Women on Facebook: an analysis based on Ambivalent Sexism

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Abstract
Sexism, understood as negative attitudes toward women, can be manifested in a hostile or benevolent way. From this, a qualitative research of the exploratory type of documentary character was carried out, that had as objective to identify and to analyze sexist contents on Facebook pages targeted at the male audience. A content analysis was done from the Ambivalent Sexism Theory of the selected posts. The results indicated that hostile sexism is still heavily shared, evidenced by posts that attempt to control behavior, demean capacity, and objectify the woman's body. Expressions of benevolent sexism have also been identified, with the specificity that they are easily propagated forms due to the seemingly positive character, veiled by a discourse of care, protection and humor. Such results show that sexism remains and remains difficult to combat, since it is not easily perceived by society.
Keywords: Facebook. Woman. Gender stereotype. Sexism.

Introduction

In the current scenario, achievements have been made in terms of reducing social and gender inequalities, mainly through struggles led mostly by women. These struggles

characterize feminist movements, which try daily to break through social barriers historically imposed by the patriarchy (SANTOS *et al.*, 2016). When analyzing such societies, as for example the Brazilian one, it is noticed that social relations have been established and developed over the years due to a differentiation of sex, based on body characteristics, and between the dualism of gender, male and female (MUNIZ, 2017). In this context, non-horizontal relationships support the notion of superiority of men at the expense of valuing women (SILVA, 2010).

Despite this, women have occupied spaces that historically were intended only for men, especially when it comes to the sphere of public life (SANTOS *et al.*, 2016). Thus, there has been the conquest of rights, such as the right to vote, to hold political positions and to exercise different functions in the labor market, including professions that for a long time were considered exclusively male, such as car mechanics and drivers. However, it cannot be disregarded that the conditions of men and women in these spaces are still unequal (PRONI; PRONI, 2018).

In the labor market, for example, men occupy the majority of managerial positions, while women can be found in a far greater proportion in professions related to care and organization (PRONI; PRONI, 2018). These are characteristics linked to the female population, due to the socially assigned role of women in maintaining the order of the home and the good upbringing of children (SILVA, 2010). It is noteworthy that this reality is still notorious in contexts where the number of women with an education higher or equivalent to that of men is growing (PRONI; LEONE, 2013).

It is also possible to observe reverberations of this social and gender inequality in the rate of violence suffered by women. This violence is often only perceived or recognized when there is physical aggression, however, it can also be psychological, patrimonial, sexual and moral (MUNIZ, 2017). It is noteworthy that these types of violence commonly occur simultaneously, as in the case of the domestic violence cycle, in which physical aggression is usually preceded by other types of violence, already practiced and naturalized (CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016).

In Brazil, in the year 2018, among the 4,519 women who were murdered, 30.4% were related to the practice of femicide, which represents a growth of 6.6% in relation to 2017. This indicates that a woman was murdered in the country every two hours (ATLAS DA VIOLÊNCIA, 2020). Regarding the records of rape and rape of minors in the years 2017 and 2018, women constituted 81.8% of the victims (ANUÁRIO BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA, 2019).

Knowing that these phenomena pervade structural issues in society, it is necessary to understand these inequalities in the light of theories of prejudice, since prejudice consists of a hostile attitude directed at a person who belongs to a group, and only because they belong to that group (ALLPORT, 1954). As an attitude, prejudice is divided into three components. A cognitive component, which corresponds to stereotypes, that is, what is thought of a group based on characteristics attributed to it; an affective component, which concerns feelings

towards that group; and a behavioral component, which corresponds to the intention to act against this group (LIMA, 2013, RODRIGUES; ASSAMAR; JABLONSKI, 2009). It is noteworthy that prejudice is not recent and can be found in almost all cultures around the world, contributing to restricting the rights and human dignity of members of various socially undervalued groups, as is the case of the female population (SILVA, 2010).

In this sense, violence against women can be understood as an expression of prejudice, which, when directed at women, is known as sexism, with itineraries that are beyond the order of bodily and/or psychological violence. This also involves daily practices, expressed in arguments rooted in the social imagination, by myths, beliefs and ideologies, which provide support for the high rates of femicide. Violence against women is veiled in the masking and subordination of everyday language, in the use of various expressions and language games and in double-entendre words (SILVA, 2014).

Sexism as a form of violence

Sexism is characterized by uncompromising negative attitudes against women (COSTA *et al.*, 2015) and can be observed in the discourse, arising from a cultural construction that perpetuates gender asymmetry, which is an instrument that permeates not only the speech of men, but also women. These discourses from the woman herself are intrinsic to patriarchal societies, in which the female population is taught and encouraged to act according to gender stereotypes, as well as sexist norms and values, allowing this system to be sustained and even strengthened (SILVA, 2010).

With significant changes in social norms and legislation in several countries on violence against women, there has been a decline in forms of prejudice and blatant and explicit discrimination (CAMINO *et al.*, 2001). These changes resulted in an increase in new forms of expression of prejudice, characterized by being subtler and more veiled, and consequently, more difficult to be perceived. It is relevant to note that these forms of expression are influenced and even defined by social norms that stand out in the context in which they occur (MCDONALD; CRANDALL, 2015).

From this perspective, there is the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism (TAS), which describes how this phenomenon works from two sub-components of sexism: the hostile and the benevolent (GLICK; FISKE, 1996). Hostile sexism is the most blatant form of prejudice against women, approaching the classic concept of prejudice presented by Allport (1954). Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, consists of inter-related attitudes to care, showing and describing women as fragile (FERREIRA, 2004, FORMIGA; GOUVEIA; SANTOS, 2002, GLICK; FISKE, 1996).

Also, according to TAS, these two dimensions are composed of three elements called: paternalism, gender differentiation and heterosexuality, which are expressed differently in each sub-component. In hostile sexism, these characteristics take on a more aggressive meaning. In this way, paternalism is seen as being dominant and seeks to control women;

gender differentiation takes on a competitive connotation, aiming, through derogatory beliefs, to put man in a higher position; and heterosexuality takes on a hostile manifestation, in which there is a tendency for men to see women only as sexual objects (BARRETO; ELLEMERES, 2005, GLICK; FISKE, 1996, KILIANSKI; RUDMAN, 1998).

For benevolent sexism, these elements take on apparently positive tones. In this case, paternalism becomes protective, based on the understanding that women must be cared for and provided for by men; gender differentiation is based on the understanding that women must complement men; and heterosexuality is manifested in intimate affective-sexual relationships, in which the woman must satisfy the romantic needs of men (BARRETO; ELLEMERES, 2005, GLICK; FISKE, 1996, KILIANSKI; RUDMAN, 1998). It should be noted that although TAS specifically emphasizes relationships between men and women, these issues can also be perceived in non-heterosexual relationships.

Although Brazilian society is currently guided by egalitarian social values and norms, which has led to an increase in the expressions of benevolent sexism, the expressions of blatant sexism are still very present, which can be evidenced in the alarming statistical data of violence against the woman. Regarding the benevolent manifestation of prejudice against women, this can manifest itself in an apparently positive way (BENOKRAITIS; FEAGIN, 1995, SWIM *et al.*, 1995), through jokes (GREENWOOD; ISBELL, 2002) or as a form of affection, delicateness and protection (BECKER; WRIGHT, 2011, PADAVIC; RESKIN, 2002).

It is noted, therefore, that the forms of expression of sexism, although still assuming traditional formats, also present new, less blatant configurations, which can be evidenced in different spaces, such as digital social media.

Digital social media and women on Facebook

According to Vermelho *et al.* (2014), digital social media correspond to a technological macrostructure that integrates a set of social actors, people or institutions, which are connected by social ties and exchange of content. Such content can be expressed in a variety of formats, such as text, sound, image and audiovisual. Here, Facebook was adopted as the digital social media to be analyzed.

Also, according to Vermelho *et al.* (2014, p. 188), "these tools enhance the maintenance and expansion of social ties, in addition to helping to visualize the relationship networks of which each subject is part". This allows for dialogue, interaction and the sharing of diverse opinions, since any person can be a producer and propagator of content. However, this possibility of multiple emitters can go beyond this informative character and contribute to the spread of prejudiced and offensive ideas, such as sexist comments (SILVA; BRAGA, 2016).

To consider this, it is important, initially, to problematize the production process of these technologies, considering who creates these algorithms and writes these codes (SILVA,

2019). According to Noble (2018), the automatic filling out of a word in the search tab, in reality, is permeated by social relations of power. This is because the algorithms, for the most part, are programmed by men with a profile that interferes with the disposition and classification of what is offered. A consequence of this is the difficulty of the algorithm in interpreting certain positions and utterances as offensive, such as jokes or figures of speech.

In this sense, when thinking about content published on digital social media, such as Facebook pages, it is necessary to consider the fact that the algorithms identify lexicons and similar discourses, indicating or suggesting friendships, groups and content, in order to form a kind of digital "bubble". This contributes to the grouping of profiles of people with similar values and who consume similar content, which can contribute to the spread and legitimization of sexism during social interactions in these networks.

Another characteristic that contributes to this reality is the possibility of anonymity. The difficulty of the content propagator in being identified, due to the physical distance, can lead to the disclosure of anonymous information, such as the creation of false profiles, which can contribute to the emission of prejudiced discourse. In addition, there is still the possibility of sharing content widely and quickly, and the spread of these ideas can reach many people in a short time (SILVA; BRAGA, 2016).

Silva *et al.* (2011), explain that such offensive discourse on digital social media are composed of two basic elements, discrimination and externality, and tend to insult, intimidate or harass people due to some specific characteristic, such as color, sex or sexual orientation. Also, according to the authors, this content has harmful effects for the target audience, such as the violation of fundamental rights and the attack on human dignity. In addition, they can incite or summon other people to participate in these discussions, expanding their dimensions and encouraging possible direct actions, which becomes even more harmful with the great diffusing power of the Internet.

In relation specifically to the prejudice suffered by women in these spaces, there is a type of continuation of the construction of the female image that is already being shared by the media, especially in advertisements. Certain advertisements represent women as objects of consumption and desire, in which they are in an eroticized position, inferior and submissive to men. This same standard of image of women can be seen on Facebook pages, which view women from a stereotyped or derogatory perspective. In these locations, there is sharing of sexist content, which undermines and trivializes the violence to which women are subjected in real life (TORRECILHA, 2016).

In this sense, the rise of the Internet has enabled greater speed and dissemination of information, but it has also contributed to the sharing of stereotyped and prejudiced ideas about women. This is even more evident when you think about the profile of the creators and programmers of Facebook's algorithms, which, in turn, can reflect sexist ideas, as stated earlier. Based on what has been explained, the present study had the general objective of analyzing sexist content on Facebook pages aimed at a male audience.

Method

Search Type

This is a qualitative, exploratory, and documentary research. It is qualitative because it deals with a level of reality that cannot be quantified, working within the universe of meanings, motives, beliefs, values and attitudes. In this sense, the phenomena must be understood and interpreted considering cultural and historical aspects that permeate human relations (MINAYO, 2015). It is exploratory because it provides greater familiarity with the problem, in order to make it more explicit or to make it possible to propose hypotheses (GIL, 2016). Finally, it is characterized as documentary because it seeks to identify, organize and evaluate the information contained in a document, in addition to contextualizing the facts at certain times (MOREIRA, 2005). In the present work, the documents used were Facebook pages, as they are freely accessible and public in nature.

Sample

The sample of this research is comprised of the content of 48 images posted on 7 Facebook pages addressed to a male audience, which are: "Man of Character", "Man chat", "Traditional Man", "Male Man", "Male in Series", "Subject Man" and "Man of Truth". At the time of collection, between October and December 2018, these pages ranged from having 30,000 to two million followers and had random weekly or monthly posts, all having at least 300 images with phrases containing some content related to the purpose of the page.

Collection Procedures

To define the Facebook pages that would contain the posts to be analyzed, a selection criterion was established of pages available using the descriptor "man" in the search tab of the Facebook pages. In regard to the exclusion criteria, pages containing less than 15 thousand followers were eliminated, considering that, comparatively, they would have less access and visibility. Then, a preliminary reading of posts from the pre-selected pages was carried out. At that moment, pages that did not include posts related to the research objective were excluded, as they presented exclusively motivational, religious or video game and animated content. After completing this process, a final number of seven pages was reached.

The collection process took place between October and December 2018, using computers and cell phones, by monitoring the posts that were made daily or weekly on these pages. To select the posts, the saturation criterion was used, that is, the collection stopped when the content of the posts became repetitive, in that no new information was added to the research (BALDIN; MUNHOZ, 2011).

In order to minimize bias in the content selection process, the collection was made by two researchers separately, who selected images that were identified as having sexist content, based on the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism, and filed them in separate and individual databases, which respectively had 56 and 52 images. In the next stage, a simultaneous check was performed of the archived posts and a consensus was reached of those that would be analyzed, totaling 48 images posted. It should be noted that the analyzed publications were posted between the years 2016 and 2018.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by means of Thematic Content Analysis (BARDIN, 2011), following a set of procedures summarized in the following steps: preliminary reading of the selected material; definition of categories based on the analyzed content; description and discussion of categories in light of the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism (GLICK; FISKE, 1996). The materials found were divided into two thematic categories, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. These were further subdivided according to the constituent elements of each of these dimensions, that is, paternalism, gender differentiation and heterosexuality. It is important to note that no names or profiles of people who follow these pages were exposed in the body of the work.

Results and discussion

Due to the personal character and lack of censorship, characteristic of digital social media, it is possible to express prejudiced opinions (MUNIZ, 2017, SILVA; BRAGA, 2016). Given this and the objective of this research, when analyzing the content of images posted on Facebook pages aimed at a male audience, there were sexist posts, both hostile and benevolent, according to the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism.

Looking first at the hostile dimension, in relation to the first element of dominant paternalism, content was found based on the idea that men should control female behavior (LEE; FISKE; GLIKE, 2010). Examples of this paternalism are posts such as: "*no one gets raped at home doing the dishes*", which refers to the idea of obedience and restriction to the private space as elements of supposed security and protection against rape, where the fault is, from this perspective, attributed to the woman. However, statistical data demonstrate a different reality, in which, according to the Ministry of Health (2018), 71.2% of sexual violence against children and 58.2% against adolescents, both female, occurred at home and were committed by men in their life.

In addition, this post also refers to and feeds back into the sexual division of labor, in which there is an attempt to control what women should do, characterized by the imposition of a place and a role that she should occupy. This role is based on traditional gender patterns

and occupations seen as typical of women, linked to home care. In this regard, Biroli (2016) highlights that the sexual division of labor, through unequal attribution of responsibilities to men and women, is at the base of the patriarchal system, where women have their labor force exploited and men benefit collectively from this system. This can also be seen in other posts, for example: *"spa Saturday: spa dishes, spa wash, spa iron, spa clean"*.

The second element of the hostile dimension concerns gender differentiation and is configured in the phenomenon in which men develop competitive attitudes towards women, through derogatory beliefs about them, in order to increase their own confidence and self-esteem. In this sense, men believe that, in their condition of superiority, they must dominate social positions related to power and decision-making, showing aversion and intolerance when women manage to occupy these spaces (GLICK; FISKE, 1996, FERREIRA, 2004). This posture can be identified in posts, mainly related to ex-president Dilma Rousseff, which demonstrate a reality that is still present, which is the denial of spaces of power to women (LIMA; ANTONINO, 2016). As an example, there is a post containing a photo of Dilma with the phrase *"it is obvious that impeachment was an exaggeration, a psychotherapist was enough"*, which in addition to depreciating women's skills in the execution of a position of power and leadership, such as the presidency, still makes an association with the female stereotype of the "crazy" woman. Another example refers to a post containing a photo of a man simulating spanking the ex-president's bottom, followed by the phrase *"for each like, a lashing"*, which diminishes and vulgarizes the female body. Such examples indicate the attempt to limit the presence of women in spaces of dominance, such as politics, and to ratify a sexist division of labor.

Following this perspective, the other form of perceived hostile expression is hostile heterosexuality, in which men have the desire to dominate women, to not demonstrate vulnerability in intimate relationships and perceive these women only as sexual objects (GLICK; FISKE, 1996, FERREIRA, 2004). Such sexual objectification describes that women are treated as objects to be seen and touched, and not as intelligent human beings. This process happens when the body, or parts of that body, are accentuated and disassociated from the woman as a person and she is given the role of giving pleasure to the man (FREDRICKSON; ROBERTS, 1997, SZYMANSKI; MOFFITT; CARR, 2011). Here, we have as an example posts with the following phrases: *"The man who says that the woman's place is in the kitchen says this because he doesn't know what to do with her in the bedroom"*; *"Sometimes all a woman needs is a hot and skilled tongue"*; *"8th wonder of the world: a woman's ass"*; *"There are things that don't need to be taught"* referring to a small boy staring at a woman's cleavage; *"Women are such a great thing that men want women, women want women and there are men who want to be women"*. Such posts demonstrate a subordination of the woman to the man, in which she is seen as an object which is at the service of male pleasure. That is, there is a maintenance of a passive position of women, of sexual objectification, of subservience to male imperatives, within a sexist society (TORRECILHA, 2016).

Expressions of benevolent sexism were also identified. From the point of view of the paternalistic character, there is an image of the woman as a fragile being, needing attention and care on the part of the man. This benevolent paternalism refers to the relationship of the man as a father, who is a figure of authority, and must provide for and protect the woman, who presents herself as helpless and incapable (FERREIRA, 2004). On the analyzed pages, this phenomenon is evidenced in posts such as: *"Teach her that you are protective and her commander. Be a man!"*; *"Women must be valued and cared for and protected by men"*; *"So delicate, you shouldn't do these manly things"; "A kiss on the forehead means much more than a kiss on the mouth, it means respect, affection and protection"*. These examples, historically, have symbolized chivalrous behaviors, demonstrating a highly romanticized interdependence of unequal social relations established between genders (GLICK; FISKE, 2011).

The other elements that make up the benevolent dimension, that is, gender differentiation and heterosexuality, could also be found in the analyzed posts. From this perspective, the social role of women is that of complementing and satisfying male romantic needs (FERREIRA, 2004, FORMIGA; GOUVEIA; SANTOS, 2002, GLICK; FISKE, 1996). In this regard, we show as examples posts with the phrases: *"Every man's dream is to have a woman of honor and character and to leave a legacy for his children"*; and *"Nothing against those who wear tight shorts or blouses, but when it comes to dating, men prefer those with longer dresses"*. There is an emphasis on the submission of women in relation to men, where they must behave properly, to satisfy the romantic needs of men who want an ideal girlfriend/ wife/mother. These behaviors are related to the idealization of the woman's place in the heterosexual relationship, in which there seems to be a silencing of her own wants and needs to the detriment of those of men. In addition, notice the ideal of the woman's dress, of what is considered to be respectable, associated with values and social norms of gender.

Thus, the posts show the belief that women have positive characteristics that serve to complement the social position of men (ROJAS, 2010). This is because, according to Weeks (2010), female sexuality standards are a product of the power of men and serve to define what is necessary and desirable for and by them. This, in turn, puts the woman in a position of submission and dependence on the will of the man.

In addition, benevolent manifestations were also found in posts disguised as comical content. This was due to the understanding that the comic content of the posts mentioned here, which are intended to make one laugh and are not intended to offend, actually appears as a way to diminish and neutralize the seriousness of the exposed content, disguising itself as jokes, that is, presenting itself as something apparently positive. Thus, it is understood that the use of humor as a way of spreading prejudice can be interpreted as a mechanism to legitimize sexism in these digital spaces. This causes the scorn of women to be viewed in a funny way, which, in turn, creates a social norm tolerant of benevolent sexism, which helps to maintain and propagate it (FORD; WENTZEL; LORION, 2001).

From this, some examples of sexist posts exposed as jokes are highlighted, which not only reinforce female stereotypes, but go further, placing the figure of the woman in a position of less value and status in the social structure. An example of this are jokes about blonde women, associating them with a lower intellectual capacity, such as: *"Two blondes were walking down the street when one says: - Look! A dead bird! The other looks up at the sky and says: - Where?".* Another example is: *"What's the difference between a blonde and a toothbrush? Your friends don't use a toothbrush",* which in addition to intellectual inferiority, reinforces the idea of woman as an object for the satisfaction of male desire. It is also noteworthy that the phrase refers to a specific profile of a woman, which meets a socially imposed standard of beauty, so that within the male imagination the white, blonde, thin woman is seen as a trophy for sexual use (BARROS, 2019).

In regard to the comic meaning of the posts, content was also seen referring to the woman as a homemaker, such as: *"Why do women get married in white? So, they match with the refrigerator, the oven and the dishwasher";* and as someone who does not know how to drive: *"Him: dear, what are you doing? Her: nothing, love. Women's things. Him: did you crash the car again?"* and *"March 8, International Women's Day",* this last sentence is represented with an image of several crashed cars. These examples reinforce female stereotypes that, in a subtle way, seek to maintain the status quo, that is, the current social norm, in which social roles are divided based on gender. It is observed that the jokes work as an attempt to attack women who deviate from the socially imposed role, in order to determine spaces and tasks that she can assume, supposing that she must be satisfied when restricted to those spaces.

In this context, it is clear that the use of humor facilitates dissemination and attenuates prejudice, which contributes to socially disadvantaged groups, such as women, to continue to be humiliated, harassed and oppressed in an acceptable manner (FORD; WENTZEL; LORION, 2001). According to Silva (2014), in this humorous form of expression of sexism, the victim is assaulted without any shame, as anything can be said, since prejudice occurs through a playful presentation, which brings with it a tone of non-criticality. It is noteworthy, therefore, that sexist jokes can play many roles, such as, for example, influencing the sexual objectification of women, the devaluation of their personal and professional skills and support violence against women (BEMILLER; SCHNEIDER, 2010, SOUSA; FIGUEIRA, 2017).

Thus, it is understood that Ambivalent Sexism presents itself in different ways and contributes to the maintenance and tolerance of different types of violence against women, in addition to serving as a basis for attitudes and behaviors that relativize, legitimize and naturalize this phenomenon. Swim and Hyers (2009) state that understanding hostile sexist beliefs is important to understand the tolerance of a person to judge different situations that violate a woman, especially when she is in a position of power. In contrast, the understanding of benevolent sexism helps to perceive reactions about this situation of violence, which can happen through neutrality, silence or humor.

Studies on sexism indicate that these two dimensions of Ambivalent Sexism are harmful to women, as they aim to maintain the status quo of gender relations (GLICK; FISKE,

1996, 2001). Although hostile sexism demonstrates a more aggressive form of expression of this prejudice, benevolent sexism, even though it appears to be positive, also brings losses and negative consequences, which makes these expressions of sexism complementary and equivalent to each other (GLICK; FISKE, 2011).

Furthermore, without disregarding the alarming rates of violence and hostile sexism towards women, it is important to highlight that benevolent sexism, due to its content being disguised as care, protection and humor, can be perpetuated and accepted more easily, often being reproduced by women themselves. For Souza (2016), it is necessary to problematize the thoughts and intentions behind benevolent sexism so that it is possible to guarantee women their freedom to be who they want to be and, consequently, preventing them from experiencing, due to gender stereotypes, a fixed and immutable destiny.

Based on what has been exposed, it is clear that analysis based on ambivalent sexism helps to understand the various forms and experiences of prejudice and discrimination that women suffer in their daily lives, whether propagated from violence itself, from sexual objectification, the allocation of spaces, and roles that these women should occupy socially or through humor.

Final considerations

In the present work, it was observed that, although digital social media, such as Facebook, represent advances in human ways of relating and communicating, they can also be tools for the propagation of messages that support different types of violence against women. In this sense, digital social media can contribute to maintaining negative representations of this group, and thus support beliefs, stereotypes and ideologies, as well as dislikes and aversions, which perpetuate serious gender inequalities.

Although research shows that hostile sexism has decreased due to the greater dissemination of laws and social norms aimed at protecting women, in addition to the advances and rights achieved by women, it was noted in the present work that hostile content is still widely shared and accepted. Such content is mainly related to the attempt to control female behavior, the depreciation of their abilities and the objectification of their bodies. This raises questions about the legitimating role of Facebook regarding more hostile content, in view of the possibility of anonymity and distance from the issuer, which can make it an instrument for denying what is politically correct and what is expected in an egalitarian society.

In relation to posts with benevolent content, it is emphasized that this form of sexism is rarely perceived by society due to its apparently positive bias, whether through care, protection, humor and appreciation of a woman's ideal. It is important to emphasize that these sexist manifestations are not configured as a new discourse, but rather, they are characterized as an alternative, an extra option to authorize prejudice against women in contemporary times.

Thus, it is clear that sexism remains difficult to confront, since it is easily disseminated on digital social media, such as Facebook. Such a scenario makes it difficult to change the view regarding the image of women, despite the fact that there are already resistance movements and researches that propose to support the fight against different practices of violence against minority groups. It should also be noted that this gender inequality as a global phenomenon is configured not only in the disparate experiences of access to rights and the exercise of power, but also in the aversion and inferiority to everything that resembles the traditional ideas of what it is to be a woman (BIROLI, 2016).

Thus, it is believed that the present work contributes both to the analysis of a contemporary phenomenon that exists in most Western societies, such as the behavior of individuals in the digital field, and to the analysis of a historical phenomenon of extreme social relevance, such as gender inequality and its numerous consequences. Research on digital social media is important, since this is a space that allows for free expression and is one of the main means of communication today. However, it is important that new studies from this perspective are carried out to understand how sexist behavior manifests itself in other social contexts besides the internet.

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