g., PPA and holding state conferences), while a lack of structure in LGBTQIA+ policy remained in Rio Grande do Norte.

In the early days, the Robinson government was aligned with the federal PT government but broke away from it during the coup. Thus, initially, vertical mainstreaming returned, mainly in relation to women. However, the institutional conditions of recently created structures/those under construction were then weakened. Finally, the Fátima government represented a radical political misalignment with the current federal government (Bolsonaro), but full alignment with the previous governments (Lula/Dilma), re-establishing their legacies and constructing anachronistic vertical mainstreaming with them, including mimicking part of their experiences, with some innovation, mainly in LGBTQIA+ policy.

Based on these results, we can reflect on the gender mainstreaming process in Rio Grande do Norte and the effects of the federal government on this, highlighting the contributions of this article.

The structuring of institutional conditions for the two policies analysed was marked by a combination of advances and discontinuities, with their trajectory in the ideological orientation of the governments being a decisive factor. Federative induction was secondary, and its effects occurred when there was a political affinity between the governments (national and state) and, also, when they identified with the progressive/left-wing. This suggests weak sustainability of the mainstreaming process, highly impacted by political changes, which indicates a low level of institutionalization (with LGBTQIA+ policies at a greater disadvantage). This phenomenon also enables us to anchor reflections on the potential and limits of institutional conditions for gender mainstreaming, in order to permanently implement gender equality policies. This reflection is the first empirical contribution of this article.

The theoretical contribution regarding the federative coordination of mainstreaming gender can also be highlighted. As mentioned, this coordination is less visible in literature on gender mainstreaming. Even in the hypotheses that we have put forward, with further advances in federative coordination, which mainly took place with policies for women, these endeavours favoured a top-down approach. This involved encouragement at the federal, in relation to the subnational level, including mimicry of national entities and mechanisms. Based on Marcondes et al. (2018), we have called this vertical mainstreaming.

However, another type of federative coordination may take place. This would be the case of the effective establishment of a federative gender mainstreaming system, characterized by a collaborative format of dialogue between the federative levels. The data indicates traces of its presence at some

points of the trajectory. The 4th CNPM suggested a federative system model for policy for women, and the National LGBTQIA+ Plan and National System to Promote Rights and Tackle Violence against LGBT also indicated this. Although this has contributed to "establishing a federative LGBT network which had not existed at the time," according to E.6, the proposals were not fully implemented.

Furthermore, we observe that the trajectory of policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community were extremely disconnected at the national and subnational levels, although common tendencies have been identified in the process of integration between them. A federative gender mainstreaming model on systemic bases may be a path towards increasing the intersectoral and participative coordination level of policies for women, with those focused on the LGBTQIA+ community. This reflection summarizes a possible practical contribution to gender equality policies that seek to coordinate policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population.

A number of limitations of this article should be highlighted. Although the analysis of the Rio Grande do Norte reality contributes with insights, the results may not be generalized, and expansion of "n" is recommended for future research, including municipal experiences. In addition, the process tracing order could be reversed, in order to learn about subnational cases which have influenced federal experiences. The gender mainstreaming approach, based on the three coordination levels analysed, represents a gain in the effort to integrate these dimensions, but also produces simplifications in the analysis of each one, which have notable complexities.

Intersectionality could also be included as an analytical category in further analyses, to shed light on the disintegration of policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ community. Finally, a fundamental task for future research would be to investigate political and discursive disputes on the outline of gender mainstreaming meanings in subnational contexts, in relation to subjects who interact with gender equality policy processes.

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