

# **WOMEN: DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE AND STRUGGLES IN CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present paper delimited as a general objective to analyze the theme of women in relation to discrimination, violence and struggles in contemporary Brazil. This is a qualitative work, with a bibliographic nature, in which we revisit studies that deal with women and their struggles for insertion in the labor market, as well as the current conditions for the insertion of women in the commercial field. The relevance of our study lies in the current condition of women, who, according to the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988), have the same rights as men, and it is necessary to discuss the subject. Given the degree of vulnerability of women in the context of domestic and family violence, it is of paramount importance that studies be developed that focus on ways to protect women against all forms of violence, bringing in their scope a range of possibilities for reflection. Our results pointed to a great scarcity that still exists in work opportunities for women, but despite the great discrimination, violence and struggles, in the twelfth century they have been gaining insertion and representation.

**Keywords:** Women. Discrimination. Violence. Struggles.

## **Introduction**

The present paper delimited as a general objective to analyze the theme of women in relation to work and discrimination, violence and struggles in contemporary Brazil, in which we were engaged in a perspective of combating the existing forms of violence. It is pertinent to remember that during most of the Ancient and Middle Ages women were excluded from social and political nuclei and hence the need to think from a perspective of Inclusion, that is, to observe that public processes have contributed to gender equality.

Thus, its proposal is to analyze and discuss the gestation and development of policies for women and how they have been faced with their inclusion in Brazil. It is necessary to immerse in this historical-social perspective from the perspective of women's insertion in the political and/or ideological field, given that this gender has always been silenced, erased, due to the strong patriarchal perspective that reigned until the middle of the contemporary Age and still tries to create roots in postmodernity. This becomes quite

complicated, since, according to Olinto (2011, p.68), the contribution of women to sectors such as poverty eradication, for example, “is another prominent economic implication, and this argument is based on the idea. that women are primarily responsible for basic tasks related to survival” among which reproduction, feeding and educating their children.

To support the discourses undertaken, we turn to Safiotti (1995; 2004), who examines gender issues and patriarchy embedded in violence against women; to the voices of Carneiro (2003), as well as Bordieu (2012), who analyzes male domination based on the social construction of the concept of gender<sup>1</sup>.

## **Discrimination, violence and struggles faced by women in contemporary Brazil**

It is necessary to recognize that the search for equality and the confrontation of gender inequalities are part of the history of Brazil, which is built in different spaces, by plural women, with different ways of thinking. In public and private spaces, women have been problematizing and questioning the obvious, the rigid norms between the sexes, and are seeking to gradually change the historically unequal power relations between men and women. As Scott (1995, p. 45) ponders, "gender studies only start to be thought of based on the problematization of the social category of the figure of the woman", and this was for a long time one of the main factors for understanding the studies of gender as a study of women.

Violence against women is a phenomenon that occurs constantly throughout history and was introjected as a reflection of natural biological differentiation, essential to the perpetuation of the human species. This understanding built a scenario of male domination, reproducing gender differences that try to erase autonomous female action (MIGUEL; BIROLI, 2014). In this sense, Bordieu states that [...] the entire natural and social order is an arbitrary construction of the biological, and particularly of the male and female body, its uses and functions, especially in biological reproduction, which gives an apparently natural foundation to the androcentric vision of division of sex work and the sexual division of labor and, from there, of the entire cosmos. The particular strength of male sociodicy comes from the fact that it accumulates and condenses two operations: it legitimizes a relationship of domination by inscribing it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction. (BOURDIEU, 2012, p. 33)

As Werneck points out, these women “have as their main anchor the fight against the violence of annihilation – racist, heterosexist and Eurocentric – with a view to guaranteeing our active participation” (WERNECK, 2010, p. 4). This active participation takes place concretely in the agency of living conditions and also by the unity of the group to which they are linked.

Barsted (2011) registers that the concept of violence against women must always be analyzed together with the notion of discrimination against women, as discussed in the 1975 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and ratified by UN Resolution No. 19:

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on sex and whose object or result is to harm or nullify the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, by women, regardless of their marital status, based on the equality of men and women, human rights and freedoms fundamental in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil field or in any other field (...) discrimination against women violates the principles of equal rights and

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<sup>1</sup> When we think about a small mapping of this research, we can subdivide it as follows: 1) Discrimination, violence and struggles faced by women in contemporary Brazil, in which a discussion is drawn around these dialogic axes. 2) Women's struggles for a place of recognition where the legitimacy gained thanks to their efforts and a lot of struggle is at stake. Final considerations and references..

respect for human dignity, hinders the participation of women, under the same conditions that men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their country, constitute an obstacle to increasing the well-being of society and the family and hinder the full development of women's potential to serve their country and humanity ( UNITED NATIONS, 1992).

We turn to Curiel (2010), for whom new possible spaces for the construction of collective action policies have been configured, in which women are acting from the perspective of confrontation in their discourses and practices, in the production of knowledge from experiences and experiences diverse, narratives and concrete situations.

According to Araújo et al. (2004), the predominant factor for men's continued violence against women is the gender ideology, which legitimizes male domination and female submission. There are numerous and varied reasons why women remain in relationships in a context of violence, often without denouncing the aggressors, but the issue of gender is a constant that permeates them all, such as emotional and financial dependence, a feeling of lack of perspective and helplessness, valuing the family unit, altruism in relation to the children, romanticizing the relationship, hope for change, lack of support from the family and society, among others.

In this context, Bourdieu asserts that

The androcentric view is thus continuously legitimized by the very practices it determines: because its dispositions result from the incorporation of the unfavorable prejudice against the feminine, established in the order of things, women cannot but confirm such prejudice continually (BOURDIEU, 2012 p. 44 ).

Thus, we have a scenario in which women themselves incorporate and reproduce the prejudices of which they are victims. This is largely, according to Silva (2010), attributed to the crystallization of an understanding that the right should be at the service of men, understood as the strongest, and the way in which it fostered and shaped these prejudices against females. . That said,

As violence against women is an essential phenomenon to gender inequality, it is not only a social product, but also the foundation of this patriarchal society, which is based on relations of domination and submission. In this way, it cannot be understood only as physical violence, but as a rupture in any form of woman's integrity: physical, psychological, sexual, moral<sup>5</sup>, regardless of the environment in which it occurs, including the public and private spaces. It can, therefore, be characterized by the space where the relationships between the aggressor and the victim are established, such as school, domestic, intra-family violence – even though these categories include other types of violence that are not against women (CUNHA, 2014, p.151)

However, it is necessary to recognize the political effect of domestic violence. Bodily injuries, attempted murder and homicides committed by husbands or partners are undoubtedly the most dramatic and convincing expressions of the oppression that women are victims of and the importance of the work of institutions aimed at punitive measures or procedures to protect victims (DEBERT; GREGORI, 2008, p.170)

About this, according to Safiotti (2004), it becomes almost impossible for a woman to be able to free herself from the aggressor without external help. As this is an affective relationship, a series of interdependencies are developed between the actors involved.

## **Women's Struggles for a Place of Recognition**

Through the political sector, women become subjects of their own social trajectories. It is necessary to recognize that “[...] this legitimacy was achieved thanks to the commitment and combativeness of a handful of feminist researchers (COSTA, 1994, p. 404). Costa (1994) points out that, from the 1980s onwards, actions involving women have become even more diversified:

Migration, urbanization, increased participation in modern sectors of the economy, higher levels of schooling, diffusion of the mass media, a drop in the fertility rate, radically alter traditional relations between the sexes, creating questions and new demands. There is a strong expansion of the higher education system, and the contingent of female students equals that of males; women recover from a historical educational deficit, but concentrate preferentially on certain careers, such as the humanities, maintaining segregation. The increase in the level of education for women leads a good number of them to feminist mobilizations, as well as qualifying them for academic production in the human sciences, the preferential niche where women's studies came to be inserted (COSTA, 1994, p. 402).

This means that the 20th century becomes a milestone in the perspective of women's ascension and recognition as an active, responsible and socially empowered being. At no time does this delegitimize men, but it makes us rethink the legitimacy of women in the social sphere, as those who were excluded start to reach important positions in society. According to Probst (2005, p. 6),

The woman has gone from being just a part of the family to becoming her commander in some situations. Therefore, this entry into the market is a victory. The process is slow but solid. Another peculiarity that accompanies the woman is her “third journey”. Usually, in addition to carrying out her duties at the company, she needs to take care of the housework. This happens in almost 90% of cases. In a decade, the number of women responsible for Brazilian households increased from 18.1% to 24.9%, according to data from the survey “Profile of Women Responsible for Households in Brazil”, developed by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE ).

This allows us to state that the increase in the level of female education does not ensure women equal employment conditions and rise in the world of work in relation to men (Cf. BRUSCHINI et. al. 2011). Mendes and Milani (2016, p. 189) also mention on the issue of education:

The growth in the percentage of occupied Mb [White women] occurred in all regions, in the main occupation positions. This proves the interference of higher education in the insertion of this group in the labor market. Likewise, in the comparison between the four Censuses, Mn [Black Women] are still over-represented in the occupation of domestic worker.

In view of this scenario, it is observed that the drop in the participation of domestic workers can be an indication of the growth of opportunities for the segment in other sectors. Furthermore, the increase in education, even if it is the conclusion of Elementary/High School, allows greater mobility of the worker to other occupations of gain. On the other hand, non-completion or low education can make it difficult for them to get out of precariousness.

The issue of the fight to combat inequality, according to the authors, finds clashes and obstacles that reveal an effect of negligence and/or silencing within the very movement that makes the struggle of women secondary. This is due to another effect: the homogenization of the population in the ideal of masculinity as correct, by thinking of man as a single population organism or monolithic framework that comprises humanity and the revelation of the truth.

Campos' (2011) narrative, in this sense, assures that in about forty years of struggles by feminist movements in Brazil, we can feel plausible and significant achievements in Brazilian legislation regarding the protection of women against violence.

## **Research Methodological Procedures**

Bibliographic and documentary research was used as a methodology, since, in addition to studying some existing works on the subject, such as *Women in motion* (CARNEIRO, 2003) and *The inclusion of women in science and technology careers in Brazil* (OLINTO, 2011).

As for the type of research, from the point of view of its nature: it is an applied research, because, through the literature review on the conditions of the gender woman, we aim to generate knowledge for practical applications and the problematization of specific issues. From the point of view of objectives, exploratory research: aims to provide greater familiarity in dealing with attempts at female inferiority. In this sense, with regard to the research process, Gil (2007) refers to research that can be defined as “A rational and systematic procedure that aims to provide answers to the problems that are proposed. The research is developed through a process consisting of several phases, from the formulation of the problem to the presentation and discussion of results” (GIL, 2007, p. 17).

As for the approach of our research, the chosen one was qualitative, whose characteristic is the qualification of the data collected, during data collection and analysis, that is, as we investigate women, we mapped the problem of their insertion in contemporaneity. . Thus, Qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representation, but rather with deepening the understanding of a social group, an organization, etc. Researchers who adopt the qualitative approach are opposed to the assumption that defends a single research model for all sciences, since the social sciences have their specificity, which presupposes their own methodology. Thus, qualitative researchers reject the positivist model applied to the study of social life, since the researcher cannot make judgments or allow his or her prejudices and beliefs to contaminate the research (GOLDENBERG, 1997, p. 34).

By conditioning the qualitative approach, we seek to understand the phenomena that involve the effectiveness of women's actions in contemporary society. It is necessary to take into account that the Brazilian contemporaneity, it has been seen that women and men have dedicated themselves a lot to build a more egalitarian world, respecting different sexual orientations. However, such efforts have not been enough for us to think about an alteritarian and inclusive society. In Olinto's perception,

The focus on women's performance in science introduces complex aspects. International evidence suggests that there are productivity differences favoring men. However, these differences tend to focus on the early stage of the scientific career. Women start to show more professional vigor than men at a later

stage, when men's careers tend to stabilize and theirs acquires more breath and tends to grow (OLINTO, 2011, p. 70).

Thus, the research, being bibliographical, was chosen in the light of the concepts of the main authors who dealt with the theme of women and the current confrontation of women with regard to inclusion.

## **Final considerations**

Through this embryonic research, we believe we have fulfilled our general objective, which was to analyze the issue of women in relation to discrimination, violence and struggles in contemporary Brazil. This is a qualitative work, with a bibliographic nature, in which we revisit studies that deal with women and their struggles.

The relevance of our study lies in the current condition of women, who, according to the Brazilian Federal Constitution, have the same rights as men, and it is necessary to discuss the subject. Our results pointed to the fact that, despite the struggle and resistance being significant among women, they have been gaining insertion and representation in the social environment. We hope that this research can contribute to studies and research in the area as well as movement scholars using history as a tool for the development of innovative research in Brazil on the condition of women.

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