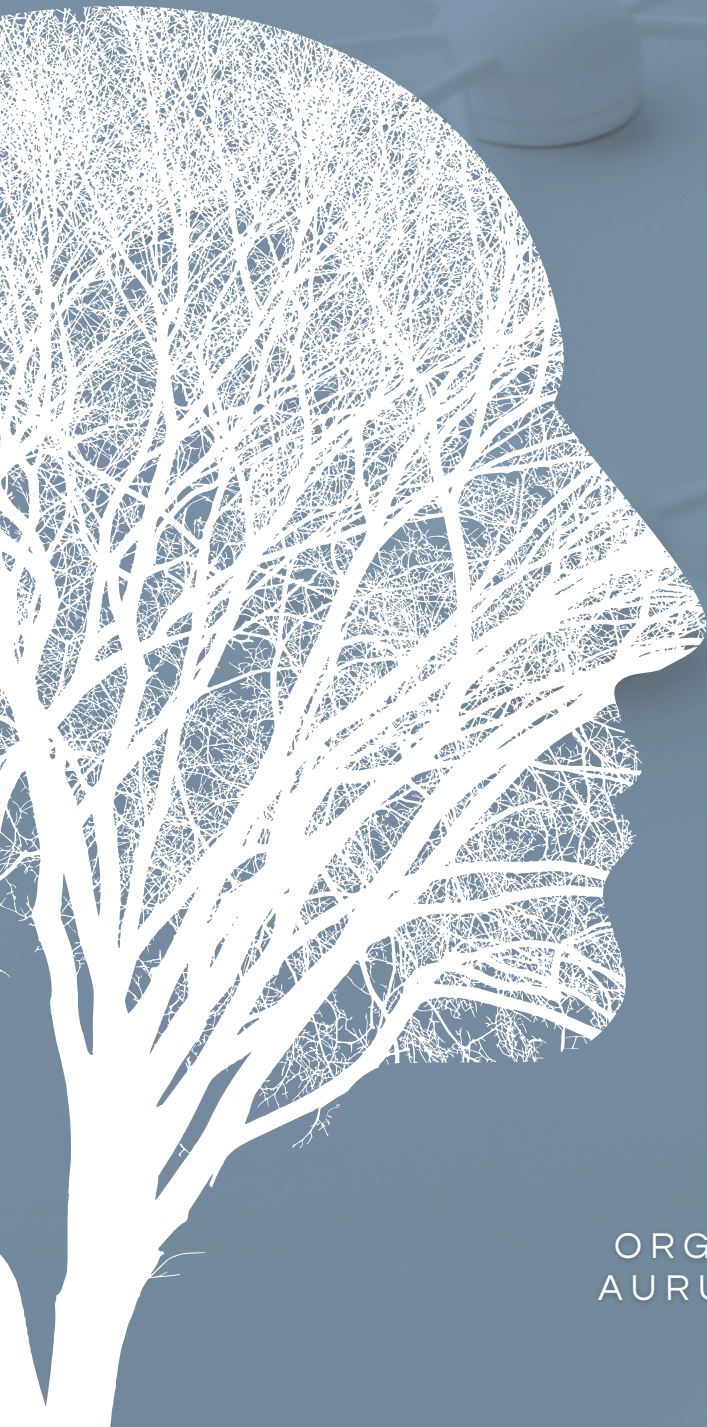# AURUM
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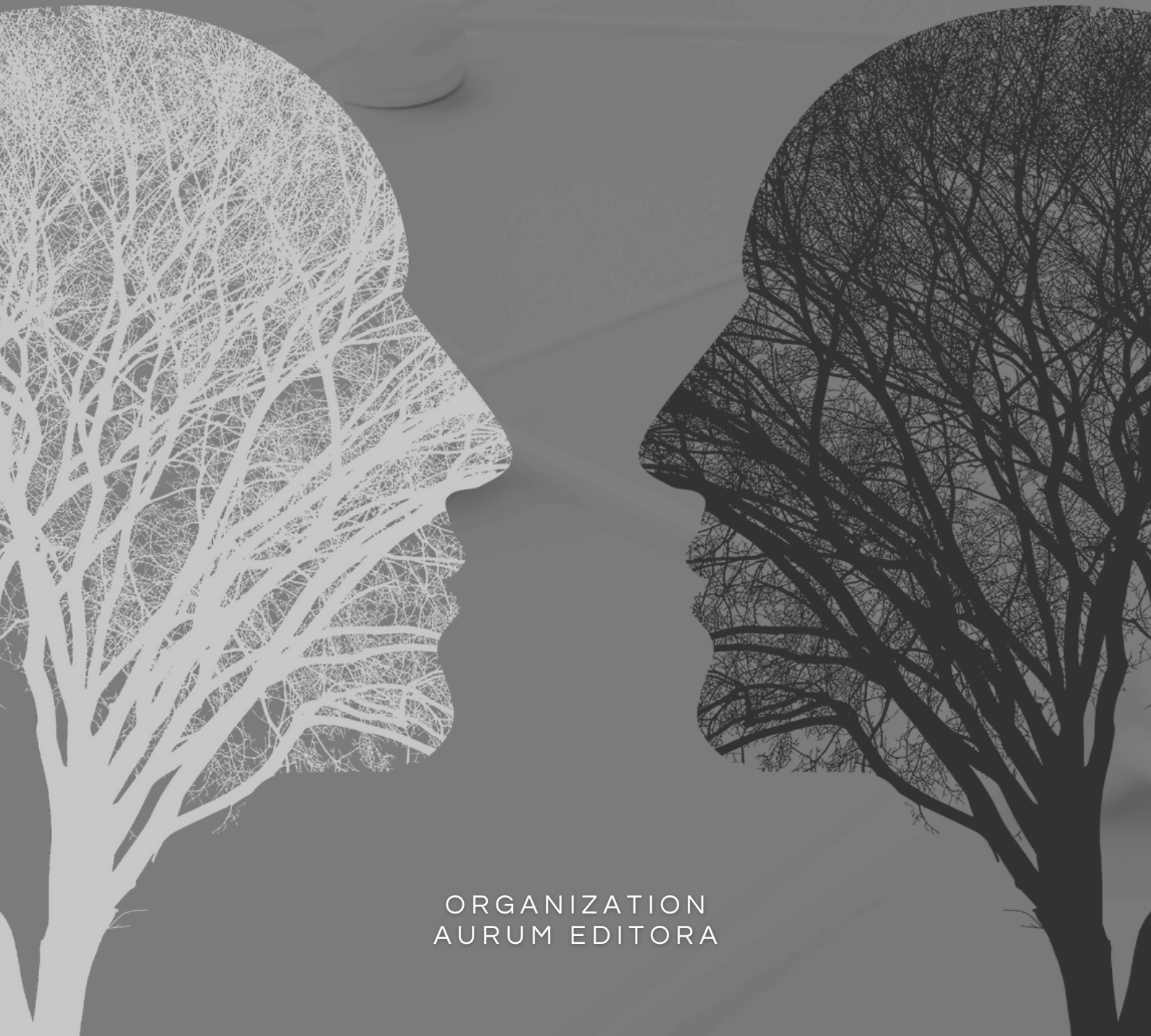
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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INFORMATION (UDI) IN DIGITAL LIBRARIES: PRINCIPLES, MODELS, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Fabiana de Oliveira Silva[1], Sarah Cristina Maria Ferreira[2] and Nelson Marcos Ferreira[3]

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines Universal Design for Information (UDI) as a fundamental paradigm for promoting inclusion, accessibility, and Informational Justice in digital libraries. Through a theoretical and conceptual approach, it analyzes the evolution of UDI and its articulation with human rights, accessibility policies, critical information literacy, and digital curation. Digital libraries are understood as sociotechnical environments in which technological, cultural, and organizational elements directly influence equity in access to knowledge. By discussing principles such as equity of access, simplicity, flexibility, perceptibility of information, and tolerance for error, the chapter highlights how these elements strengthen users' informational autonomy. It also addresses the role of inclusive metadata, interoperability, and international standards (WCAG, Dublin Core, Schema.org, FAIR/IDEIA, ISO 16363) in building accessible digital ecosystems. International reference models and structural and epistemological challenges faced by Brazilian institutions are examined, followed by practical recommendations for institutional repositories and Federal Network libraries. The chapter concludes that UDI transcends technical aspects, constituting an ethical and educational commitment that positions digital libraries as key environments for democratizing knowledge and fostering citizenship.

Keywords: Universal Design for Information; Accessibility; Digital inclusion; Informational justice; Digital libraries.

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INTRODUCTION

The accelerated transition from physical libraries to digital environments has brought significant progress in access to knowledge, but it has also exposed historical inequalities related to how different subjects interact with information systems. Although it is argued that digitization has broadened access, it has not, by itself, ensured effective conditions of use, comprehension, participation, and social appropriation of information.

Informational accessibility, understood as a human right, continues to be traversed by cognitive, technological, sensory, semantic, and sociocultural barriers that tend to intensify in digital environments not built under inclusive principles. In this context, Universal Design for Information (UDI) emerges as a contemporary and indispensable paradigm aimed at creating information systems that consider human diversity from their very conception.

The idea that information constitutes a public good, and that access to it is a structuring component of citizenship, implies recognizing that informational exclusion is also social exclusion. This perspective is conceptually close to Informational Justice, whose centrality lies in guaranteeing equitable conditions of access, participation, and the capacity for critical use of information, ensuring that no group is rendered invisible or left at the margins of cultural, educational, and technological practices.

In digital libraries—especially institutional repositories, university libraries, and scientific databases—the implementation of UDI becomes a strategic element not only for reducing inequalities but also for strengthening practices of digital curation, preservation, and ethical mediation of information.

Thus, this chapter analyzes the foundations, applications, and challenges of Universal Design for Information in digital libraries, discussing how this paradigm is articulated with accessibility, inclusion, and Informational Justice. The approach considers both the technical and the epistemological dimensions of UDI, discussing structuring principles, implementation models, inclusive metadata practices, institutional policies, and potentialities for Vocational and Technological Education (VTE). To this end, it engages with authors who problematize informational complexity (Lévy, 1999), sociotechnical apparatuses (Deleuze, 1992), critical mediation of information (Gasque, 2012; Campello, 2009; Dudziak, 2017), and digital preservation (Sayão, 2010; Alves; Tartarotti; Fujita, 2020), linking such reflections to international recommendations such as WCAG, FAIR/IDEIA, ISO 16363, UNESCO (2023), and the SDGs of Agenda 2030.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INFORMATION

The concept of Universal Design, originally formulated in the field of architecture by Ronald Mace, proposed that physical environments be planned to serve all individuals, regardless of their motor, sensory, or cognitive abilities. Over the past decades, this conception has expanded to digital

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technologies, resulting in developments such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Information (UDI).

In the informational context, UDI encompasses the creation of systems that, from their initial planning, consider human diversity, allowing multiple forms of perception, comprehension, and interaction with information.

The philosophical basis of UDI is aligned with an inclusive vision of society, grounded in principles of human rights and in the understanding of information as a public good. The perspectives of the UN and UNESCO on accessibility and social participation indicate that digital environments that exclude certain groups reinforce structures of inequality (UNESCO, 2023). Thus, the application of UDI in digital libraries goes beyond the technical domain, constituting a political, ethical, and educational act.

Moreover, UDI dialogues with conceptions of informational mediation present in the fields of Librarianship and Information Science. Mediation—understood as a process involving interaction, interpretation, and construction of meaning—presupposes that subjects relate to information based on different cultural and cognitive repertoires. Gasque (2012) and Campello (2009) indicate that information literacy does not reduce to instrumental mastery; it demands the creation of conditions for critical autonomy, for the capacity to judge sources, interpret discourses, and understand structures of power. When the design of an information system prevents certain groups from accessing or comprehending content, this mediation process is disrupted, reinforcing epistemic inequalities.

Thus, UDI constitutes a natural extension of critical mediation, insofar as it enables digital libraries to be configured as inclusive spaces capable of accommodating people with different conditions of vision, hearing, cognition, digital literacy, cultural repertoires, and levels of informational autonomy. It is also connected to digital curation, in that preservation, description, dissemination, and use of digital objects are fully realized only when accessible to all.

DIGITAL LIBRARIES AS SOCIOTECHNICAL ENVIRONMENTS

Understanding digital libraries as sociotechnical environments makes it clear that they are not merely neutral repositories of documents but complex systems in which technologies, subjects, policies, languages, and cultural practices are intertwined. Deleuze (1992) argues that modern institutions configure technologies of power that shape modes of existence, which allows us to understand the digital library as a space of disputes, technical choices, and social responsibilities.

Within this sociotechnical ecosystem, UDI not only expands accessibility but repositions the library as an institution that promotes equity and citizenship. By becoming accessible, it reduces power asymmetries and contributes to the exercise of Human Rights, reinforcing transparency, public access to information, and democratic participation. Agenda 2030—especially SDGs 4 (quality education), 9

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(resilient infrastructure and innovation), 10 (reduction of inequalities), 16 (effective and inclusive institutions), and 17 (partnerships)—strengthens this alignment by recognizing the role of information in building fairer societies.

UDI is also articulated with Open Science, whose fundamental principle is that the results of scientific production—data, articles, software, methodologies—must be accessible, reusable, and comprehensible to all. However, as Pinfield et al. (2015) point out, openness does not automatically equate to inclusion: without cognitive, technical, and semantic accessibility, vulnerable populations remain excluded.

Thus, digital libraries become strategic environments for articulating UDI and Open Science, strengthening practices of digital inclusion, collaborative curation, and citizen participation.

PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INFORMATION APPLIED TO DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Incorporating UDI into digital libraries involves adopting specific principles that guide the design of accessible, equitable, and intuitive information systems. When applied to the library context, such environments should offer multiple forms of navigation, interaction, and appropriation of content.

The principle of equity of access requires that all users be able to use the digital library under equivalent conditions, regardless of disability, age, digital literacy, or technological circumstances. This includes compatibility with screen readers, keyboard navigation, alternative descriptions, adequate contrasts, and straightforward navigation paths.

Flexibility of use refers to the capacity of the digital library to adapt to different user profiles and modes of interaction, allowing, for example, enlargement of fonts, interface personalization, use of textual and audiovisual versions, and offering content in multiple formats.

Simplicity and intuitiveness involve minimizing unnecessary complexities and reducing cognitive load, which benefits both persons with disabilities and users who are new to the digital environment.

Perceptible information means that all content must be presented in formats detectable by people with different sensory abilities, ensuring communicative equivalence.

Tolerance for error implies creating interfaces that prevent failures and assist in recovering from mistaken actions, especially in search systems, forms, and downloads.

Low physical and cognitive effort promotes interfaces that do not require precise movements, manual strength, or complex reasoning for simple actions.

Finally, accessible dimensions and spaces—transposed to the digital realm—refer to designing interfaces compatible with multiple devices, with appropriately sized buttons and clickable areas, ensuring comfort and efficiency.

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When incorporated simultaneously, these principles constitute the foundation of a truly inclusive digital library.

INTEROPERABILITY, METADATA, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Informational accessibility depends not only on the interface but also on the quality of descriptive and technical metadata. The description of a digital object determines how it will be found, interpreted, and reused. Therefore, inclusive metadata will become an essential strategy for UDI.

Standards such as Dublin Core, MARC, RDA, Schema.org, and DataCite can incorporate properties aimed at accessibility, such as alternative text, audio description, transcription, identification of language, format, extent, cognitive accessibility, and type of mediation.

Furthermore, descriptions sensitive to linguistic and cultural diversity help reduce biases and discriminatory representations. As Lyman and Varian (2003) indicate, the information explosion makes it urgent to adopt standards that allow relevant information to be located without increasing inequalities of visibility.

Interoperability—an organizing axis of Open Science—is also related to UDI. Interoperable systems enable digital objects to circulate across different platforms, reaching diverse audiences. Without accessibility standards, however, this circulation becomes limited. Thus, digital libraries that wish to integrate networks such as RCAAP, OpenAIRE, LA Referencia, or SciELO need to incorporate accessible metadata, ensuring equity in the use of information.

MODELS AND GOOD PRACTICES OF UDI IN DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Some international institutions offer inspiring models for applying UDI. Europeana, for example, adopts standards of inclusive cultural description and provides automated accessibility tools. The UN develops multilingual, intuitive digital libraries with accessible metadata and guidelines for cultural diversity. Arca (FIOCRUZ) stands out for the clarity of its interface and the quality of its description, adopting accessibility policies within the scope of health. RepositóriUM (UMINHO) has developed digital inclusion functionalities aligned with the RCAAP ecosystem.

These models show that incorporating UDI is not an isolated action, but a continuous process that involves institutional policies, team development, technical reviews, and an organizational culture oriented toward equity..

STRUCTURAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Implementing UDI faces significant structural barriers. Many digital libraries lack accessibility policies, specialized teams, or technological resources to redesign their systems. The absence of

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institutional regulations, combined with a lack of political recognition of accessibility as a right, compromises progress.

There are also epistemological challenges: the information field has historically rendered invisible vulnerable groups—persons with disabilities, traditional communities, peripheral populations, subjects with low digital literacy. Digital libraries designed under an exclusively technocratic logic tend to reproduce these exclusions, reinforcing epistemic hierarchies.

Informational Justice, in this sense, constitutes a fundamental horizon. It requires that digital libraries problematize structuring inequalities and adopt practices that guarantee not only access but the effective participation of all in the construction, circulation, and appropriation of information..

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR BRAZILIAN LIBRARIES AND INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES

Incorporating the principles of Universal Design for Information (UDI) into Brazilian libraries and institutional repositories requires a strategic, systemic, and interdisciplinary approach capable of transforming not only informational products but also the processes of curation, mediation, and information management. In the national context—especially in public teaching and research institutions—adopting UDI implies building institutional policies that ensure informational accessibility as a right, an ethical commitment, and a structuring component of digital governance.

In this regard, the initial need to develop formal policies for informational accessibility stands out, defining responsibilities, workflows, and minimum standards to be met by different sectors of the institution. Reviewing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for digital curation thus becomes an essential step, as it makes it possible to incorporate specific UDI guidelines into processes of ingest, processing, preservation, and dissemination of digital content. This review should dialogue with national regulatory frameworks, Open Science guidelines, and international accessibility directives, strengthening an institutional culture of inclusion.

Another fundamental action involves mapping technological, communicational, and cognitive barriers that hinder diverse audiences from accessing digital content. This diagnosis guides more precise interventions, such as adapting interfaces, choosing accessible formats, and implementing assistive resources. For this, it is essential to invest in the continuing education of librarians, faculty, IT teams, and other professionals involved, articulating technical, pedagogical, and sociocultural competencies for a practice more attuned to diversity.

The technical dimension of UDI also requires attention to the incorporation of accessibility metadata into the records of repositories and digital libraries, which favors the discovery of accessible materials and improves interoperability among systems. Complementarily, it is recommended to develop

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ingest checklists that include validations of audio description, captions, alternative texts, contrasts, navigability, and other elements essential to equitable access to information.

Continuous evaluation of interfaces is likewise indispensable. This evaluation should involve users with different profiles and conditions, making it possible to identify weaknesses and guide iterative improvements. Moreover, the adoption of UDI can be strengthened by articulation with the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDGs 4, 9, 10, and 16) and with Open Science agendas, reinforcing its strategic, institutional, and social character.

Within the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education, integrating UDI into Vocational and Technological Education (VTE) presents even broader opportunities. Libraries can promote workshops on inclusive information literacy, critical training in curation and cultural mediation, as well as technological accessibility projects that involve students, faculty, and support teams.

These actions strengthen libraries and repositories as spaces for learning, citizenship, and innovation, aligned with the public mission of democratizing knowledge.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Universal Design for Information is consolidated as an essential paradigm for digital libraries committed to equity, citizenship, and social justice. By incorporating principles of accessibility, flexibility, simplicity, tolerance for error, and cultural diversity, UDI broadens the social reach of information, strengthens critical mediation, and reduces historical inequalities in access.

More than a technical guideline, UDI constitutes an ethical commitment that repositions digital libraries as sociotechnical environments of transformation, dialogue, and democratic participation. Its adoption strengthens Open Science, Vocational and Technological Education, Human Rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals—especially those related to inclusion, innovation, and justice.

Thus, promoting Universal Design for Information is to promote Informational Justice. It is to recognize that the true democratization of knowledge is not achieved solely through the availability of digital content, but through guaranteeing that all people can understand, use, and reinvent such content as part of their social, educational, and cultural trajectories. It is within this horizon that Brazilian libraries and institutional repositories find their contemporary mission: to be accessible, critical, welcoming, and, above all, profoundly human spaces..

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CHAPTER 2

ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY REINTERPRETATION OF LAW AND THE 2030 AGENDA: SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY AND RACIAL CHALLENGES IN THE BRAZILIAN REALITY

Eliane Maria Octaviano Martins[1] and Khayam Ramalho da Silva Sousa[2]

ABSTRACT

This article examines the intersectionality between race and gender in the Brazilian legal context, emphasizing the enforcement of fundamental rights of the Black population in light of the 1988 Federal Constitution and Brazil's commitments to the UN 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, and 16. Although formal equality is provided for in the constitutional text, achieving substantive equality remains a challenge since structural racism and sexism are intertwined and often reproduced by legal institutions themselves. The hypothesis is that intersectionality cannot be treated as isolated categories but as simultaneous dimensions of oppression that require legal interpretation committed to social justice and transforming discriminatory structures. Based on bibliographic review, legal hermeneutics, and documentary analysis, the study highlights the importance of anti-racist institutional practices and the role of affirmative actions, such as the quota system, in expanding Black people's access to higher education and power spaces. However, these policies still face resistance and have limited implementation in the private sector, demonstrating the need for broader, collaborative, and continuous strategies. The article argues that tackling structural racism requires not only normative advances but also training processes and intersectoral policies capable of promoting an inclusive, democratic institutional culture aligned with sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Intersectionality; Substantive equality; Structural racism; Affirmative actions; 2030 Agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1988 Federal Constitution enshrines equality between men and women and guarantees protection against any form of discrimination. However, the realization of these rights encounters obstacles arising from structural inequalities that permeate Brazilian society, especially when simultaneous discriminations based on race and gender are taken into account. These challenges reveal the need for a constitutional reading committed to the promotion of substantive equality, aligned with international human rights guidelines.

In this context, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, establishes specific targets aimed at reducing inequalities, promoting gender equality, and confronting structural racism.

Thus, objectives such as SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) reinforce the responsibility of States to adopt policies and legal interpretations that ensure effective protection against discrimination, including in its intersectional dimension. In this way, the 2030 Agenda operates as an international normative framework that complements and guides the realization of the fundamental rights provided for in the 1988 Constitution.

The central problem of this study consists in analyzing the extent to which Brazilian constitutional foundations provide adequate protection against multiple discriminations arising from the intersectionality between race and gender, observing the convergence among Brazilian constitutional law, anti-discrimination law, and the commitments assumed by Brazil under the 2030 Agenda. The aim is to understand how the Judiciary, public policies, and state institutions have been responding to these demands and what gaps persist in the enforcement of the fundamental rights of Black people.

The study proceeds from the hypothesis that intersectionality requires an integrated constitutional interpretation capable of recognizing the multiple forms of oppression that disproportionately affect Black women. The adoption of a hermeneutic oriented by the objectives of the 2030 Agenda helps to strengthen inclusive public policies, expand institutional capacity to confront structural inequalities, and promote the realization of substantive equality.

The methodology employed is based on bibliographic review, constitutional hermeneutics, and documentary analysis, with the aim of understanding the normative, institutional, and theoretical treatment afforded to intersectional discrimination in Brazil, in light of national and international commitments to the promotion of human rights.

INTERSECTIONALITY AS A TOOL FOR ANALYZING STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES

The term "intersectionality" has gained broad prominence in gender studies over recent decades and is widely recognized as a critical social theory, an analytical category, and a legal model. Although

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the concept has deeper roots, its consolidated theoretical formulation dates back to the Black Feminism movement in the United States, particularly in the late 1970s, with emphasis on the year 1977.

According to Hirata (2014, p. 62)[3], the extensive bibliographic production—initially in English and, more recently, also in French—identifies the first use of the term "intersectionality" in an article by the African-American jurist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, published in 1989.

In that seminal text, the author employs the concept to highlight the interdependence of power structures based on race, gender, and class, proposing a new way of understanding the multiple forms of subordination that specifically affect Black women. From the category of intersectionality, Crenshaw (1994)[4] concentrates her analysis above all on the intersections between race and gender, addressing in a complementary—though peripheral—manner other social markers such as class and sexuality, which, according to the author, also contribute to structuring the experiences of Black women.

Intersectionality, in this sense, does not purport to be a totalizing theory of identity, but rather an analytical tool aimed at understanding multiple sources of subordination and social exclusion. The work proposes a conceptual division of intersectionality into two complementary dimensions: structural intersectionality, which refers to the position of Black women at the overlap of race and gender and to the consequences of this condition for experiences of domestic and sexual violence, as well as for institutional responses to these forms of violence; and political intersectionality, which concerns the limitations of traditional feminist and anti-racist agendas that often neglect or marginalize the specific situation of Black women, especially with regard to racialized gender violence.

By contrast, the understanding of intersectionality from Sueli Carneiro's perspective is deeply rooted in the Brazilian social context and in the concrete lived experiences of Black women. Although she does not adopt an identical theoretical structure to that systematized by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, Carneiro (2003)[5] elaborates and applies the concept in a critical and situated manner, articulating the markers of race, gender, and class as inseparable elements of the dynamics of exclusion and subalternization. For the author, the experience of Black women reveals that gender inequalities cannot be analyzed in isolation, since they are intertwined with structural racism, which not only defines the possibilities of existence but also the modes of oppression to which these women are subjected.

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[3] HIRATA, Helena. Gênero, classe e raça: Interseccionalidade e consubstancialidade das relações sociais. Tempo Social, vol. 26, 2014.
[4] CRENSHAW, Kimberlé W. Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. In: FINEMAN, Martha Albertson; MYKITIUK, Roxanne (orgs.). The public nature of private violence. Nova York: Routledge, 1994. p. 93-118.
[5] CARNEIRO, Sueli. Enegrecer o feminismo: a situação da mulher negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero. In: RACISMOS CONTEMPORÂNEOS. Revista Estudos Avançados, v. 17, n. 49, p. 49–58, 2003.

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In this regard, Carneiro (2003)[6] argues that the condition of Black women is marked by a dual oppression—of race and of gender—that must be understood as intertwined and interdependent, rather than as additive or parallel instances of discrimination. In Brazil, the social structure is deeply marked by historical inequalities that manifest through the systematic exclusion of certain social groups, particularly Black people, women, and individuals in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability. These groups, even when possessing professional qualifications, face significant obstacles in the labor market, which translate into fewer opportunities for insertion, lower remuneration, restricted professional mobility, and a high rate of informality.

As Santos (2009)[7], points out, Brazilian society is traversed by "structural racism" that naturalizes inequality and prevents social rights from being realized equitably. In the same vein, Silva (2018)[8] argues that the intersection of race, gender, and class operates as a mechanism of exclusion that restricts these subjects' access to positions of power and prestige, even when they possess competencies equivalent to or superior to those of their privileged peers.

It is therefore not merely a matter of individual or conjunctural failure, but of a system that reproduces structural inequalities through discriminatory criteria disguised as meritocracy, as Carneiro (2003) analyzes when highlighting that racism, articulated with sexism, profoundly limits the possibilities of social ascension for Black women.

Within this context, intersectionality constitutes an essential theoretical-methodological tool for the critical analysis of Law, particularly in its capacity to reveal how ostensibly neutral legal structures can reproduce and legitimize historical inequalities. By failing to recognize the particularities of Black women, for example, the legal system tends to operate under a universalist logic that ignores the specificities of oppression experienced by socially subalternized groups.

As Ribeiro (2017)[9], observes, Brazilian law still resists the incorporation of intersectional analytical categories, preferring solutions that treat subjects as homogeneous and decontextualized. This results in the perpetuation of a normative model that, instead of correcting inequalities, often reinforces them, especially when it disregards how race, gender, and class interact in producing exclusion.

The centrality of intersectionality in confronting structural inequalities also becomes evident in the formulation and application of public policies. In the Brazilian case, affirmative policies such as racial quotas in higher education and in public service examinations are concrete measures that seek to mitigate

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[6] CARNEIRO, Sueli. Enegrecer o feminismo: a situação da mulher negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero. In: RACISMOS CONTEMPORÂNEOS. Revista Estudos Avançados, v. 17, n. 49, p. 49–58, 2003.
[7] SANTOS, Juarez. Racismo estrutural e desigualdade no mercado de trabalho. Revista Jurídica, v. 15, n. 2, p. 45–67, 2009.
[8] SILVA, Juliana Teixeira. Discriminação interseccional no Brasil: desafios para a efetivação dos direitos fundamentais. Revista Brasileira de Direitos Fundamentais, v. 6, n. 1, p. 89–110, 2018.
[9] RIBEIRO, Djamila. Quem tem medo do feminismo negro?. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2017.

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the historical effects of racism and sexism. Nevertheless, such policies still encounter resistance and are constantly attacked by arguments based on a false notion of formal equality that disregards the material inequalities accumulated over centuries of exclusion.

According to Gomes (2012)[10], the effectiveness of affirmative actions requires an intersectional approach that recognizes the complexity of social inequalities and operates on multiple fronts—including education, the labor market, health, and justice. By articulating race, gender, and class as structuring dimensions of exclusion, intersectionality enables these public policies not only to promote inclusion but also to alter the institutional logics that sustain inequality.

As Akotirene (2019)[11], argues, the intersectional paradigm is not merely a theoretical resource but a political commitment to social justice, demanding that institutions operate from a perspective attuned to the multiple overlapping forms of oppression. Therefore, for the Brazilian State to advance in the realization of a substantive democracy, it is indispensable to incorporate intersectionality as a guiding principle of its policies, legislation, and judicial decisions.

Finally, adopting an intersectional approach in the legal field and in public policies represents a fundamental step toward the realization of human rights in Brazil. It entails recognizing that access to full citizenship does not occur in an equal manner for all social groups, and that Black women, in particular, have historically occupied a marginalized position in the spheres of power, justice, and institutional representation.

THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN DIGNITY AS A CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

It is undeniable that the 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (CRFB/88) represents the highest normative framework of the national legal order, guiding not only infraconstitutional legislative production but also the interpretation and application of legal norms in general.

At this juncture, as Silva (2005, p. 51)[12] teaches, the Constitution is the "fundamental legal-political document that organizes the State, defines its powers, and establishes the fundamental rights and guarantees of individuals."

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[10] GOMES, Joaquim B. Barbosa. Ação afirmativa & princípio constitucional da igualdade: o direito como instrumento de transformação social. Rio de Janeiro: Renovar, 2012.
[11] AKOTIRENE, Carla. Interseccionalidade. São Paulo: Sueli Carneiro: Pólen, 2019.
[12] SILVA, José Afonso da. Curso de direito constitucional positivo. 25. ed. São Paulo: Malheiros, 2005.

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As Iotti (2023)[13], observes in reflecting on the constitutional project of 1988, the Constitution should not be understood merely as a political document aimed at organizing the State and apportioning competencies, but rather as "a nation-building project, as a fundamental commitment of a community of persons who recognize one another as reciprocally free and equal."

The Magna Carta must be understood as the supreme norm endowed with full normative force, in the terms set forth by Konrad Hesse (1991)[14], who asserts that the Constitution bears a "will to Constitution," whose effective legal meaning demands realization by public authorities. Thus, the 1988 Constitution not only structures the powers of the State but, above all, enshrines a societal project founded on the values of human dignity, liberty, and material equality.

In Article 1, item III, human dignity is expressly listed as one of the foundations of the Federative Republic of Brazil. This guiding principle holds the status of a source-value of the entire constitutional system, functioning as the interpretive axis of all fundamental rights. As Barroso (2013, p. 129)[15], emphasizes, "human dignity constitutes the axiological core of the Brazilian constitutional order," serving as an essential parameter for the formulation of public policies and judicial decisions.

Recognizing human dignity as a constitutional foundation translates into an ethical and legal commitment of the Brazilian State to protect individual and collective rights. In this way, human dignity projects itself onto all legal relations, guiding the Judiciary's action in resolving everyday conflicts. For Sarlet (2012, p. 63)[16], dignity is "the intrinsic and distinctive quality of each human being that makes them deserving of the same respect and consideration by the State and society."

Therefore, by expressly enshrining human dignity as a foundation of the Republic, the 1988 Constitution not only reaffirms the centrality of fundamental rights within the Brazilian legal system but also imposes upon state entities the duty to ensure minimum conditions for a just, fraternal, and materially equal existence.

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[13] IOTTI, Paulo. A Constituição de 1988 e a Evolução dos Direitos da População LGBTI+ - 2022. In: RAMOS, Marcelo Maciel. NICOLI, Pedro Augusto Gravatá. ALKMIN, Gabriela. Diversidade Sexual e de Gênero. O Direito pensado por mulheres e pessoas LGBTQIA+, BH: Dialética, 2023, p. 268.

[14] HESSE, Konrad. A força normativa da Constituição. Tradução de Gilmar Ferreira Mendes. Porto Alegre: Sérgio Antonio Fabris, 1991.

[15] BARROSO, Luís Roberto. Curso de direito constitucional contemporâneo: os conceitos fundamentais e a construção do novo modelo. 6. ed. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2013.

[16] SARLET, Ingo Wolfgang. A eficácia dos direitos fundamentais: uma teoria geral dos direitos fundamentais na perspectiva constitucional. 11. ed. Porto Alegre: Livraria do Advogado, 2012.

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THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF FORMAL AND MATERIAL EQUALITY IN BRAZILIAN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

Overcoming the racist logic that has historically permeated Brazilian society and realizing the principle of material equality constitute indispensable prerequisites for affirming the existence of a stable, legitimate, and socially effective legal order. The constitutional commitment to human dignity and substantive equality requires not only the adoption of anti-discrimination norms but also the critical deconstruction of the power structures that uphold racial exclusion in the country.

In this sense, society must problematize the asymmetries of power that result in historical and persistent discrimination, manifested across different economic, educational, institutional, and symbolic spheres. As Almeida (2019, p. 38)[17] states, racism in Brazil is "a structuring element of social relations," and is therefore inseparable from national legal and political dynamics.

From this observation, the study and consolidation of anti-discrimination law become fundamental instruments in the struggle against racial prejudice, intolerance, and hate speech. This field of law assumes a significant role in protecting vulnerable groups and in ensuring the implementation of public policies geared toward historical reparation and the promotion of social justice. For Moreira (2020, p. 19)[18], anti-discrimination law "is not limited to identifying discriminatory behaviors; it acts upon transforming the social structures that reproduce inequalities."

Thus, the normative effectiveness of the 1988 Constitution depends, among other factors, on the legal system's capacity to respond adequately to the challenges posed by structural racism, guaranteeing to all citizens, regardless of their race or origin, the full exercise of their fundamental rights.

Moreover, anti-discrimination law has foundations tied to the 1988 Federal Constitution, which structures a legal model committed to substantive equality and to overcoming all forms of social exclusion. Article 1, item III, enshrines human dignity as an essential foundation of the Republic, while Article 3, item IV, establishes as a fundamental objective the promotion of the common good, explicitly prohibiting any type of discrimination, whether by origin, race, sex, color, age, or other forms.

These provisions guide the construction of inclusive public policies and justify the adoption of specific legislative measures to confront historically consolidated inequalities, such as structural racism. The constitutional basis, therefore, confers upon anti-discrimination law not only normative support but also a transformative role in the realization of fundamental rights and social justice.

Within the realm of individual rights and guarantees, Article 5 of the Constitution ensures that all individuals are equal before the law, prohibiting distinctions of any kind. Its item XLI reinforces this

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[17] ALMEIDA, Silvio Luiz de. Racismo estrutural. São Paulo: Pólen, 2019.
[18] MOREIRA, Adilson José. Crítica à razão discriminatória: uma análise da lógica jurídica da subordinação. 2. ed. São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 2020.

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principle by providing for legal punishment of discriminatory conduct that violates fundamental rights and freedoms. Article 7, item XXX, explicitly prohibits discrimination in the workplace, especially with regard to persons with disabilities.

The Supreme Federal Court's interpretation of these provisions reaffirms the Constitution's normative force. In adjudicating ADPF 186, the Court recognized the constitutionality of racial quota policies in public higher education institutions, concluding that the promotion of material equality requires the adoption of affirmative actions. This decision strengthens the understanding that formal equality, by itself, is insufficient to confront historical inequalities, making it essential to reinforce legal mechanisms aimed at the realization of social justice on constitutional grounds.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF BLACK PEOPLE: ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES

With regard to reparative policies aimed at promoting racial equality in higher education, the adoption of ethno-racial quotas for Black people (pretos and pardos) and Indigenous peoples stands out. A relevant example is the initiative of the Federal University of Goiás (UFG), which, through CONSUNI Resolution No. 7/2016, instituted reserved vacancies for these groups in all its stricto sensu graduate programs, encompassing master's and doctoral courses. This measure positioned UFG as a pioneer among Brazilian federal universities in implementing affirmative actions of this nature at the graduate level, consolidating itself as a reference in confronting racial inequalities and in realizing the principle of material equality within the academic sphere.

The implementation of the ethno-racial quota policy at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG) faced significant challenges, among which reports of fraud in student admissions via the reserved-vacancy system stand out. Such occurrences prompted the creation of a permanent self-declaration commission—an institutional mechanism designed to investigate and curb irregularities related to candidates' ethno-racial self-declarations.

Initially, this commission had a reactive character, focusing on the analysis of complaints received and having worked intensively for two years with this focus. Over that period, a broad and well-qualified internal debate took place within the University regarding the need to improve the commission's procedures. As a result of this process of institutional reflection, the permanent self-declaration commission shifted to a preventive role and was formally incorporated into the stages of selection processes, with the objective of verifying, in advance, the veracity of candidates' racial self-declarations. This change in paradigm represented an important advance in consolidating the quota policy, contributing to greater legitimacy, transparency, and effectiveness in promoting racial equity in access to higher education.

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Despite the recognized importance of affirmative policies in promoting Black people's access to spaces historically denied to them, the mistaken notion persists in the social imagination that race does not constitute an obstacle to individuals' social mobility (Silveira; Vetorazo, 2021)[19]. This distorted conception fuels the discourse that racial equality policies would be unnecessary in contemporary social dynamics, disregarding the deep scars left by structural racism. Such a narrative contributes to resistance against the implementation of these policies and hinders their full acceptance in the public sphere, insofar as it denies the existence of the racial inequalities that underlie and justify their adoption.

It thus becomes essential to recognize that inclusion policies directed at the Black population must not be restricted exclusively to the educational field—even though this is a fundamental axis for promoting social development and citizenship. The insertion of Black people into historically exclusionary spaces requires an articulated set of intersectoral measures capable of confronting the multiple structural obstacles that limit full access to rights and opportunities.

Accordingly, the realization of racial equality demands comprehensive public policies that also encompass areas such as the labor market, the health system, housing, security, and political representation, acknowledging the complexity of the barriers imposed by structural racism.

An illustrative example is Alyne Pimentel vs. Brazil, decided in 2011 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/UN), which—within the context of reproductive rights, health, and the fight against structural racism—represents an international milestone in denouncing obstetric violence and the intersectional discrimination faced by Black women in Brazil.

In that case, Ms. Alyne Pimentel, a Black woman, poor, and resident of the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, died in 2002 after her health care during pregnancy was neglected due to the absence of adequate diagnosis and treatment in public health facilities. The Committee held the Brazilian State responsible for violating Alyne's human rights, emphasizing institutional negligence based on structural factors such as race, class, and gender.

The decision underscores the need to recognize racial inequalities in access to health care and reinforces the State's duty to adopt specific measures to protect Black women, who are at greater risk of suffering institutional violence and preventable deaths. The CEDAW Committee pointed out that Brazil failed to guarantee Alyne the right to health and to life, as provided for in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, demonstrating the insufficiency of public policies in effectively reaching historically marginalized groups.

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[19] SILVEIRA, A. P.; VETORAZO, H. A democracia racial na Base Nacional Comum Curricular: permanências e/ou rupturas? Boletim de Conjuntura (BOCA), vol. 5, n. 14, 2021.

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This case compellingly exemplifies how the racialization of suffering affects the right to health of Black women in Brazil, whose maternal mortality is significantly higher compared to White women. Alyne's death did not result solely from individual technical failures, but from a systematic pattern of negligence embedded within the context of structural racism, evidencing the urgency of racial equity policies within the SUS, as well as effective mechanisms of social control and institutional accountability.

The analysis of the case shows that the enforcement of the rights of Black people—especially Black women—cannot be dissociated from the construction of a health system committed to the constitutional principles of equality, human dignity (Art. 1, III, CRFB/88), and health as a fundamental right (Arts. 6 and 196 of CRFB/88). Moreover, it points to the importance of international human rights oversight as an instrument of pressure and transformation of domestic policies, particularly when national mechanisms prove ineffective in protecting Black lives.

THE 2030 AGENDA AS A VECTOR FOR STRENGTHENING RACIAL EQUALITY POLICIES: LINKAGES AMONG SDGs 5, 10, AND 16

In September 2023, the opening of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly was held in New York under the theme "Rebuilding trust and reactivating global solidarity: accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability for all people." During the event, participating countries debated the status of the SDGs at the global level and analyzed the actions that Member States must adopt in their domestic policies to ensure their realization.

An analysis from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda highlights the urgency of this demand. SDG 5, which prioritizes gender equality; SDG 10, aimed at reducing inequalities; and SDG 16, which seeks just and effective institutions, emphasize the need to implement comprehensive affirmative policies that consider racial, sexual, and gender dimensions (UN, 2015).

In this context, the promotion of racial equality must be a central element in sustainable development strategies, ensuring that diversity and social justice are pillars of the Brazilian democratic model.

Thus, SDG 5, by addressing the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, provides an indispensable interpretive key for understanding the intersectional dimension of rights violations that affect Black women (UN, 2015). Paradigmatic cases such as that of Alyne Pimentel demonstrate how gender and race interact structurally to produce specific forms of discrimination, whose overcoming requires integrated public policies that simultaneously confront sexism and institutional racism.

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In this sense, Brazil's fulfillment of the targets under SDG 5 implies not merely expanding women's formal access to services and rights, but transforming the institutional logic that naturalizes negligence and violence against Black bodies.

SDG 10, dedicated to reducing inequalities within countries, directly aligns with affirmative actions directed at the Black population, especially in the field of higher education (UN, 2015). Policies such as ethno-racial quotas and mechanisms for verifying self-declarations adopted in federal universities—such as UFG—constitute concrete instruments for achieving this objective. They seek to correct the unequal distribution of opportunities stemming from a historical pattern of racial marginalization, materializing the commitment to "leave no one behind," a central expression of the 2030 Agenda.

In this scenario, the evolution of these policies—particularly when they shift from a reactive posture to preventive action—reinforces the need to institutionalize and maintain mechanisms that ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of affirmative actions.

For its part, SDG 16, which concerns effective institutions, access to justice, and the promotion of peace, is directly related to confronting structural racism within the justice system, in health care, and across other public policies.

In this setting, it demands the strengthening of administrative and judicial practices that guarantee equal treatment, transparency, and state accountability—elements that are particularly sensitive when examining rights violations that affect Black people.

Thus, international monitoring of cases such as that of Alyne Pimentel demonstrates that the actions of human rights bodies play a fundamental role in overseeing state obligations, contributing to institutional improvement and to the prevention of future violations.

Therefore, the articulation among SDGs 5, 10, and 16 shows that the realization of the rights of the Black population transcends the formal dimension of equality, requiring intersectional public policies, robust institutional mechanisms, and administrative practices committed to racial inclusion.

When incorporated into governmental and academic strategies for confronting inequalities, the 2030 Agenda strengthens the advancement of inclusion policies and broadens the parameters of state accountability, constituting an important instrument for guiding actions in defense of the life and dignity of Black people in Brazil.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated throughout this research, a mistaken narrative still persists across broad sectors of Brazilian society that affirmative actions with a racial focus would be unnecessary or even unwarranted.

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Such discourse ignores the structural nature of racism in Brazil, repeatedly evidenced by social, economic, and state-lethality indicators that reveal persistent inequalities and the selectivity of violence affecting the Black population. To deny the relevance of policies that promote racial equality is to reinforce a system that has historically marginalized and rendered Black people vulnerable, profoundly shaping the configuration of social and racial inequalities in the country.

In this sense, this research advocates the adoption of an anti-racist perspective as an interpretive axis for legal relations, especially within the domains of Constitutional Law and Anti-discrimination Law.

By demonstrating how the racial variable influences access to rights, institutional spaces, and opportunities, the urgency of legal practices capable of realizing the substantive equality enshrined in the 1988 Federal Constitution is reaffirmed. This understanding also converges with Brazil's international commitment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets goals aimed at gender equality (SDG 5), the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10), and the strengthening of institutions of justice (SDG 16).

In this context, an intersectional and anti-racist perspective proves indispensable for implementing these objectives at the national level. As analyzed, one affirmative public policy that has produced significant results in Brazil has been the implementation of quota systems, especially in access to higher education and the civil service.

Moreover, the effectiveness of this policy underscores the need to consolidate and expand such mechanisms, given that their incidence remains limited in the private sector. This asymmetry demonstrates both the resistance of certain social segments to adopting inclusive practices and the urgency of extending anti-discrimination policies to all spheres of economic and social life.

Reducing racial inequalities, as provided for under SDG 10, demands institutional arrangements that go beyond the state sphere and involve companies, universities, and civil society organizations.

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of affirmative actions, the importance of complementary measures is emphasized—such as the implementation of training and capacity-building programs promoted by companies themselves, focusing on people belonging to historically vulnerable groups. Such initiatives, in addition to contributing to the promotion of diversity, strengthen the construction of inclusive institutional environments aligned with the goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially those that envisage effective institutions and governance practices guided by equity (SDG 16).

Consequently, the centrality of education as a vector of social transformation stands out once again, reaffirming that confronting structural prejudice requires not only normative advances but also continuous formative processes that contribute to the deconstruction of stigmas and the consolidation of an anti-racist institutional culture.

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Finally, it is recognized that affirmative actions can also be broadened through initiatives originating from organized civil society, which has historically played a fundamental role in the struggle for racial equity in Brazil.

These initiatives constitute effective and complementary alternatives to governmental and corporate efforts, strengthening social participation—an essential element for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Despite the resistance and obstacles that frequently permeate the implementation of these policies, empirical evidence shows that such difficulties do not compromise their legitimacy, nor their importance as essential instruments for promoting social justice, material equality, and the consolidation of an effectively inclusive democratic project.

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THE OTHER AS A MIRROR: IMAGINARY AND ALTERITY IN THE IBERO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION (16TH–17TH CENTURIES)

Jônatas de Lacerda[1]

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the Ibero-American colonization process in the 16th and 17th centuries from the perspective of the notions of imaginary and alterity, drawing on the theoretical contributions of Adone Agnolin (2007), Tzvetan Todorov (2010), Guillermo Giucci (1992), Laura de Mello e Souza (1986), among others, understanding the encounter between Europeans and indigenous peoples as a profoundly symbolic, cultural, and epistemological phenomenon. It argues that America was not perceived as an empty space, but as a territory inhabited by complex societies that challenged the traditional categories of European thought. In the face of this confrontation, the indigenous people were frequently represented as barbaric, bestial, or monstrous, functioning as an inverted mirror in which Europeans projected their own religious, cultural, and political conflicts, intensified by the context of the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The actions of the Society of Jesus are examined as a central element of this process, since the missionaries produced catechetical narratives and practices that, while seeking conversion, legitimized the subjugation and domination of native peoples. Through the analysis of Jesuit accounts, letters, and interpretations, especially regarding practices such as cannibalism and war rituals, the study demonstrates that indigenous otherness was constructed from European categories that hierarchized cultures and justified the expansion of Christianity and imperial power. It concludes that colonization must be understood as a process in which identity and otherness mutually constitute each other, revealing both the violence of cultural imposition and the crisis of meaning experienced by Europe itself in the face of the encounter with the other.

Keywords: Otherness; European imaginary; Ibero-American colonization; Society of Jesus; Indigenous peoples.

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INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of American territories into the European horizon, starting in the 16th century, should be understood less as a mere geographical expansion and more as an epistemological event, in which Europeans were compelled to confront forms of humanity that escaped the traditional categories of their historical experience. The encounter with the so-called "New World" did not merely reveal unknown lands and peoples; it produced a profound shift in the way Europe thought about itself, projecting onto the other—the indigenous, pagan, savage—the conflicts, tensions, and expectations that permeated the European cultural universe.

Far from representing an empty or amorphous space, America presented itself as a territory densely inhabited by societies endowed with complex social, ritualistic, and symbolic organization. This fact, however, generated embarrassment rather than recognition. Indigenous alterity, instead of being understood according to its own logic, was framed within an imaginary inherited from the medieval Christian tradition, in which difference tended to be interpreted as absence, deviation, or imperfection. Thus, the other was not perceived in its singularity but reduced to an inverted mirror in which Europeans sought to reaffirm their own civilizational identity.

It is within this horizon that the role of the Society of Jesus is inscribed, whose missionaries assumed the position of privileged mediators between the European world and indigenous societies. Jesuit narratives—letters, reports, sermons, and theatrical representations—not only described cultural practices considered strange, such as cannibalism or war rituals, but also produced meanings about them, integrating them into a symbolic system that justified domination, catechesis, and subjugation. The evangelizing mission, far from constituting an exclusively spiritual enterprise, was directly linked to the political project of the Portuguese Crown and to the broader context of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, in which the expansion of Christianity was intertwined with the affirmation of a universal order.

In this sense, the notion of alterity proves central. As Agnolin suggests, the other is not merely the one who differs, but the one through whom the historical subject defines itself. The indigenous person, often represented as barbaric, bestial, or monstrous, becomes the symbolic place where Europeans deposit what they refuse to recognize in themselves. War, cannibalism, and the supposed absence of religion thus function as signs of a radical difference that, paradoxically, reveals a disturbing proximity: the other appears as an inverted model of the self.

Therefore, this study proposes to analyze the representations of medieval Iberian culture projected onto Latin America, paying attention to the ways in which the European imaginary—marked by medieval legacies and modern religious conflicts—structured the interpretation of the indigenous world. By investigating Jesuit narratives and colonial discourse, we seek to understand how the experience of conquest produced not only the subjugation of the other but also a profound crisis of meaning within

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European culture itself. To think about colonization, therefore, is to think about a process in which identity and alterity are mutually constituted, in a continuous game of projections, refusals, and symbolic negotiations that indelibly marked the formation of the Ibero-American world.

DEVELOPMENT

It is not new to speak of Portuguese who permeated the American territory and somehow used it as an apparatus or exploitation colonies, as Ferreira[2],demonstrates in his study. It is also well known that there is a need to broaden this knowledge regarding the actions of both sides—Portuguese and natives— who were already organized with a unique and subsistent structure that distinguished them from each other. However, despite these important and relevant facts, this is not what the present study seeks to answer. Although it deals with the initial elements of this encounter, it focuses on analyzing the meeting between these civilizations, which, despite being disparate, greatly influenced, identified with, and inculcated aspects into each other's society. From this perspective, we identify thoughts and customs as forms of cultural imposition, thus guiding the analysis toward these disparities in the context of the other, centered on the imaginary and alterity between natives and Portuguese. Regarding Portuguese religious matters, we emphasize the Jesuits as protagonists in this process versus the ritualistic organization of the "natives."

What matters, therefore, is to identify as a purpose the fact that "the self defines itself through the other, of which it is intimately the vehicle," and consequently, the other appears as a model of the self. In this indication, Agnolin points out how complex the notion of alterity is: when we think of the other from the perspective of the self, we are thinking about conflicts that permeate our own reality and that, unconsciously, we attribute to the other—the conflicts we experience within ourselves.

As properties of the Portuguese Crown, to a greater or lesser degree, all social groups inhabiting the Colony were exposed to the expansion of this way of being. This task specifically fell to the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, disseminators of Portuguese identity in Brazilian lands.

The encounter between Europeans—especially the Portuguese—and the natives brought a range of conflicts and representations about the imaginary (what was imagined to be found) and alterity (how the other was perceived), in a non-acceptance of difference, where, through its representation, conflicts experienced by Europeans were attributed to the other, leading to the death of many indigenous people who did not remain passive under domination but fought and, through their ritualistic representations, such as cannibalism, reaffirmed a "culture" common among them, including in the case of the Tupinambá, which is one of the objects of analysis by the authors discussed.

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[2] In addition to defending the territory, the colonization of Brazil had another purpose: to transform the Colony into a profitable enterprise for Portugal. (Ferreira, Olavo L., História do Brasil, 2nd ed. São Paulo: Ática, p. 25).

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Thinking about Iberian colonization in American territories means emphasizing its importance as a cultural fusion inherent to this territory, for we are not listing an empty, shapeless land, but a defined culture that already presented diverse forms among the existing tribes—what we call cultural diversities. At the moment of "introduction"—of Europeans—into this colonial coexistence, we observe various representations of power and religion that differed in practices but were assiduously present in both contexts. This cultural diversity and differentiation brought the idea of submission and dependence of the native, according to Giucci: "Implicitly, the native is integrated as a subject under the dominion of the Lusitanian crown, entering into a relationship of inequality and dependence relative to the direct emissary of this distant power." (Giucci, 1992: 47).

Estrangement was inevitable for all parties involved in this process, as each, with its own artifices and conduct, sought to demonstrate—or attempted to demonstrate—the superiority or vitality of its religious beliefs. It is important to note that both sides (natives and Europeans) tried in every way to circumvent the imposition of the other's "religion"[3], since the imposition as a form of superiority of the European colonizers' religion is identified throughout various bibliographic accounts. According to Souza, the vision of the colonizers (Portuguese) was characterized by: "…the idea that the discovery of Brazil was a divine action; that among the peoples, God had chosen the Portuguese; that once they became masters of the new colony, they had the duty to produce material wealth—by exploiting nature—and spiritual wealth—by rescuing souls for the divine patrimony." (Souza, 1986: 35).

To better link these thoughts, based on power relations between Europeans—colonizers—and natives—colonized—we develop this problematization, addressing their most expressive confrontations, based on assumptions outlined by the European historical-religious panorama, tied to contexts such as the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Through this problematization, we seek to identify the religious motivation among the "navigators," driven by the impetus to disseminate Christianity, rescuing souls for the divine patrimony, as Souza notes, which was evident in the encounter with the other. The religious emphasis in the expansionist context is so vivid that Columbus makes several references to the Crusades, which had been abandoned in the Middle Ages, whose main objective was the Reconquest of the Holy Land, highlighting the importance of religion[4], the Reconquest, and its dissemination in the territories encountered: "The

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[3] It is important to emphasize that in the period mentioned—the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age—religion and power were intertwined, granting the Church, through its representative—the Pope—the highest authority. "The Pope cannot be judged by anyone; the Roman Church has never erred and will never err until the end of time; The Roman Church was founded solely by Christ; only the Pope can depose and appoint bishops; only he can convene ecclesiastical assemblies and authorize Canon Law; only he can review his judgments; only he can use the imperial insignia; he can depose emperors, absolve vassals from their duties of obedience; all princes must kiss his feet." (Southern, 1970, p. 102).

[4] The concept of religion represents a historical product and, as such, is absent in the languages of "primitive" peoples. Even in classical Latin, the term religio (from which comes religere, to bind) only referred to certain behaviors that today we would define as "religious." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 123).

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expansion of Christianity is much more important to Columbus than gold… I hope in Our Lord to be able to propagate His holy name and His Gospel throughout the universe" ("Letter to Pope Alexander VI, February 1502"). (Todorov, 1993: 10).

The systematic study of divinity, its essence, existence, and attributes underwent ideological renewals, in light of assumptions inherent to the model of Protestantism disseminated throughout Europe, which brought popular access to letters through biblical translations into vernacular languages.

> "…in addition to the impulse toward letters and sciences, the 16th century presents a general and significant renewal of Theology. Beyond the re-approximation/re-reading—with new philological instruments and new translations, in vernacular—of the Old Testament and the works of the Church Fathers, this renewal of Theology was also realized through the direct study of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Dominicans of the School of Salamanca and the Jesuits of Coimbra were at the forefront of this renewed and important tradition of critical studies. Among the most relevant intellectual figures of this movement, suffice it to mention Francisco de Vitoria, Domingos Soto, Belchior Cano, Pedro da Fonseca, and Francisco Suárez." (Agnolin, 2007: 24).

This theological renewal was incited by the Protestant movement, as mentioned by Agnolin, characterizing a broader sense of the relationship between divinity and humanity, making the human being directly linked to the divine. The approach to letters and translations was a way to bring this ideology closer, allowing the individual to have direct contact with the divine—not only through documentary sources such as the Bible and works written by the Church Fathers but also through a closer relationship between the human and the divine, reducing this space and distance. Undoubtedly, the Lutheran success, compared to the Catholic world, is due to the fact that the Christian is assumed as an individual directly connected to the divine. "But it is important to take into account that, in the philosophical and theological interpretation of biblical texts, Erasmus and Luther were the most emblematic fruits of the profound philological revolution carried out by Italian humanism." (Agnolin, 2007: 26).

Thinking, therefore, about this "New World" requires a careful look at what was forming in the context outlined by Europeans in the paths that permeated their impetus and quest. According to Agnolin, "the fact of having encountered a complex and organized civilization, such as the Aztec and later the Inca, caused discreet embarrassment for the Orient" (Agnolin, 2005, p. 177), referring to the colonies belonging to the Spanish crown. However, a similar factor was evident in the extreme organization that surpassed the imagined context regarding the so-called "Indians[5]" in the Portuguese colonies, for the

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[5] Throughout this work, the term "Indian" is used in accordance with the historical documentation analyzed, in which this nomenclature appears recurrently in colonial accounts from the 16th and 17th centuries. Its use does not imply uncritical adherence to a category now recognized as generalizing but preserves the historicity of the sources and highlights the meanings attributed by European agents to the American other. In contemporary historiography, the term "indigenous peoples" is adopted to acknowledge the ethnic and cultural diversity of native populations; thus, when used in this study, "Indian" should be understood as a documentary and analytical category linked to the colonial imaginary.

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organization of this society was so relevant that it caused embarrassment to the Portuguese in how to deal with that situation arising from the conquest of the New World. They faced a society extremely organized in its rituals and hierarchical structure, ensuring that even with a leader, power did not concentrate in his hands—that is, without granting superior power to anyone—so that the notion of civility and egalitarian society was maintained, each fulfilling their "role" in this context. "The 'savage' rejects not only personal power but also power itself." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 186).

Friendly relations, at first, began to become conflictual until reaching intolerance; alterity became evident, given the imaginary held about a certain people. Thus, Europeans sought, in Aristotelian terms, to name them as different, making them inferior to themselves—as servants or made to serve. This counterpoint is evident in the issue of cannibalism. According to Agnolin, "If cannibalism constitutes the key element of each successive interpretation of the conquest, we identify that cannibalism, according to Lévi-Strauss, is good to think with," since there was an identity observed by various writers, who sometimes "defended" them and sometimes "accused" them, as in the case of Sepúlveda, who called them sordid dogs, while Las Casas titled them "noble savages."

What matters, therefore, is to identify as a purpose the fact that "the self defines itself through the other, of which it is intimately the vehicle," and consequently, the other appears as a model of the self. In this indication, Agnolin points out how complex the notion of alterity is: when we think of the other from the perspective of the self, we are thinking about conflicts that permeate our own reality and that, unconsciously, we attribute to the other—the conflicts we experience within ourselves.

The same discourse emerges when we analyze the different texts written by Europeans—narratives, Jesuit letters—that bring to the indigenous person the symbol of cannibalism, anthropophagy. From this perspective, the cannibal can therefore also represent "the other too similar to the self, a mirror in which one refuses to contemplate oneself. The monstrosity of the Savage: a desperate effort to establish difference at any cost, that is, to elaborate from oneself a reality different from the other. Therefore, it is commonly stated that estrangement, this alterity, cannot be established without the other, where each group needs the other to define itself, and thus victory is never definitive. This indicates that war does not arise because of alterity but creates alterity, and the enemy is initially always an equal." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 192).

From this perspective, we observe that it is no different in the encounter between Jesuits and colonizers with the "Indians" who inhabited the territory that would become the Portuguese American colonies. This was due to the systematic organization observed in indigenous society, which, according to Florestan Fernandes, states that the formation of war or the triggers for conflicts arise from a "male activity," mainly in Tupinambá society, highlighting that war is provoked by men called "military" and not by women. According to Florestan Fernandes, after the combats between enemy warriors, the

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victorious men had as a fundamental role with the prisoners the execution of reception rituals and anthropophagic ceremonies. (Hernandes, 2006, p. 180).

When analyzing such a context, what constituted the structure of Tupinambá indigenous society was characterized by Europeans as acts of inferiority, which, according to the Aristotelian view, would be the factor that justified attributing to the foreign culture a sense of inferiority, to legitimize their actions later intensified by intolerance, as addressed at the beginning of this work. According to Isidore of Seville, while prodigies served to predict, portents to announce, and ostents to manifest, monsters participated in the history of salvation by showing, warning, and signifying the will of the Lord. (Giucci, 1992, p. 78). Author Guilhermo Giucci highlights that the imaginary regarding the distant and unknown was also fueled by travel narratives to the East by Herodotus, Pliny, Saint Isidore, and Marco Polo, in which the elements that compose the "marvelous" are always exalted: prodigal and exuberant nature, leisure, and promise of great wealth. Thus, the entire organization unfolded in the impetus of travelers of the marvelous, who sought to justify the act of colonization, and in this religious version, the marginal escort of the message of Christ and the apostles carried the mission of freeing the hesitant and unbelievers from error.

From this point raised by Giucci, we will discuss the emphasis of Jesuit work reinforced by the context addressed by Agnolin regarding symbolic mediations and indigenous culture: Jesuit interpretation of indigenous practices, which had as its main question how to transform the pagan into a Christian, reducing the different to the same—that is, an attempt to make the different like oneself, as Europeans saw themselves and unconsciously wanted to make them equal, not knowing how to deal with difference or not realizing it. Imagining difference is what allows one to understand oneself; therefore, homogeneity is the total impossibility of constructing meaning.

The role of the Jesuit in this conception of colonization is fundamental to effect the question of alterity, for indeed few had access to writing; therefore, the documents we have are accounts of a European view of the context surrounding the conception of Portuguese colonization. Jesuits in their reports were sometimes opposed to slavery, sometimes acted as a moderating power, and sometimes appropriated slave labor on a large scale. Thus, Agnolin lists the different accounts and views that at certain moments were attributed to them based on their actions.

The shortage of labor in colonial Brazil was evident, and in the 16th century, this function was assigned to the Indians, as they were numerous and became "easy prey" for manipulation. Thus, the hunt for Indians became a great source of wealth in the colonial period. The Jesuits, despite opposing the "hunt" aimed at slavery, served faithfully to the Portuguese crown, which, allied with the Church, overrode political powers, seeking alternative methods of appropriation and conquest of this native

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people. The conquest of slave labor thus became the struggle that permeated not only the sphere of the colonate but also that of the Crown, administrators, and missionaries through alliances.

An important account by Jesuit Father Anchieta reveals that they were "people so indomitable and bestial that all their happiness lies in killing and eating human flesh; it is in the theater that this catechetical and combative zeal manifests most prominently." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 107). In this context, we identify the methods used by Jesuits, who, in addition to rhetoric reported by Hansen, also used theater to impress the Indian through representations, where they attempted to indoctrinate them into the specificity of the Church, condemning anthropophagic cannibalism as well as drunkenness, dyeing, dancing, smoking, war, adultery, and polygamy.

To elucidate the process of converting this native to Christianity, we find, according to Agnolin's analysis, different positions among Jesuits, as previously mentioned, and seeing that this process of acculturation of the Indian was marked by intolerance: "concluding that the conversion of the 'sad and vile gentile' could not be achieved through persuasion, Jesuit Father Manuel da Nóbrega points to subjugation as the appropriate path for their Christianization.

> I understand from experience how little could be done in this land for the conversion of the gentile due to their lack of subjection, and they being more like wild beasts than rational people, and being servile people who only submit through fear and subjugation. This submission, according to Nóbrega, would be applied through relentless repression of the (intolerable) customs of the indigenous and the concentration of converts in organized settlements." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 114).

With this statement by Nóbrega and other accounts by priests through letters and narratives, the Society of Jesus legitimizes the harsh work of catechesis in forming a new religiosity, emphasizing the cruelty of the gentile as "cruel inhabitants of the New World." This action and legitimation were only possible through the religious alliance represented in the 16th century by the interdependence between spiritual power (the Pope) and temporal power (the Emperor), where faith and Empire interacted according to the need to expand the Orbis Christianus (Agnolin, 2005, p. 117), that is, a medieval Christian image of the world. It was founded on the belief that the world belongs to God, whose representative on earth is the Catholic Church. As properties of the Portuguese Crown, to a greater or lesser degree, all social groups inhabiting the Colony were exposed to the expansion of this way of being. As we have shown, this task specifically fell to the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, disseminators of Portuguese identity in Brazilian lands.

Throughout the historical process that permeates the beginning of the 16th century, we see the constant unification and reaffirmation of this alliance between Portugal and the Church, represented by the Society of Jesus, which would remain until 1759, when the Pombaline Reform resulted in the expulsion of the Jesuits from both Brazil and Portugal. However, we attribute to Jesuit priests Antônio

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Vieira and José de Anchieta the heroic times of education—or the foundation of Brazilian education—developing an important role in this theme, which we will not delve into, as it is not the objective of our research.

Nevertheless, Spain also undertakes the expansionist process as much as Portugal, and as Catholic kingdoms, they align with the expansionist process of interest to the Church, which would concomitantly benefit from this expansion and universalization of Christian belief. Spain, governed by King Charles I, aligned itself with the fight against the Protestant Reformation in a passive and intellectual manner, even with opponents within the kingdom and neighboring Catholic kingdoms that broke with the Church. He remained as a representative of this alliance, supporting the Council of Trent, which would be the greatest symbol of the Counter-Reformation, and consequently sharing the Society of Jesus, which began its activities in Spain in 1543 and was taken to Spanish America in 1566. The motivational impetus determined both in the notion of the kingdom and in the individuals who composed the kingdom of Portugal is equally identified in the Spanish kingdom and in those who composed it, who relentlessly fought for Catholic expansion and non-acceptance of foreign representations, so well elucidated in the narratives of Sepúlveda and Las Casas. Alterity—the non-acceptance of the other—was evident throughout the Ibero-American territory, emphasizing European superiority in the Aristotelian view, attributing inferiority and servitude to the other.

With this context marked by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the precursors in this process of expansion and universalization of Christianity will be identified and listed at the most different levels of representation of the imaginary and alterity present among colonizers, Europeans—including the Portuguese—and Jesuits, who represent the Church in Portuguese American lands.

When analyzing the sources presented throughout the text, we seek to understand how this factor of encounter was established, given that the scenario was marked by visible traces of the Protestant Reformation and the prism of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The question of the other is marked by European alterity in the sense of attributing to the Indian an Aristotelian view that subjugated them, leaving them in inferior conditions as "made to serve." When we pay attention to these indications, we understand that Europe was experiencing these conceptual crises on different philosophical fronts regarding religion, allowing these conflicts to be attributed to indigenous rituals as pagan, irreligious, bestial, and other adjectives assigned to them.

The anthropophagic case—cannibalism—so often mentioned in the narratives as a symbol of the American Indian, came to intensify this assertion, giving meaning to a superior and imposed colonization of European representations over indigenous ones. Therefore, with these indications listed mainly by Agnolin, Giucci, and other researchers addressed in the texts, we understand the notion of alterity and

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imaginary that was established in the reading of these works or Jesuit narratives about the inhabitant of the "New World."

It is interesting to highlight and analyze the religious aspect in this understanding, since the focus of the research developed aims to emphasize Jesuit activity as a representation of the Counter-Reformation in the Ibero-American colonies. From this perspective, we observe that Europeans attributed their religious conflicts to indigenous ritualistic representations of the New World, and thus the non-acceptance of any cultural or religious manifestation—even if not proven as religion—according to the movement that was expanding widely throughout Europe, called the Protestant Reformation. Therefore, the European, in alterity, in relation to the other, made an analysis of himself, of the context he experienced, without being aware of it, attributing this personal conflict to the other, to the indigenous person. This we could understand in the Ibero-American case with greater clarity, since both Portugal and Spain would use, to a greater or lesser degree, the imaginary and alterity, always from a vision of superiority, making others—or the other—appear as inferior, made to serve.

The encounter between Europeans—especially the Portuguese—and the natives brought a range of conflicts and representations about the imaginary (what was imagined to be found) and alterity (how the other was perceived), in a non-acceptance of difference, where, through its representation, conflicts experienced by Europeans were attributed to the other, leading to the death of many indigenous people who did not remain passive under domination but fought and, through their ritualistic representations, such as cannibalism, reaffirmed a "culture" common among them, including in the case of the Tupinambá, which is one of the objects of analysis by the authors discussed. In this context, Giucci may seem sympathetic to the conquerors; however, he does not lose sight of the entire violent and bloody process of colonization that unfolded in the Americas, with the shock of alterity and disillusionment being greater than the riches and wonders that had driven them.

Another factor worth noting is that, in the ideology guiding Jesuit missionary practice, this imposition of a transposed meaning (the other) over the proper meaning also occurs within an interpretation of their own (heroic) actions, leading to the understanding that this "theater of images made of heroic gestures of the missionaries comes to condition, in a decisive way, even the placement (meaning) of the other, whether barbarian, innocent, bestial, or naive." With this, we understand that the notion of alterity identified in Jesuit actions did not fully contribute to the fact of "acculturation" or openness to cultural diversities, even because this concept was exercised in a time far removed from the period studied. What was prioritized, therefore, was a culture of superiority and inferiority, of organization or disorganization, of social structure or lack thereof—and this is what frightened the colonizers, as they identified a culture that was already organized in its social structure and maintained

itself, something that was not happening in Europe. "The other appears as the model of the self." (Agnolin, 2005, p. 182).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the representations constructed in the encounter between Europeans and indigenous peoples in Ibero-America shows that colonization was not limited to a process of territorial occupation or political imposition but was configured, above all, as a symbolic and cultural phenomenon deeply marked by the notion of alterity. By projecting onto the indigenous peoples images of barbarity, monstrosity, and inferiority, Europeans not only sought to explain the unknown but also attempted to affirm their own identity, anchored in values inherited from the medieval Christian tradition and strained by the religious and intellectual transformations of the 16th century.

In this sense, the European imaginary played a central role in constructing the figure of the "Indian" as a radical other. Practices such as cannibalism, war rituals, and indigenous forms of social organization were interpreted through Aristotelian and theological categories that hierarchized peoples and legitimized domination. Such interpretations, however, reveal less about indigenous societies themselves than about the internal conflicts of Europe, marked by the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and the need to reaffirm a universal Christian order. Thus, the American other became the symbolic space where fears, tensions, and contradictions of the European world were deposited.

The role of the Society of Jesus was decisive in this process. As privileged mediators between the Crown and native peoples, the Jesuits produced narratives that simultaneously condemned and instrumentalized indigenous alterity. Their reports, letters, and catechetical practices reveal a constant oscillation between defending the indigenous against direct enslavement and legitimizing their subjugation in the name of Christian conversion. Catechesis, far from representing an intercultural dialogue, often operated as a mechanism for reducing difference to sameness, seeking to erase indigenous practices and cosmologies in favor of a universal Christian identity.

Thus, it becomes evident that alterity does not precede conflict but is produced by it. War, religious intolerance, and cultural imposition do not arise as natural responses to difference but as strategies for the symbolic construction of the enemy, necessary for affirming a supposed European superiority. The indigenous person, classified as barbaric or bestial, paradoxically becomes a disturbing mirror in which the European refuses to recognize himself but on which he depends to define his own identity.

It is concluded, therefore, that the representations of medieval Iberian culture projected onto Latin America were fundamental for legitimizing the colonial and missionary project. At the same time, these

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representations reveal the limits of European thought in the face of difference, showing that colonization was also a process of crisis and identity redefinition. Thinking about the colonial encounter from the perspective of the imaginary and alterity allows us to understand that the history of conquest is equally the history of the West's difficulties in dealing with the other without reducing, subordinating, or silencing him—a problem that goes beyond the 16th century and remains relevant for understanding colonial legacies in the contemporary world..

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THE PENTECOSTALISM PHENOMENON: A HISTORICAL-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

José Ronaldo de Freitas Machado[1]

ABSTRACT

The study entitled "The Phenomenon of Pentecostalism: A Historical-Theological Analysis" proposes a systematic investigation into manifestations of the sacred within the Pentecostal sphere. Based on bibliographic methodology and documentary analysis, the work seeks to understand the ways in which such manifestations are configured in the Pentecostal movement, establishing distinctions in relation to practices observed in other branches of evangelical Protestantism and in African-based religions. The historical-theological perspective adopted makes it possible to outline the trajectory of Pentecostalism, from its origins in the early 20th century to its consolidation as a religious expression of relevance in the Brazilian and international scene. The study also addresses the theological foundations that underpin Pentecostal spiritual experiences, such as glossolalia, prophecies, and healings, highlighting their implications for the constitution of community identity and the experience of faith. By promoting a comparative analysis with other religious traditions, the work aims to foster interreligious dialogue, valuing the plurality of forms of expression of the sacred and contributing to a more comprehensive and respectful understanding between different belief systems. In this sense, the study acts as a mediation between academic knowledge and religious practice, encouraging plural coexistence and mutual recognition among communities of faith.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Religious Phenomenon; Interreligious Dialogue.

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the religious phenomenon has been a fertile field for academic investigation. This article proposes to investigate, from a historical-theological perspective, the manifestations of the phenomenon of *Pentecostalism*, since this segment has been the fastest-growing in Brazil from its origins in the 19th century to the present day (Picolloto, 2016; Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023).

Initially, it is important to emphasize that the complexity inherent to religious experience—especially observed in the variety of Pentecostal rites—requires a methodological approach capable of integrating quantitative and qualitative factors (Machado, 2023). For a full understanding of its historical roots and contemporary implications, this study draws on the research of theorists such as Alves (2021), Alves & Bobsin (2022), and Soares (2023).

Thus, the theoretical foundations are analyzed from the perspective of authors such as Williams (2011) and Horton (2022), within a Pentecostal framework. In this context, Grudem's theology (2022) and Rocha (2010), through dialogue with the Philosophy of Religion, are also considered, aiming to present a balance between history, theology, and religious manifestation.

Furthermore, divine revelations manifested in liturgical practices—while avoiding extremism and interpretative fragmentation—are reflected upon with the help of Alves (2021) and Alves & Bobsin (2022). Consequently, the need arises to promote interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding between Pentecostalism and other religious currents, which constitutes a central point of investigation for this work (Oro, 2001).

However, the purpose of this investigation is not only to uncover the origins and constitutive elements of the Pentecostal phenomenon but also to propose a critical reflection on Theology and the manifestation of God—the Divine—as expressed within the field of Religious Studies. Moreover, Pentecostalism, in its various expressions, can contribute to the harmonious construction of a pluralistic society, considering the sociocultural demands that manifest in the daily lives of believers and in recent academic production (Freston, 1993).

Through this analysis, it becomes evident that Pentecostalism, by incorporating a diversity of rites and mystical experiences, presents itself as a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, capable of challenging the traditional boundaries of institutionalized theology (Mello, 2022). Therefore, this study is based on a mixed methodology that seeks to unite the objective and subjective dimensions of the religious phenomenon, as the investigation addresses the hypothesis that manifestations of the Divine in Pentecostalism—often viewed through an extremist lens—contain elements that can be oriented toward a balanced and enriching religious practice for both believers and society (Mello, 2022).

Considering recent empirical research and theoretical analyses published between 2011 and 2024, it is important to reassess the impact of Pentecostal practices not only in the spiritual sphere but also in

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identity formation and contemporary social dynamics (Everts; Lamp, 2023), since evangelicals have stood out in Brazil since 2010, as has Pentecostalism (Picolloto, 2016).

Thus, this article proposes a reflection on the relationship between mystical experience and liturgical practices as a means of fostering a critical and enriching debate among researchers, religious leaders, and members of the Christian community regarding the phenomenology of Pentecostalism (Alves, 2021; Alves & Bobsin, 2022; Alencar, 2022; Soares, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

Considering the complexity surrounding the religious phenomenon within the scope of Pentecostalism, the choice of a hybrid methodology is justified by the different dimensions that constitute the liturgical experience of believers. This study is based on both quantitative and qualitative tools (Machado, 2023), as well as documentary analysis (Lüdke; André, 2018), developed through a systematic review of theoretical publications spanning the years 1993, 2003, 2008, and 2010 to 2024.

In this sense, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods offered the researcher the opportunity to explore the subjective subtleties of mystical experiences and the measurable aspects of ritual behaviors, supporting the hypothesis that the authentic manifestation of the Divine in Pentecostalism can be delineated through a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the Holy Spirit's activity.

Moreover, the methodology employed allows for the identification of internal and external factors that may exert influence, contributing to a true and complete portrayal of liturgical practices, in accordance with the guidelines of respected scholars such as Grudem (2022) in his work on systematic theology and Rocha (2010) on the philosophy of religion.

With this mixed methodological approach, emphasis was placed on the importance of maintaining scientific rigor, which is reflected primarily in the careful selection of data collection instruments, ensuring the validity and reliability of the results. In this regard, the study not only dedicated itself to building a solid theoretical foundation but also sought to empirically validate the concepts that underpin religious practices, underscoring the need to adopt a critical and reflective stance in the analysis of Pentecostal rites (Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023).

Consequently, it became clear that adopting a mixed methodology—both flexible and rigorous—is the most appropriate path for advancing research in the field of Religious Studies and for suggesting strategies that guide believers in seeking a balance between mystical expressions and the preservation of ethical and spiritual values that characterize Pentecostalism (Everts; Lamp, 2023).

Understanding that the mixed method chosen for this study involves integrating the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the experience of Pentecostal practitioners, the analysis of collected data

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enabled the identification of various elements that converge toward understanding the liturgical phenomena linked to mystical experience (Silva, 2005; Mello, 2022).

The methodological tools applied demonstrated that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, according to Machado (2023), allowed not only for the collection of descriptive data but also for the detection of patterns and trends in religious or liturgical practices, which proved essential for developing conclusions aligned with the study's objectives.

It is relevant to emphasize that merging these methods facilitated the identification of contextual and intersubjective variables, which, in turn, enabled a critical analysis of liturgical practices, contributing to the discussion on the need for balance between tradition and innovation in the religious context.

From this perspective, it can be affirmed that the methodological rigor implemented in this study supports the validity of the results and establishes a solid foundation for developing strategies that guide both researchers in the field of Religious Studies and religious leaders in understanding the challenges and opportunities surrounding manifestations of the Divine in Pentecostalism.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Considering the extensive academic production on the religious phenomenon, the literature review on Pentecostalism reveals that recent studies emphasize the plurality of liturgical manifestations and the intensification of mystical experiences among believers, due to the religious richness present in Brazil (Silva, 2005; Macedo, 2007; Palhares, 2010; Mello, 2022).

Thus, it is understood that religious manifestations are diverse, each occurring within its own socio-religious context. For instance, manifestations within classical Pentecostalism—also known as the first wave (Freston, 1993)—occurred between 1910 and 1950, with two churches: the Christian Congregation in Brazil and the Assemblies of God. These emphasized the descent and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, "speaking in other tongues as biblical evidence of baptism with the Holy Spirit" (Soares, 2023, p. 32), deliverance from demonic possession, and the gifts of the Spirit (Alves, 2021; Horton, 2022).

In this context, Pentecostalism spread rapidly, radiating from its initial center in Los Angeles, with Chicago as its spiritual epicenter. Furthermore, through the ministry of William H. Durham in Chicago, Luigi Francescon—founder of the Christian Congregation in Brazil—and Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren—founders of the Assemblies of God in Brazil—were impacted during worship services, confirming the missionary movement that reached Brazil in 1910 (Soares, 2023, p. 42).

The second moment, called the middle wave or second-generation Pentecostalism, prioritized divine healing and mass evangelization during the 1950s and 1960s, according to Freston (1993), with churches such as the Foursquare Gospel Church (1951), Brazil for Christ, and God is Love. These also

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emphasized God's power and the presence of the Holy Spirit in each believer's life.

However, Soares (2023) notes that before this occurred, a Canadian woman named Aimée Semple experienced divine healing through Durham's ministry. After returning to the United States from missionary work in China, she founded the Foursquare Gospel Church.

Finally, the third generation, or third wave of Pentecostalism—known as Neo-Pentecostalism—focused on prosperity theology and spiritual warfare. These churches are more media-oriented, often showcasing exorcisms (deliverance) through communication channels and emphasizing material prosperity. Thus, between 1970 and 1998, churches such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, International Grace of God Church, Sara Nossa Terra Community, and World Church of God's Power gained prominence (Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023).

From this exposition, it is clear that divine manifestations within Pentecostalism should not be confused, as they differ by specific elements due to "[…] the diversity of rites, hermeneutics, methods, among others, which is a typically Christian problem reflecting its immense cultural plasticity" (Alves, 2021, p. 16).

In this regard, authoritative references such as Picolloto (2016), Alves (2021), Alves & Bobsin (2022), and Soares (2023) become relevant, offering a panorama that highlights the ongoing dynamism of this religious movement and the complex tension between tradition and theological innovation present in Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, and various African, Indigenous, mystical, and animist religions.

Therefore, the analysis of McGrath's work (2008) on *Christian Spirituality*, Fajardo's investigation *Assemblies of God* in Brazil and Its Fragmentation (2014), and Alves & Bobsin's study *Classical Pentecostalism in Brazil*: Adaptation and Preservation of Principles (2022) emphasize the experiential dimension of Pentecostalism. Examining the *Assemblies of God* in Brazil means understanding a plural network of social practices resulting from the fusion of Swedish Protestantism and U.S. Pentecostalism (Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023). Furthermore, this religious expression took root among former popular Catholics and grew especially in secularized urban centers, where it diversified (Fajardo, 2014).

Pentecostal manifestations—such as baptism with the Holy Spirit, *glossolalia* (speaking in other tongues, as described in Acts 2), and healings—highlight the interrelations between individual subjectivity and the formal structure of religious institutions, something explicit in the biblical-theological context described in systematic works by Williams (2011), Horton (2022), and Grudem (2022), which underscore the marks of Pentecostalism.

In this context, theoretical contributions by Silva (2005), Palhares (2010), and Rocha (2010) reinforce the idea that mystical experience can be understood both as a personal experience and as a social construction, prompting detailed debates on the adequacy of rites in light of sociocultural contexts,

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leading to Christian spirituality and transcendence (McGrath, 2008).

It is worth noting that discussions regarding extremism and marginalization of certain practices, highlighted by various empirical studies, indicate the need for a balanced perspective that recognizes the diversity and complexity inherent to this religious phenomenon—Pentecostalism—promoting an integrated and contextualized understanding of its manifestations across cultures, including British, American, Swedish, African, Brazilian, among others (Pereira, 2018; Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023).

Thus, specialized literature employs diverse approaches to decipher the constitutive elements of Pentecostalism, combining historical, sociological, and theological perspectives (Alves, 2021; Alves & Bobsin, 2022). In this regard, the relevance of studies addressing distinct angles and intersections between religious experience and belief (Everts; Lamp, 2023), as well as contemporary social practices, is evident.

It should be emphasized that, as noted by Teixeira (2003) and Silva (2020), interreligious dialogue plays a central role in mediating between diverse traditions and promoting a healthy environment for individuals' spiritual flourishing. Thus, the literature review extends beyond mere description to a critical-historical-theological interpretation of challenges imposed by liquid modernity, where the demands of balanced religious practice confront the pressures of a constantly changing plural society (Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023; Everts; Lamp, 2023).

Given this context, the theoretical foundation presented is essential for guiding debate, elucidating symbolic, ritual, and social aspects that characterize the Pentecostal phenomenon (Williams, 2011; Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023), providing resources for constructing practices that harmonize mystical experience with principles of ethics and social responsibility (Lacerda, 2017).

Considering that Pentecostalism, in its dynamic nature, is permeated by intense rituals that configure symbolic manifestations of the Divine, the literature also highlights the relevance of critically analyzing the processes legitimizing these rituals—such as water baptism, baptism with the Holy Spirit, manifestation of spiritual gifts, the Lord's Supper, anointing of the sick, and expelling evil from those afflicted by malignant diseases—where transcendence occurs (Williams, 2011; Grudem, 2022; Horton, 2022).

Therefore, the investigation shows that although the religious phenomenon presents elements of transcendence and rupture with past structures (Alves, 2021; Soares, 2023), there is constant mediation between tradition and modernity, demanding careful reflection on the authenticity and social role of Pentecostal rites from the perspective of Religious Studies.

From this viewpoint, the literature emphasizes the need for balance between maintaining historical foundations and adapting to contemporary demands, which often require reinterpretation of mystical experiences in light of social and cultural challenges (Mello, 2022). However, Pentecostal manifestations—such as believers jumping, dancing, clapping, spinning, sometimes crying due to the

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presence of the manifested Divine, singing in another language, or experiencing spiritual ecstasy—should not be confused with the liturgical and ritual practices of African-based religions, as they are distinct manifestations in different contexts (Macedo, 2007).

Nevertheless, Pereira's investigation (2018) reaffirms the importance of considering the contextual particularities of each congregation, noting that Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal rituals, although standardized in certain aspects and sometimes media-oriented, reveal a diversity that enriches the debate on the nature of the religious phenomenon (Cunha, 2019).

Conversely, the interreligious perspective applied to studies on Pentecostalism, as evidenced by Palhares (2010), Picolloto (2016), and Medeiros (2024), highlights the importance of promoting open and continuous dialogue between various fields of knowledge and faith communities. From this viewpoint, it is emphasized that Pentecostal rites cannot be analyzed in isolation without considering the historical and cultural relationships that sustain them (Alves & Bobsin, 2022).

In light of this scenario, it becomes imperative for researchers, pastors, and members of evangelical communities to engage in constructive debate capable of integrating established knowledge with contemporary methodological advances (Freston, 1993; Palhares, 2010; Picolloto, 2016). Accordingly, the literature points to the need for interdisciplinary strategies that enable a more robust understanding of mystical manifestations observed in Pentecostalism (Freston, 1993).

Thus, the reviewed bibliographic corpus establishes a solid foundation for investigating the multifaceted dimensions of the religious phenomenon—Pentecostalism—legitimizing the need for studies that transcend mere description and seek, holistically, to identify the elements that underpin the divine experience in this context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data and analyses presented, it becomes imperative to reflect on the social, theological, and cultural implications of the religious phenomenon within the context of Pentecostalism (Picolloto, 2016; Pereira, 2018). Believing that the spiritual experience of the faithful manifests in intense and sometimes polarizing ways, the discussion addresses the tensions between mystical experience (spirituality) and contemporary demands for a balanced and responsible practice (Oro, 2001; Lacerda, 2017; Cunha, 2019).

However, studies by Silva (2018) and Oliveira (2019) indicate that the intensification of rituals can both contribute to the consolidation of community identity and foster behaviors bordering on extremism, especially when manifestations lack interreligious dialogue.

It is worth noting that, as emphasized by McGrath (2008), Alves (2011), Fajardo (2014), Alencar (2022), Mello (2022), and Soares (2023), Pentecostal rites—when analyzed holistically—reveal

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dimensions that transcend mere emotionality, integrating structural and symbolic elements capable of dialoguing with contemporary needs for belonging and authenticity.

From this perspective, this article highlights that the religious phenomenon in Pentecostalism possesses transformative potential, as Rocha (2010) suggests, oriented toward practices of moderation and self-criticism, which can serve as a vehicle for promoting a more inclusive and integrative spirituality. Consequently, based on Pereira's assumptions (2018), this discussion emphasizes the importance of avoiding radicalization of practices by promoting strategies that prioritize, among other approaches, the balance between mystical expression and a solid ethical and social foundation.

Conversely, such a critical stance is necessary to ensure that religious manifestations do not deviate from their original purpose of fostering closeness between the sacred and the human, thereby allowing Pentecostalism to reaffirm itself as a phenomenon capable of significantly contributing to the development of more supportive and pluralistic societies. Furthermore, it can foster an ethic of coexistence grounded in dialogue and mutual tolerance, overcoming boundaries that historically separated different religious perspectives.

From this reflection, it is evident that the *perceptions* obtained from data analysis point to the need to rethink the limits between mystical experience and the imposition of rituals that, in certain situations, may lead to distorted interpretations of the Divine. From this viewpoint, it is essential for both researchers and religious leaders to adopt positions that privilege interreligious dialogue and internal critique, preventing spiritual experience from translating into exclusionary or even extremist practices.

Moreover, the analysis of believers' discourses, combined with recent empirical studies, revealed a consensus regarding the need for balance between mystical fervor and social ethics, reinforcing the hypothesis that Pentecostal practices can indeed be oriented toward moderation through interreligious dialogue.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize that valuing personal experiences and community narratives proves to be a powerful instrument for constructing a Pentecostalism that engages with contemporary challenges (Freston, 1993; Silva, 2005; Palhares, 2010). From this perspective, promoting spaces for reflection and debate becomes crucial, where contradictions can be exposed and critically analyzed, enabling the construction of a spirituality that remains faithful to Divine precepts without renouncing social responsibility.

Bearing in mind that balancing Pentecostal mystical manifestation with consistent ethical values is a constant challenge, the reflection prompted by this discussion proposes a series of recommendations for integrating experiential and institutional dimensions within Pentecostal rites.

Through this approach, it is proposed that reconfiguring liturgical spaces and dialogue not only reinforces the authenticity of mystical experience but also fosters the inclusion of diverse perspectives

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and combats excesses that, in certain situations, tend to marginalize segments of the community. It is worth noting that integrating theological knowledge with advances in empirical research, as suggested by studies by Pereira (2018) and Mello (2022), is fundamental for creating practices that encourage an altruistic spirituality committed to collective well-being.

Indeed, the analysis of current practices underscores that the religious phenomenon can be a powerful tool for social transformation, provided it is guided by principles that promote dialogue, inclusion, and respect for interpretative diversity. In this regard, it is essential to highlight that a critical and self-critical stance, coupled with constant reevaluation of rites and practices, proves indispensable for constructing a Pentecostal identity willing to break with inflated patterns and recover the central elements of the Divine.

Thus, the discussion proposes creating institutional and pedagogical mechanisms that enable the continuous improvement of liturgical practices, fostering a culture that values balance between mysticism and political-social ethics, contributing to shaping a religious experience that, beyond being transformative, reflects the genuine human longing for meaning and transcendent connection, as described by Soares (2023) in his work *O Pentecostalismo Brasileiro*.

Conversely, the relevance of this discussion lies in identifying parameters that can guide liturgical practices to preserve the mystical essence of Pentecostalism without opening space for extremism or dismantling its historical foundations (Alves, 2011; Alves, 2021). Considering that believers' spiritual experience involves intense subjective experiences, it becomes imperative that such manifestations be contextualized within a robust theoretical framework that legitimizes them while orienting them toward constructive social engagement.

Therefore, the critical analysis of symbolic and ritual dimensions, grounded in the perspectives of the authors cited thus far, reveals that balancing tradition and innovation is not only desirable but necessary for the continuity of the religious phenomenon in a plural society. From this panorama, it is evident that mechanisms of socialization and internalization of Pentecostal rites, when articulated with practices guided by ethical principles, promote a transformative experience capable of integrating the sacred dimension with social responsibility without losing its empirical religious essence.

Nevertheless, the absence of such balance can lead to radicalization of discourses, contributing to the formation of groups that distance themselves from interreligious dialogue and harmonious coexistence, fostering religious intolerance with bitter consequences for society. Thus, the discussion moves toward proposing strategies aimed at reconciling mystical manifestation with the need for inclusive religious practice, thereby establishing a new paradigm in the field of Religious Studies, as well as for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs in Religious Education.

It is worth emphasizing that, as highlighted by recent studies and believers' own experiences, the

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path to a full Pentecostal experience necessarily involves recognizing its transformative potential, provided it is channeled toward practices of moderation and collective engagement, contributing to the formation of a more cohesive, plural community capable of dialoguing with contemporary challenges.

Through this analysis, it is concluded that balancing the various dimensions of the religious phenomenon—namely, believers' subjective experience and the institutional mechanisms governing Pentecostal rites—is a determining factor for consolidating a religious practice that is both authentic and socially relevant.

From this perspective, the discussion suggests that synergy between empirical and theoretical knowledge, as indicated by Silva (2018), Mello (2022), Fajardo (2014), and Picolloto (2016), can guide the construction of a Pentecostalism synthesized from mystical and rational dimensions, enhancing the effectiveness of rituals and the reinterpretation of sacred elements.

Conversely, integrating tradition and modernity, combined with a critical and self-aware approach, emerges as the key to overcoming challenges imposed by contemporaneity and promoting an experience that simultaneously preserves the essence of the Divine and contributes to positive societal transformation (McGrath, 2008).

In light of this, the results presented reinforce the need for pastoral policies and practices that encourage interreligious dialogue and critical reflection on the enduring methods and objectives of Pentecostalism, transforming it into a true instrument of inclusion and spiritual renewal.

CONCLUSION

In fulfilling the proposed objectives and the analysis developed, it is concluded that the religious phenomenon within Pentecostalism presents a complexity that demands a plural and interdisciplinary approach. The dialogue between mystical experience and liturgical practices proves essential for constructing a balanced and socially responsible spirituality.

The data demonstrated that, when grounded in ethical and theological principles, Pentecostalism can become an instrument of inclusion and social renewal, distancing itself from excesses and radicalization. In this sense, it is imperative that researchers, religious leaders, and communities maintain a continuous process of reevaluating liturgical practices to foster peaceful and respectful coexistence among different traditions.

This study reaffirms the importance of interdisciplinary research in Religious Studies and indicates that Pentecostalism—far from being an exclusionary phenomenon—can play a significant role in promoting universal values such as inclusion, tolerance, and spiritual renewal. The balance between mystical authenticity and structured liturgical practices emerges as a central point for a healthy Pentecostalism capable of contributing positively to the contemporary social and cultural landscape.

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Given the challenges of liquid modernity and growing religious polarization, the need for a critical-historical-theological stance that harmonizes tradition and innovation is emphasized. The integration between theory and empirical data proved fundamental for understanding the phenomenon and identifying pathways that direct Pentecostal manifestations toward sustainable and harmonious development.

Thus, it is concluded that Pentecostalism, by encompassing multiple experiences and practices, constitutes a fertile field for debates that transcend the limits of traditional theology, promoting integration between science, faith, and social responsibility. The findings encourage strengthening interreligious dialogue and point to reforms that, by reconciling tradition and innovation, can contribute to building more cohesive, inclusive communities committed to universal values of solidarity, ethics, and justice.

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BETWEEN THE INADEQUATE AND THE ILLICIT: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDUCT OF SEXUAL CONNOTATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

More than acknowledging that sexual violence and harassment have always existed, it is imperative to understand, prevent, and confront them—especially within Public Administration, which should constitute a space of ethics, safety, and professionalism. Harassment manifests itself in multiple forms, leaves deep marks on victims, and reproduces systemically in institutions, with emphasis on public institutions, the central object of this study. This is an integrative qualitative study whose main objective is to analyze the conceptual differentiation and the method of quantifying conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment within Brazil's Federal Public Administration. To this end, the study examined the Program for the Prevention and Confrontation of Sexual Harassment and Other Crimes against Sexual Dignity and Sexual Violence (Law No. 14,504/2023), the Sectoral Plan for Combating Harassment of the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU, 2024), as well as data extracted from the CGU's "Resolveu?" and "Correição em Dados" dashboards regarding sexual harassment complaints recorded in agencies of the Federal Executive Branch from January 2015 to August 2025. The data were submitted to critical analysis, with the aim of identifying thematic patterns and comparing results. The findings show that, although the topic has been gaining institutional and normative relevance, its complexity requires intentional and structural change in institutional practices, since such conduct constitutes an urgent and multidimensional problem in public institutions, with significant negative impacts on mental health, quality of life, and professional performance.

Keywords: Sexual harassment; Sexual conduct; Public administration.

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INTRODUCTION: AN OLD PROBLEM WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES

The fact that, at times, violence is little discussed does not mean it does not occur frequently, particularly in public settings.

On the contrary, in most cases the harasser occupies a hierarchically superior role to the victim, who, not knowing whom to turn to and fearing impunity, prefers to remain silent—exactly as in cases of domestic violence. These data underscore the urgency of intensifying debates and implementing actions aimed at preventing and confronting these practices in the academic environment.

Because by recognizing violence as a public health issue, the World Health Organization (WHO) draws attention to the consequences of violence for all involved (Maito, Panúncio-Pinto & Vieira, 2022; Gomes, Lopes & Nascimento, 2024). The WHO itself classifies interpersonal violence (IPV) into two categories: family/intimate partner violence and community violence, that which occurs between people who may or may not know each other—exactly as can occur in educational institutions.

From this perspective, addressing harassment necessarily implies looking at ourselves and recognizing the presence of a phenomenon of global reach that demands careful attention to the context in which we are inserted. It is an invitation to rethink the "local," in the sense of making it healthier, more welcoming, and guided by empathy. Harassment practices directly impact the institutional climate and compromise people's quality of life, which leads to the need for constant concern with individual and collective well-being, as well as with building relationships based on cooperation and harmonious coexistence in shared spaces.

The occurrence—and above all, the recurrence—of harassment situations constitutes a violation of Human Rights insofar as it affects not only human dignity but also liberty, honor, image, privacy, and other fundamental, individual, and indivisible rights. Cases of sexual violence or sexual harassment can be found at the most varied everyday levels. And this is grave violence and an affront to the most intimate and reserved rights.

In this vein, Freitas (2023) emphasizes that the principle of human dignity must constitute the central axis of legal interpretation in cases of violations occurring in institutional settings, ensuring adequate, fair, and effective responses to victims. The incorporation and rigorous application of this principle strengthen the performance of public (and also private) institutions both in prevention and in confronting the multiple forms of violence, especially those of a sexual nature, in line with the constitutional foundations of equality, non-discrimination, and human dignity (Barreto, 2005; Freitas, Heloani & Barreto, 2008; Hirigoyen, 2011).

Given the foregoing, the objective of this research is to investigate the conceptual difference between conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment in the quantification of complaints, the opening of administrative proceedings, and, consequently, the imposition of sanctions within the Federal

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Public Administration, by analyzing data obtained from the CGU's "Resolveu?" and "Correição em Dados" dashboards on complaints of conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment in agencies of the Federal Executive Branch from January 2015 to August 2025.

In addition to the introductory aspects, the present study is structured as follows: the next item presents the data collection methodology; the third item reports the results found, as well as their analysis; and, finally, the main conclusions of the study, its contributions to the literature, and its limitations are highlighted.

METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION

To achieve the proposed objective, and based on Decree No. 9,203 of 11/22/2017, which instituted the governance policy in the federal public administration, as well as the Access to Information Law (LAI) (Law No. 12,527 of 11/18/2011), which regulates art. 5, XXXIII; art. 37, §3, II; and art. 216, §2 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, ensuring the fundamental right of access to information produced and/or stored by agencies and entities of the Union, States, Federal District, and Municipalities, the methodological path of the study was divided mainly into two phases. The first comprised analysis of the database available on the Office of the Comptroller General's (CGU) "Resolveu?" dashboard concerning sexual harassment complaints in agencies of the Federal Executive Branch from January 2015 to August 2025, analyzing the handling of complaints.

The second phase comprised verification of the database available on the CGU's "Correição em Dados" dashboard concerning the opening of administrative procedures as well as the imposition or not of sanctions.

The development of this study was structured in successive stages, as described below. In the first stage, the guiding research questions were formulated, adopting the PCC strategy (population, concept, and context), as recommended by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI, 2014). According to these elements, the following structure was established: P – Federal Executive Branch of Brazil; C – sexual harassment; and C – from January 2015 to August 2025.

Once the sources of the research were identified and characterized, the guiding questions were formulated: (1) What is, in available numbers, the quantity of sexual harassment complaints from January 2015 to August 2025 in Brazil's Federal Executive Branch? (2) How were harassment complaints handled/forwarded within the above period and locations? (3) What is the difference in conceptualization between conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment for Brazil's public administration?

From these questions, the first phase of the study began, substantiated in a meticulous search on the CGU's "Resolveu?" dashboard. There, the subject "sexual harassment" was selected within the

intended analysis period. The "federal" sphere was selected in the "all" segment, with active ombuds offices, from 01/01/2015 to 08/31/2025.

It should be highlighted at this point that, for methodological reasons, only the "complaints" option was analyzed, even though options for compliments, claims, "simplifique", requests, and suggestions existed. They were not part of this study's object, but they appear in the tables for the purpose of data comparison.

Next, data available on the CGU's "Correição em Dados" dashboard were analyzed concerning the opening of administrative procedures and the imposition or not of sanctions. There, within the intended analysis period, the subject "conduct of sexual connotation" was selected, given that "sexual harassment" was not available. The "federal" sphere was selected in the "all" segment, from 01/01/2015 to 08/31/2025.

DISCUSSION: CONDUCT OF SEXUAL CONNOTATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The concept of sexual harassment emerged from North American public debate in the 1970s, more precisely in the university context of Cornell University, where feminist activists named as sexual harassment the conduct of hierarchical superiors who used their position to make advances of sexual connotation toward subordinates (Silva, 2024). From the 1980s onward, the topic gained international visibility, being incorporated by feminist movements and international organizations as a relevant issue of women's rights, especially in the world of work.

According to Barros (2009), legal interpretation of cases involving the violation of sexual dignity in institutional contexts must be guided centrally by the principle of human dignity so as to ensure effective and fair responses to victims. In this sense, rigorous mastery of these concepts strengthens the capacity of public and private institutions to act both in prevention and in confronting sexual-nature violence, in harmony with the constitutional principles of human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination.

In the Brazilian legal system—especially regarding possible disciplinary sanctions applied within the federal public administration—the distinction between conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment is fundamental, even though both share the same field of violation of sexual dignity. Although related, the concepts present essential differences regarding gravity, legal configuration, and consequences in the public sector.

Thus, it is important to highlight that the CGU's Sectoral Plan for Combating Harassment (2024) defined sexual violence as a serious public health problem present in various contexts, including schools

and universities. Globally, the incidence of sexual violence is alarming, and this problem has already been recognized as a public health issue by the World Health Organization (2019).

In Brazilian doctrine—especially within Labor Law, Criminal Law, and the protection of fundamental rights—conduct of sexual connotation comprises any action, verbal or physical, that has explicit or implicit sexual character and provokes embarrassment, intimidation, humiliation, or violation of a person's dignity, irrespective of physical contact. It is behavior that involves sexual content or meaning and may manifest through words, gestures, looks, touches, messages, or attitudes that refer to sexuality.

As Barros (2009) observes, such conduct may be inappropriate and offensive to the professional environment, but does not always, by itself, constitute the crime of sexual harassment. Thus, conduct of sexual connotation is the genus of which sexual harassment is a species. Accordingly, we have:

Conduct of Sexual Connotation	Sexual Harassment
Inappropriate behavior, without necessarily any intention to embarrass or obtain advantage.	Requires deliberate intent to obtain sexual advantage, generally with abuse of power/hierarchy.
Not every sexualized conduct is sexual harassment.	All sexual harassment involves conduct of sexual connotation, but not the reverse.
May, on its own, lead to disciplinary or administrative sanctions.	Is typified as a crime under art. 216-A of the Penal Code Subject to dismissal in the federal public administration.

Source: created by the authors

In the Brazilian context, the promulgation of Law No. 10,224 of May 15, 2001 included in the Penal Code article 216-A, which typifies sexual harassment as a crime, providing for detention for those who constrain another person with the aim of obtaining sexual favor, especially in relationships marked by hierarchy or subordination (also Bosco; Nogueira, 2001; Bradaschia, 2007; Moreira, 2016 apud Haile, 2021).

Sexual harassment comprises any conduct of a sexual nature that is not desired by the person who receives it, including, among other practices, physical contacts, insinuations, comments, or manifestations of sexual tenor. It is not required, for characterization, that the conduct be repeated or involve explicit physical or psychological violence. In certain situations, comments of sexual tenor, jokes, verbal threats aimed at obtaining sexual favors, as well as physical contacts or non-reciprocal and unwanted looks, may be legally framed as a crime, especially when capable of compromising the victim's job security or of establishing a hostile, distressing, or intimidating work environment.

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Moreover, for the configuration of harassment it is indispensable that the conduct be unwanted and persistent, to which the victim reacts by manifesting rejection of the harassing acts (Fonseca et al., 2021).

The aggressor may be any person, regardless of gender; this form of violence is frequently expressed through the abusive exercise of different modalities of power (hierarchical, gender-based, or economic) for the purpose of obtaining sexual advantages (Haile, 2021, apud Duarte, 2001, among others). It is a practice that violates the most intimate sphere of the individual and that, by affronting the principles of equality, privacy, and human dignity, constitutes a serious violation of human rights.

According to the CGU's Sectoral Plan for Combating Harassment (CGU, 2024), sexual harassment is characterized by adopting conduct with sexual content without consent, involving the undue use of position or office to obtain sexual advantages, or resulting in embarrassment and the violation of fundamental rights. In this context, essential legal interests are protected, such as the dignity, intimacy, privacy, honor, and sexual freedom of public servants, as well as users of the services offered by the public administration.

Thus, in light of doctrine, sexual harassment is classified into two main modalities:

(i) sexual harassment by intimidation, also termed environmental harassment, which is characterized by the creation of a sexualized environment capable of producing a hostile and intimidating climate (ILO, 2019); and

(ii) sexual harassment by blackmail, or *quid pro quo*, typical of work relationships marked by hierarchy, in which there is abuse of authority (ILO, 2019), the modality that includes the crime provided for in art. 216-A of the Penal Code. In both cases, the practice is deemed unlawful within the federal public service, subjecting the agent to applicable administrative sanctions, including dismissal, in accordance with legislation applicable to the Federal Public Administration.[4]

Sexual harassment by intimidation, also termed environmental, manifests in situations of dispute for professional space, in which the aggressor resorts to sexual harassment, and not moral harassment, when the victim occupies a position of greater vulnerability within the organization or social sphere, affecting, mostly, women and homosexual persons. In this modality, the existence of formal hierarchy is not an indispensable condition for occurrence, and practice among coworkers is common (ILO, 2011; Morais; Múrias; Magalhães, 2014 apud Fonseca, 2021).

Violence is expressed, above all, in the limitation of the victim's freedom to refuse sexist advances, even if there are not necessarily direct punishments or immediate prejudice to the victim's

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[4] According to articles 117 and 132 of Law No. 8,112/1990, Binding Opinion No. 1/2023/PG-ASSEDIO/SUBCONSU/PGF/AGU, Opinion No. 0015/2023/CONSUNIAO/CGU/AGU.

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position at work (Fonseca, 2021). Such conduct, however, may constitute an unlawful act in the civil, labor, and administrative spheres.

By contrast, sexual harassment by blackmail, also known as *quid pro quo*, is characterized by the crime and by the explicit presence of hierarchy and the exercise of authority in work relations. In these cases, the victim is placed before the threat of suffering prejudice in their professional, economic, or moral condition if they do not accept the advances or, inversely, of obtaining benefits and advantages if they agree to such demands, establishing a coercive and abusive relationship (ILO, 2011; Brito, 2011; Pierucci et al., 2014 apud Fonseca, 2021).

However, even when not constituting a criminal offense described in the Penal Code, behavior/conduct of sexual connotation suffered by a coworker, client, or subordinate is a real problem in the corporate environment, and is subject to punishment. [5]

This is because, within the Federal Public Administration, a broader and more systematic interpretation of sexual harassment is adopted, not limited to the strict definition provided in the Penal Code. This understanding arises from the need for reinforced protection of fundamental rights in the institutional environment, especially human dignity, equality, and administrative morality.

Thus, analysis of sexual harassment goes beyond mere penal/criminal typification, encompassing conduct that, although not constituting a crime, is incompatible with functional duties and with the values governing Public Administration.

In this line, Schwarz (2010) clarifies that the configuration of sexual harassment presupposes, concomitantly, the presence of embarrassment, abuse of power, and the specific purpose of obtaining advantage of a sexual nature. These elements are fundamental for distinguishing between inappropriate behavior of sexual connotation and sexual harassment proper, especially within the administrative-disciplinary field.

The principal distinction thus resides in the subjective element of the conduct, embodied in intent. While certain manifestations of sexual tenor may occur without the direct intention of obtaining sexual advantage, sexual harassment requires that the agent act consciously and directed toward that end, taking advantage of their position of functional or hierarchical superiority. In other words, although every situation of sexual harassment involves sexualized conduct, not every conduct of this nature will be sufficient, by itself, to characterize sexual harassment, especially when the specific purpose of obtaining sexual advantage is absent.

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[5] According to articles 117 and 132 of Law No. 8,112/1990, Binding Opinion No. 1/2023/PG-ASSEDIO/SUBCONSU/PGF/AGU, Opinion No. 0015/2023/CONSUNIAO/CGU/AGU; in both cases, it is considered unlawful within the federal public service and subject to dismissal, in view of the legal determinations applicable to the federal public administration.

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Put differently, while every situation of sexual harassment involves conduct of sexual connotation, not all sexualized conduct will necessarily characterize sexual harassment.

In September 2023, the current President of the Republic approved Opinion No. 00015/2023/CONSUNIAO/CGU/AGU, making it binding and establishing dismissal as the penalty for cases of sexual harassment within the entire federal public administration, since Law No. 8,112/1990 did not expressly typify such conduct as functional misconduct, generating doubts regarding the penalty to be applied. According to the opinion, the concept of sexual harassment is:

> The practice of sexual harassment, broadly understood as any conduct of a sexual nature manifested in the exercise of a public position, job, or function or by reason thereof, expressed through acts, words, messages, gestures, or other means, proposed or imposed upon persons against their will, regardless of gender, that causes embarrassment and violates their sexual freedom, intimacy, privacy, honor, and dignity, affronts administrative morality, decorum, the dignity of public office and of the institution, characterizing a disciplinary transgression of gravest nature. (Opinion No. 00001/2023/PG-ASSEDIO/SUBCONSU/PGF/AGU)

As is evident, both the opinion and Law No. 14,612 of July 3, 2023 expressly adopted a broad/extensive definition of the expression sexual harassment, to include all conduct of sexual connotation offensive to another person's dignity and sexual freedom even without hierarchy between harasser and victim, provided that the agent's position is relevant to the practice of harassment.

For the configuration of sexual harassment before the federal public administration, it is necessary: (a) conduct of sexual connotation offensive to the dignity and sexual freedom of another person; (b) no need for hierarchy; (c) that the agent's position be a determining characteristic for occurrence; (d) without the specific purpose of obtaining sexual advantage.

So broad is the concept that, following the same reasoning line, in a training course offered by the CGU entitled "Correcional ABC of the Investigation of Harassment and Other Improper Conduct of Sexual Connotation,", the lecturer Fabian Maia emphasized that other conduct typified in the Penal Code, depending on the circumstances, may be characterized, for the purpose of disciplinary penalty within the federal public administration, as sexual harassment, insofar as they are crimes against sexual dignity. Crimes of rape (art. 213, PC), sexual violence through fraud (art. 215, PC), sexual importuning (art. 215-A, PC), exposure of sexual intimacy (art. 216-B, PC), rape of a vulnerable person (art. 217-A, PC), and all types described in the chapter of sexual crimes against vulnerable persons (Title VI, Chapter II) can be considered sexual harassment for the federal public administration, subject to dismissal if committed in the public service by public agents/servants (Opinion No. 00001/2023/PG/ASSEDIO/SUBCONSU/PGF-AGU).

The International Labour Organization (ILO), in turn, establishes that sexual harassment consists of behaviors such as insinuations, threats, non-consensual physical contacts, blackmail, or any form of

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unwanted sexual solicitation that harms the victim's dignity—especially women—and creates a hostile work environment (Silva, 2024).

Haile (2021) also notes that sexual harassment can be expressed in various forms, from non-consensual touches to comments of sexual connotation, invasive looks, and unwanted physical contacts. The conduct does not require repetition to be considered criminal, as long as it creates a distressing work environment or threatens job stability. The author highlights, based on Duarte (2001), that the aggressor may be of any gender. The determining element is the use of hierarchy or functional influence to obtain advantage of a sexual nature.

In this scenario, both cases of sexual harassment and conduct of sexual connotation may constitute an affront to the constitutional principles of human dignity, equality, and protection of intimacy and private life, and also act as a limiting factor for the effective equality of opportunities in professional spheres. As Silva (2024) points out, the persistence of an institutional culture marked by silence and the naturalization of abusive practices remains one of the main obstacles to eradicating this type of violence, especially in the Latin American context, where academic debate on the topic still proves incipient in various countries.

Although the Brazilian legal system has advanced in recognizing and protecting victims of sexual harassment, its practical application reveals significant limits. Frequently, victims fail to report due to fear of reprisals, low confidence in institutional instances, or the lack of effective policies for reception, listening, and investigation. This reality shows that mere normative provision is insufficient, making it indispensable to promote an institutional culture oriented toward prevention, accountability, and care for affected persons.

Within public institutions—marked by hierarchical relations—sexual harassment may manifest subtly, institutionally, or symbolically. Its impacts go beyond the legal sphere, reaching dimensions such as victims' mental health, professional and academic performance, and, in many cases, the very permanence of these people in work and training spaces.

TRANSPARENCY AND INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE THROUGH TABULATED DATA

Given that the contours of sexual harassment in the federal public administration are not restricted to penal/criminal conceptualization and are far broader, it is also evident that combating abusive practices in public institutions has always required an articulated response on the part of those institutions and their management, involving effective instruments of control, accountability, and mechanisms to promote confrontation.

The difference is that now the general population has access to these data regarding federal public bodies—here specifically—making it possible to demand effective and transparent results.

In this context, the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU) plays a prominent role in the structure of the federal government, being responsible for fostering public integrity and supervising the correct application of public resources. It is a central body of the Executive Branch's internal control system, with fundamental attributions in preventing and combating irregularities and/or illegalities, promoting administrative ethics, and strengthening trust in public institutions (Santos, 2023).

The CGU was conceived to improve Brazil's internal oversight mechanisms, with special attention to corruption. Its creation dates back to 2001, when it was instituted as the Office of the Corregidor-General of the Union, being formally transformed into the CGU by Law No. 10,683/2003. Since then, it has broadened its scope of action, incorporating the functions of auditing, ombuds service, accountability, and promotion of transparency, reinforcing its strategic position in confronting corruption and in building a more transparent and efficient public administration (Santos, 2023).

Its principal attributions include: combating corruption; promoting transparency and social control; improving public management; strengthening the culture of integrity; and consolidating the principles of public administration—legality, impersonality, morality, publicity, and efficiency. In addition, the institution coordinates the Federal Government's Internal Control System, conducts audits, investigates denunciations of irregularities, applies sanctions provided for in the Anti-Corruption Law (Law No. 12,846/2013), and acts in training public servants (Santos, 2023).

Among the initiatives aimed at active transparency, the "Resolveu?" dashboard stands out—a digital platform created by the Office of the Ombudsman-General of the Union (OGU), linked to the CGU. The tool's main purpose is to systematize and publicize data concerning submissions recorded by citizens in the federal public administration's ombuds channels. Through it, one can access information related to complaints, claims, suggestions, and compliments, as well as consult indicators on resolution and response time by agency or entity (Souza et al., 2024).

In addition to its informative function, the "Resolveu?" dashboard also plays a strategic role in inducing administrative changes. By making public the resolution rates and response times of ombuds submissions, the tool tends to pressure public administration bodies to improve their internal investigation and response flows to society's demands. This visibility contributes to creating a culture of accountability and to valuing social control, promoting the engagement of managers, servants, and users in building more responsive institutions.

The data extracted from the platform can foster management more sensitive to institutional violence, serving as a basis for periodic evaluations of institutional performance and as a reference for developing specific integrity policies and strengthening the culture of combating abusive practices in the academic environment. Thus, we have:

Table 1 - Data Obtained from the "Resolveu?" Dashboard

There were 4,891,344 **GENERAL SUBMISSIONS** in 328 agencies of the Federal Executive Branch								
Sexual harassment	From 01/01/15 to 08/31/25							
	General submissions	Agencies	Under analysis/ handling	Enabled/answered	Not enabled (archived)	Sent to other agencies	Resolution	Average satisfaction
	4.783	284	103	3834	846	335	73,15%	50%
	2,633 general submissions, where applicable, were forwarded for opening of investigative or accusatory proceedings.							
There were 980,597 **COMPLAINTS** in 328 agencies of the Federal Executive Branch								
Sexual harassment	De 01/01/15 a 31/08/25							
	Complaints only	Agencies	Under analysis/ handling	Enabled/ answered	Not enabled (archived)	Sent to other agencies	Resolution	Average satisfaction
	4.546	284	93	3638	815	299	72,122%	49,35%
	2,524 were forwarded, where applicable, for opening of investigative or accusatory proceedings.							

Source: created by the authors

Even when a complaint is classified as "enabled," such classification does not automatically imply that its content is sufficient to initiate an administrative procedure for holding the accused accountable— be it through an inquiry or by initiating an Administrative Disciplinary Proceeding (PAD).

It is the responsibility of the Ombuds Unit to receive the complaint and conduct preliminary analysis. At this stage, it is essential to distinguish verifying the presence of minimum requirements for admissibility of the complaint (proper to the Ombuds Office) from investigating the truthfulness of the reported facts, which does not fall within its scope of action.

Thus, the limit of the Ombuds Office's action in handling complaints received—including those related to sexual harassment—consists in, once the complaint is considered "enabled," i.e., the existence of the minimum required elements confirmed, forwarding it to the agency's or entity's competent internal affairs unit for acknowledgment and adoption of appropriate measures.

The Internal Affairs Office (Corregedoria), in turn, upon receiving complaints previously considered "enabled" by the Ombuds Office, must conduct the admissibility judgment in accordance with the parameters established in art. 144 of Law No. 8,112/1990 and other applicable regulations (Thematic Report on Sexual Harassment, 2023).

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It is important to highlight that this study presents the total number of complaints, and the data categorized as "Total (*)" in the tables include not only complaints but also claims, compliments, requests, and suggestions related to the topic. This indicates that not all submissions were exclusively accusations of harassment but may involve other forms of interaction by the academic community with institutional ombuds offices.

Furthermore, within the total occurrences, some are classified as "not enabled or archived," as they are those that did not present minimum elements such as the names of those involved or details of the fact to be investigated, lack of clarity/insufficient data, duplicate submission, improper submission, or even lack of competence—facts that make the Ombuds Office's action impossible.

Based on the data found, it was also deemed appropriate to carry out a comparative analysis between the entire period from 01/01/2015 to 08/31/2025 and the more recent period from 04/01/2023 to 08/31/2025. This comparison was made because in April 2023 the Program for the Prevention and Confrontation of Sexual Harassment and Other Crimes against Sexual Dignity and Sexual Violence in the public administration—direct and indirect—federal, state, district, and municipal was promulgated.

Table 2 - Data Obtained from the "Resolveu?" Dashboard

There were 2,056,979 **GENERAL SUBMISSIONS** in 328 agencies of the Federal Executive Branch							
Sexual harassment	From 04/01/23 to 08/31/25						
	General submissions	Agencies	Under analysis/ handling	Enabled/ answered	Not enabled (archived)	Sent to other agencies	Resolution	Average satisfaction
	2375	248	102	1772	502	160	63,66%	41,92%
	1,110 general submissions, where applicable, were forwarded for opening of investigative or accusatory proceedings.						
Foram 980.597 **DENÚNCIAS** em 328 órgãos do Poder Executivo Federal							
Sexual harassment	From 04/01/23 to 08/31/25						
	Complaints only	Agencies	Under analysis/ handling	Enabled/ answered	Not enabled (archived)	Sent to other agencies	Resolution	Average satisfaction
	2287	246	92	1710	485	152	62,78%	40,83%
	1,073 complaints, where applicable, were forwarded for opening of investigative or accusatory proceedings.						

Source: created by the authors

From analysis of the data, it is possible to perceive a concentration of complaints in the last two years (2023 to 2025), indicating increased awareness in the community and a possible improvement in mechanisms for institutional listening and recording, very likely due to Law No. 14,540/2023. This dashboard has played a fundamental role in promoting greater visibility of submissions recorded by ombuds offices (Souza et al., 2024).

However, this increase may also be linked to an alarming reality: abusive practices remain entrenched and, in some cases, intensified by impunity or the inefficiency of disciplinary structures. This hypothesis is reinforced by data from the "Correição em Dados" dashboard: less than half of the complaints resulted in the opening of administrative procedures, and only a small fraction of those procedures culminated in effective sanctions (Santos, 2023).

This institutional discrepancy can be explained, in part, by the absence of effective prevention and confrontation policies. International and regional literature recommends adopting clear protocols, structures for psychosocial support, training of servants, and safe and accessible channels for reporting. The experience of Latin American universities shows that well-implemented protocols are fundamental for mitigating such violence and promoting cultural transformations on campuses (Distintas Latitudes, 2023).

These data suggest three possible interpretations:

(i) a real increase in occurrences, related to institutional or social factors;

(ii) greater trust by victims in reporting channels, possibly related to awareness campaigns and strengthening of ombuds offices under Law No. 14,540/2023;

(iii) improved transparency and systematization of records on the "Resolveu?" dashboard as of 2023.

Regardless of the cause, the numbers indicate the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for reception, investigation, and accountability. The recent period highlights the importance of monitoring the efficiency of responses and ensuring that increased complaints are not accompanied by impunity or revictimization.

Next, data available from the CGU's "Correição em Dados" dashboard were verified, as it broadens understanding of the institutional path of complaints within Public Administration. While the "*Resolveu?*" dashboard focuses on the initial stage of handling submissions presented to ombuds offices, demonstrating the volume, nature, and profile of demands received, the "Correição em Dados" dashboard makes it possible to observe the unfoldings of those submissions in the field of administrative accountability, by compiling information on the initiation, progress, and results of disciplinary administrative proceedings, as well as the application of sanctions to individuals and legal entities.

The combined use of these two databases enables a more comprehensive and integrated analysis of institutional confrontation of sexual harassment, not only allowing identification of the recording of complaints but also verification of the extent to which they progress to the internal affairs sphere and result in concrete accountability measures—which is fundamental for assessing the effectiveness of prevention, investigation, and sanction policies adopted by Public Administration. Thus, we have:

Table 3 - Data Obtained from the "Correição em Dados" Dashboard

230,002 administrative procedures initiated in the dashboard's totality
15,702 accusatory disciplinary procedures concluded with the application of the sanction of warning
15,286 accusatory disciplinary procedures concluded with the application of the sanction of suspension
24,855 accusatory disciplinary procedures concluded with the application of the sanction of expulsion

From 01/01/15 to 08/31/25
2,950 administrative procedures were initiated on the subject:
Conduct of sexual connotation

Conduct of sexual connotation	578 are still in progress (246 investigative procedures and 332 accusatory procedures) 2,372 were concluded (1,578 investigative procedures and 794 accusatory procedures) Of these *794 accusatory disciplinary procedures concluded*, we have:

Acquittal	TAC	Warning	Suspension	Expulsion	Prescription
239	64	51	148	216	76

From 04/01/2023 to 08/31/25
1,618 administrative procedures were initiated on the subject:
Conduct of sexual connotation

Conduct of sexual connotation	431 are still in progress (280 investigative procedures and 151 accusatory procedures) 1,187 were concluded (991 investigative procedures and 196 accusatory procedures) Of these *196 accusatory disciplinary procedures concluded*, we have:

Acquittal	TAC	Warning	Suspension	Expulsion	Prescription
14	58	16	39	67	2
There were 306 occurrences at Caixa Econômica Federal, ranking first					

Source: created by the authors

The data extracted from the "Correição em Dados" dashboard demonstrate the relevance of the topic within the Federal Public Administration and allow observation of the evolution of institutional handling of conduct of sexual connotation. In the broader time frame, one notes the initiation of 2,950 administrative procedures related to the topic, a significant portion of which are still in progress, while others have resulted in conclusive decisions—including acquittals, execution of Terms of Conduct Adjustment (TACs), and application of disciplinary sanctions ranging from warning and suspension to the maximum penalty of dismissal. These numbers show that conduct of sexual connotation has been the

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subject of accountability attention, with effective mobilization of mechanisms for administrative responsibility.

Analyzing specifically the period from 2023 to 2025, as occurred with the data from the "Resolveu?" dashboard, one observes an expressive concentration of procedures initiated, totaling 1,618 records—a number representing a significant portion of the total identified. This increase may be associated, in relevant measure, with the promulgation of Law No. 14,540/2023, which instituted the National Program for the Prevention and Confrontation of Sexual Harassment and Other Crimes against Sexual Dignity and Sexual Violence; with awareness regarding confrontation and prevention of harassment; but also with an increase in harassment itself.

By establishing clear guidelines, institutional duties, and mechanisms for prevention, reception, and accountability, the new legislation tends to increase the visibility of the problem, strengthen victims' confidence in institutional channels, and encourage formal recording of occurrences—directly impacting internal affairs indicators.

In this sense, the increase in the number of procedures in the period following the law's entry into force should not be interpreted solely as an isolated rise in the incidence of conduct, but as a possible reflection of improved normative instruments, greater institutional awareness, and consolidation of a culture of confronting harassment in the federal public service. It is, therefore, a datum that reinforces the importance of structured public policies of prevention and combat, as well as of transparency and integrated action between ombuds offices and internal affairs units in the realization of fundamental rights to dignity, equality, and safe work environments.

These data reinforce the importance that the transparency provided by platforms such as the "Resolveu?" dashboard and the "Correição em Dados" dashboard be not only informative but mobilizing of structural institutional changes, ensuring victims of harassment a fair, swift response based on due process of law. The mere existence of reporting channels is not sufficient if there is no structure and political will to guarantee accountability of aggressors and symbolic and institutional reparation to victims.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Protection of life and human dignity must occupy a central position in social and institutional relations; the naturalization of suffering, violence, or injustice is no longer admissible. Confronting harassment is a structuring challenge for building a new organizational and social culture, requiring a conscious, collective, and responsible choice. Facing the problem directly, recognizing its gravity, and assuming effective commitments to prevention and accountability is an indispensable condition for consolidating a truly democratic society that is safe and healthy for all people.

In this sense, the precise distinction between conduct of sexual connotation and sexual harassment proves fundamental not only for the correct legal qualification of facts but also for promoting institutional environments guided by respect and the protection of human dignity. Educational and work institutions must implement clear and effective policies capable of recognizing and confronting the gravity of behavior of a sexual nature that violates respect for persons, irrespective of its subsequent legal classification, reaffirming the commitment to dignity, equality, and integrity of all subjects.

The "Resolveu?" and "Correição em Dados" dashboards are consolidating as instruments for evaluation and encouragement of accountability, promoting an institutional environment that is safer, more democratic, and committed to respect for human rights, with responses to rights violations and enabling improvement of public policies in the public environment.

The importance of the platforms is also reflected in the possibility of comparing institutions' performance regarding response to complaints and the forwarding and application of sanctions, encouraging agencies to improve channels for reception and conflict resolution, and allowing a more accurate diagnosis concerning the effectiveness of actions adopted.

Recommendations extracted from analyzed studies point to the urgency of adopting an integrated institutional policy that involves not only reactive measures but, above all, preventive and educational actions. The CGU, as an oversight and transparency body, must be strengthened as a strategic partner in building academic environments that are safe, upright, and welcoming (Santos, 2023).

Sexual harassment tends to perpetuate itself and, often, to remain invisible not because of explicit manifestations of violence, but precisely because it is expressed through subtle, everyday, and symbolic practices that are socially tolerated or minimized. This veiled form of violence contributes to the normalization of injustice and to difficulty in institutional recognition of the problem, allowing harassment situations to extend over time in victims' trajectories—often without finding reception, protection, or adequate assistance in the face of the violations suffered.

Given this scenario, institutional incorporation of strategies to confront sexual harassment proves indispensable. When prevention is assumed as a priority by institutions—especially universities and other spaces of training and work—an environment conducive to implementing educational programs aimed at understanding the dynamics and characteristics of this form of violence is created. Such initiatives contribute not only to promoting prevention and social justice but also to strengthening mechanisms for holding aggressors accountable, reaffirming institutional commitment to dignity, equality, and the safety of individuals.

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